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**ENCHANTMENT AS
VISITOR MOTIVATOR
IN ECOSYSTEM
ENTREPRENEURSHIP:
THE CASE OF RURAL
VOUZELA**

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Abstract: Our entrepreneurship and citizenship project aims to better delineate the hospitality and tourism riches of the Municipality of Vouzela by taking advantage of its endogenous resources in line with sustainable tourism. Using enchantment as a unifying theme, we built a system for consumer feedback that is immediate as well as comprehensive. This resulted in a system that is complete and that is seen as relevant locally, and which will guide bringing international status to Vouzela. As data gathering continues decision makers will increasingly rely on the system to learn which features and provisions benefit Vouzela most.

Enchantment as visitor motivator in ecosystem entrepreneurship: The case of rural Vouzela
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Consistent with greater societal interest in awe-inducing appeal of some extreme sport activities, the concept of enchantment (Houran, Lange, Laythe, 2020; Lange, Houran, Moran, 2022) is increasingly recognized as a central factor in determining tourists' satisfaction and net promoter scores with their travel destinations (cite some).

Enchantment now replaces – or at least enhances – Pine and Gilmore's (1999) now classic notion of the experience economy. For instance, Lange, Houran, and Moran (2022) investigated people's enchantment with Porto's "Magic Train", which is intended as practical transportation to the city's historical sites, shopping areas, the wine cellars, and important buildings. Findings indicate that Lange et al.'s (2022) enchantment measure correlate highly with respondents' intentions to recommend the "Magic Train" to others. In conjunction with related findings (Houran, Hill, Haynes, and Bielski, 2020) the authors concluded therefore that enchantment can serve as an engaging brand promise and consumer motivator.

Although empirical research on enchantment and tourism is increasing, such endeavours face a variety of issues when applied to large-scale projects beyond well-defined local attractions. Here we present a case study that revolves around an entire community that is in the process of developing complex and long-term initiatives around sustainability, sustainability certification, and responsible tourism. This project concerns the municipality of Vouzela, which is located in

the district of Viseu in the North East portion of Portugal. It has nine parishes with about 10 thousand inhabitants, and it is rich in history, heritage, gastronomy, traditions and landscape. Once rural, Vouzela now thrives on commerce, industry, as well as the tourism and service industry sectors. In terms of tourism, the county is much sought after for its natural heritage. Since 2015 Vouzela has Portugal's first Local Management Natural Park, and it is known for its' numerous mountain bike trails, walking trails and naturally excellent cuisine, including the Vouzela pastries and Lafões veal.

The present paper can be seen as an interim report on the progress towards attracting tourists to Vouzela from within Portugal and from across Europe in general, while maintaining the goals of sustainability and responsible tourism. Throughout, the emphasis is on understanding visitors' motivations, increasing understanding the nature of Vouzela's attractions, and supporting the needs of its' local government and stakeholders. Following a short history of Vouzela, we next define the concept of "Enchantment" as a tool for attracting visitors to the region. The third section is of a more technical nature and focuses on the collection and processing of information of a business nature on for-profit organizations in the Vouzela region.

SECTION 1: VOUZELA

Vouzela (www.cm-vouzela.pt) is a Portuguese village that stands out for its ancient patrimony. The beauty of the nature, its exquisite traditional and varied cuisine, as well as the historical heritage of the land, define and mold the friendly people of the region and explain their distinctive cultural heritage. Vouzela has been able to maintain its traditions, especially rural and ethnographic over time, highlighting even today, the craftsmanship with linen work, regional quilts, and basketry.

As is illustrated in Figure 1, Vouzela is located in an area of great natural beauty and strong rural and traditional features. Its woods are characterized by large areas of oak trees, which explains the immense biodiversity of the region. It is also in Vouzela that you can find the largest woods of *Rhododendron Ponticumssp Baeticum*, commonly called oleander.

The recent history of Vouzela is marked by the great fires of October 2017 that consumed 80% of its' territory. The near-total devastation forced an enormous reconstruction effort that involved the support of several government entities, NGOs, embassies, associations, companies, the municipality and, naturally, the local population. In fact, despite the sadness of losing everything (in some cases) Vouzela's inhabitants never put down their arms when rebuilding. Today, very few signs of the tragedy remain, and visitor will find a region that is characterized by resilience, persistence and hope. In 2019, the city was again affected by the weather, this time with storms Elsa and Fabien that caused extensive damage to water lines, roads and some homes. But this did not diminish Vouzela's determination to succeed.

Sustainability Certification. The preceding caused local government to adopt focusing on sustainability as the best way forward, and this triggered the Vouzela tourism sustainability certification process that began on July 27, 2020 when the Sustainable Commitment letter was signed in a ceremony attended by the Minister of Territorial Cohesion, Prof. Ana Abrunhosa. This was in fact the starting point for a long, intense, complex and hard-working journey, which included the diagnosis of the district area, the definition of the action plan, many online and face-to-face awareness and training actions, the realization of the audit and awarding of the international Biosphere Destination seal, which took place on December 6, 2021. At the time, Vouzela

was the first municipality in the country to obtain this certification. Other municipalities, Mafra and Baião followed later.

The Biosphere Destination seal is awarded by the Instituto de Turismo Responsable, a Spanish NGO, which positions Vouzela as a sustainable tourist destination, reflecting our efforts to fulfill the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals to build a quality destination for locals and tourists. Vouzela aspires to evolve towards a more sustainable society, guaranteeing the future of the next generations through the definition of policies and the adoption of practices that make people, resources and the environment coexist in harmony.

Observatory for Sustainability. It is in this context that the Observatory for Sustainability emerged, a strategic project that aims to ensure, on the one hand, the collection and processing of information in different areas, and on the other, the monitoring of a wide range of good sustainability practices to be disseminated in the territory, allowing to obtain concrete data on activities and behaviors adopted by the local population, tourists or public and private entities, which will support decision-making in the management of Vouzela as a sustainable tourist destination.

In addition to complying with a Biosphere Destination certification requirement, the observatory will also help to promote the development and protection of local tourist resources, providing information on the volume of visitors, economic impact, opinions of those responsible, movements, trends and regional framework. and national destination Vouzela. Specifically, information collection by the Observatory will allow:

- understanding the origin, profile, motivation and behavior of tourists;
- identifying the tourist dynamics of the territory.

- knowing the impact of tourism on the territory;
- measure the predisposition to adopt sustainable behaviors on the part of tourists, tour operators and the general population;

Collaboration for Data Gathering. In order to operationalize the Observatory, a partnership was developed with ISLA – Instituto Politécnico de Gestão e Tecnologia in Porto in conjunction with PLM, which is a multinational company which in recent times has expanded to new areas and products (<https://www.plmretail.com>). Under this partnership, questionnaires were developed to collect data from tourists through a mobile application (including tablets) developed by PLM. In addition, data is gathered concerning the nature and usage of the various businesses in Vouzela. The analysis and presentation of these data is the responsibility of ISLA's Laboratory for Statistics and Computation.

On February 14, 2022, the Observatory started officially with the announcement of a pilot project. The first phase thereof involves 20 operators and tourist sites, both private and public (namely accommodation, restaurants, museum, tourist office, campsite, among others), which, due to their target audience and location, are useful to help collect differentiated data for the study. The 20 partners were asked to collaborate to encourage their guests or customers to fill in the questionnaires. In general, data gathering has been quite challenging and the project now faces the need for new strategies and approaches to improve the situation.

SECTION 2: ENCHANTMENT

The concept of Enchantment is defined as an “art, act, instance of magic” or a sense of “great delight”, which often includes “fascination, fascination, attraction, captivation, happiness, or rapture”. Thus, rather than referring to

merely memorable events, enchantment focuses on *experiences that delight consumers' senses and sensibilities, such that enchanting experiences profoundly stir their psyches and proverbial souls*. For instance, while it is certainly desirable that tourists should like and remember Vouzela's Caramulo Natural Park, enchantment involves feelings of being "in love" or "humbled" by this park. For instance, Bennett (2001) remarked that enchantment "consists of a mixed bodily state of joy and disturbance, a transitory sensuous condition dense and intense enough to stop you in your tracks and toss you onto a new terrain and to move you from the actual world to its virtual possibilities" (p. 111).

While enchantment can be induced in many different ways, no spectacular situations or environments are required to experience enchantment in tourism. For instance, in their content analyses of tourists' narratives concerning their anticipated future travel following the COVID-19 epidemic, Lange, Houran, and Tracey (2021) identified five types of enchanting experiences: (a) *Escapade* (an adventurous escape to a particular destination), (b) *Nostalgia* (reminiscence related to special 'first-time' events), (c) *Catharsis* (participation in events related to liberation or ecstasy), (d) *Communion* (impromptu or planned fellowship under special circumstances), and (e) *Attachment* (family activities that reinforce bonding and sense of legacy). Note that these experiences are expected to occur naturally and that neither requires extraordinary special effects, or any artificial means or device.

The ubiquity of naturally occurring enchantment is supported by Lange, Houran, and Moran's (2022) research which indicates that enchantment already may occur in the context of a ride in a simple children's "Magic Train" through downtown Porto. In fact, we expect that the natural beauty Vouzela's trails,

campsites, and parks are more enchanting, certainly to those interested in sustainable and responsible tourist destinations.

Measurement of Enchantment. Houran, Lange, and Laythe (2020) developed a Enchantment-Adjective Checklist (Enchantment-ACL). As is shown in Appendix A, this is a collection of 21 Rasch scalable binary questions (applies vs. does not apply) that covers five experiential themes which are hypothesized to define the construct of enchantment: (a) *Emotional*, (b) *Sensorial*, (c) *Timeless*, (d) *Rational*, and (e) *Transformative*. Psychometric research by Houran, Lange, and Laythe (2020) on this measure reported a Rasch internal reliability of 0.82, and the Enchantment-ACL was validated by the finding of a positive correlation with global enchantment ratings in an applied context ($r = 0.51, p < .001$). Similarly, in their study of Porto's 'Magic Train,' Lange, Houran, and Moran (2022) found a correlation of 0.40 ($p < 0.01$) between the Enchantment-ACL and Reicheld's (2003) net promotor score. Currently, the Enchantment-ACL is available in English, French, and Portuguese. A Spanish version is under development.

SECTION 3: DATA GATHERING AND REPORTING

With the Enchantment approach, we expect to:

- Provide the municipality of Vouzela with guidelines to identify customer needs, promoting the development of innovative products, services or experiences that really impact tourists' experiences;
- Help Vouzela entrepreneurs and companies to identify the nature of their customers, enabling the development of products and services adjusted to their expectations;

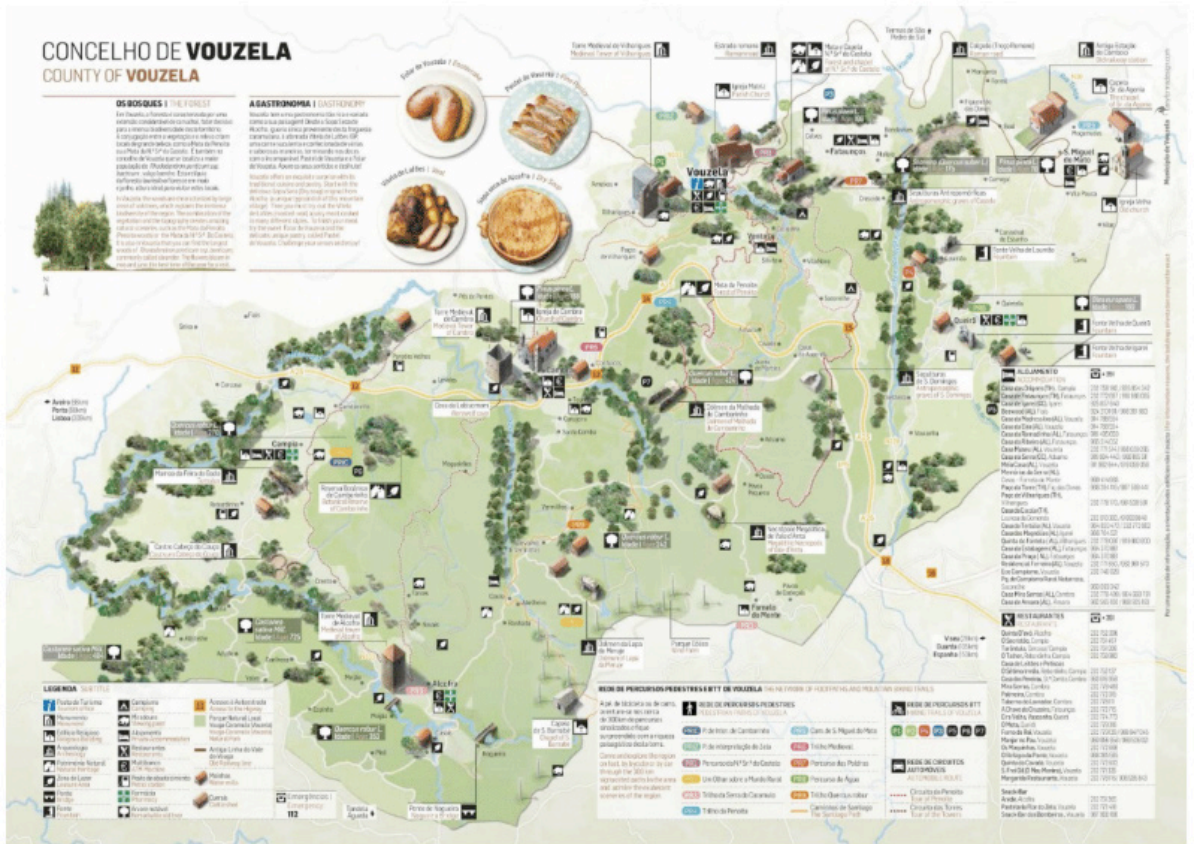


Figure 1: Map of Vouzela showing its natural resources

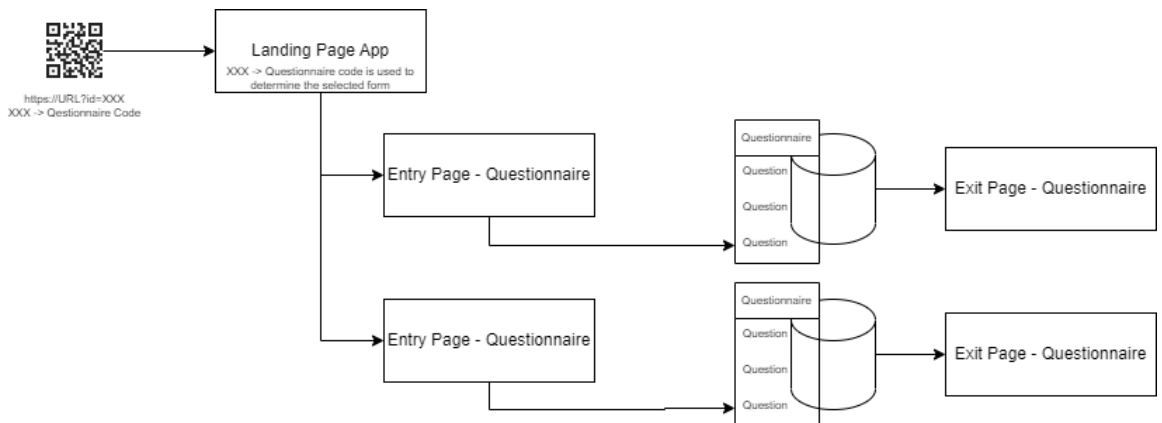


Figure 2: Schematic of the QR code registers

Entre as pessoas cujas opiniões são importantes para si, a quem aconselharia fazer uma visita a Vouzela no próximo ano / época?



Figure 5: A summary of 25 respondents' free-style (typed) answers

- Create a contact database, increasing the region's search potential.

Data Gathering. The data acquisition system was designed with two major purposes in mind: (1) The usage of the system provides information concerning the audiences' attitude towards usage of technological tools in the Vouzela context; (2) The number of questionnaire submissions provides useful feedback from the public concerning Vouzela proper.

When users scan a QR Code at a specific location the application registers the location and type of questionnaire to be made available to the users' particular device.

Upon entry, users are greeted with a standard message, and they are then sent to the appropriate questionnaire and HTML based form. Data acquisition relies exclusively on a

highly responsive Progressive Web App which can be used on any kind of internet connected device. The technological stack is as follows:

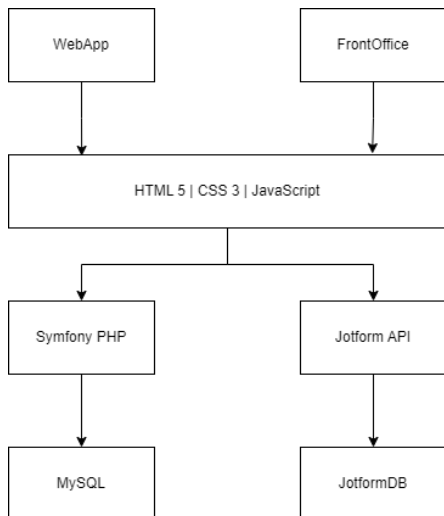


Figure 3: Schematic of the Progressive Web App

In database terminology, the main entities are Locations and Questionnaire which allows for the differentiation of multiple pairs between

these entities, thereby creating a method of availability for multiple questionnaires in one single location, as well as the usage of a uniform questionnaire on several locations.

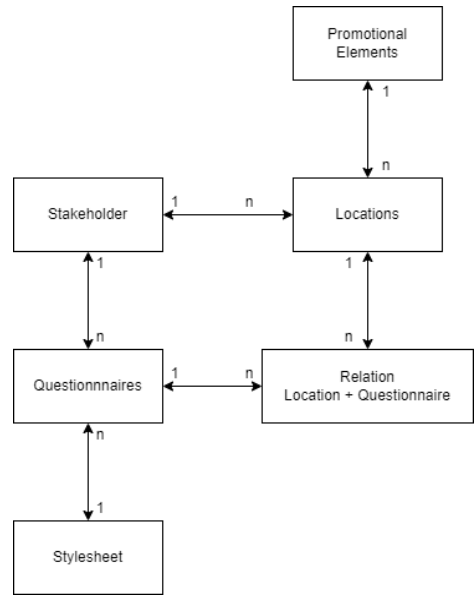


Figure 4: Schematic of the Locations and Questionnaire

To create unique experiences of the various questionnaire/location pairings, each combination is characterized by unique graphic designs with their own distinctive color pallets and images. The result is that unique images are associated with each location, and that each questionnaire has its own characteristic display style.

Pilot Study. The questionnaires referred to above were used during a pilot study. In addition to the Enchantment-Adjective Checklist (Enchantment-ACL), these questionnaires also assess relevant background information concerning the respondents. Tourists could answer this questionnaire via cellphone, on tablet, or on a personal computer. The questionnaire contains a mix of open-ended and closed-format (e.g., click-here) type answers. The results are presented to the various stake-holders by means of an interactive, web-based, dashboard-style interface which supports a variety of graphical

interfaces.

As an illustration, Figure 5 shows a summary of 25 respondents' free-style (typed) answers to the question "*Among the people who are important to you, who would you advise to visit Vouzela in the next year/season*". It can be seen that family forms the most important reference groups, followed by friends and particular individuals. Similarly, the questionnaire addresses the perceived positive and negative features observed by visitors. This information can then be analyzed across subgroups of visitors, i.e., by gender, age, nationality, etc. We are convinced that such analyses will prove to be very useful to Vouzela, its government, and stake-holders to guide future developments.

Respondents. While the pilot study is currently in progress, at this time we do not yet have enough data from which infer patterns and trends. Among the reasons are the following: users not completing the questionnaires, the questionnaire may be too long to be completed, and insufficient collaborations with local businesses so that the encourage users to complete the questionnaire.

CONCLUSIONS

To attract tourists from Portugal and across Europe, Vouzela will need to understand the potential visitor, and the different stakeholders may have to innovate make the local experiences more enchanting according to tourists' tastes and preferences. In particular, given the Enchantment theme, the role of amazing stories and breathtaking experiences takes on a much greater importance.

Our project is based on a solid theoretical background with its questionnaire administration system, and a Dashboard for data analysis. Thus far the system has shown promise even at the completed small scale application. Now we are now learning

how to tackle large-scale, community-wide applications. The main issues we face are how to involve all the stake-holders, how to expand our system so as to include several new sub-categories (i.e. restaurants, lodges, hotels, stores) and how to facilitate data-gathering in larger number.

The lessons learned here pointed to five major areas: (1) The need for support by local governments, tourist boards, and commercial groups to initialize, support, and sustain such research; (2) The necessity to identify and cover many smaller, but highly relevant, local sub-destinations and attractions by means of tailor-made questionnaires; (3) Data gathering is complicated by the fact that tourists may visit that one, two, .. and many more of the main and sub-destinations. Ideally, questionnaires are administered at several locations to identify weak / strong points of all sub-destinations and attractions; (4) the preceding requires the use of advanced online questionnaires to track tourists across different locations and that can integrate the questionnaire answers made by each individual in different locations; (5) The available data need to be reported in a very user-friendly manner for optimal usability by different stake-holders, including individual businesses, tourist boards, city government, as well as local inhabitants and visitors.

Our project contributes to the aims of Vouzela's Plano de Sustentabilidade Turística

(Tourism Sustainability Plan) on aspects of sociocultural, economic and environmental sustainability of the municipality by obtaining the parameters to measure such factors. We

believe that our project will have significant impact on Vouzela as a tourist destination, through greater visibility and positioning of the municipality, promote commerce and the

local economy and the creation and sale of Biosphere experiences

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Appendix A

WE'D LIKE TO KNOW ABOUT YOUR EXPERIENCE

Please answer all questions

Your age: _____ **years old. Gender (m / f):** _____ **Country of origin:** _____
Today's date: _____

How did you decide to participate in this attraction? Check ✓ *only one of the two options*

- It was a planned decision
- It was an “impulsive” decision

What was the main reason for your participation? Check ✓ *only one option or both*

- It was my own idea: I was motivated by my own interest or my own curiosity
- It was someone else's idea: I was here because someone else wanted me to participate

What do you think of this attraction?

Which of the words below best describes your personal experiences and feelings in this attraction?

Please tick all the words that reflect your personal experience. Any number of words can be selected. ✓

Joy (great happiness)	
Excited (enjoyable feeling of eagerness or expectation)	
Delighted (great pleasure)	
Energized (great energy or liveliness)	
Goodness (feeling of ultimate love or grace)	
Beauty (great allure or splendor)	
Dreamy (quiet, restful, in a daydream)	
Stunned (overwhelmed or great shock)	
Lost-in-the-moment (focused attention, frozen in place and time)	
In awe (great respect or admiration)	
Surprised (a jolt, suddenly startled)	
Aware (increased perception or understanding)	
Important (great appreciation of the moment and its significance)	
Amazed (feeling baffled or astonished)	
Educated (enlightened, open-minded, or having new knowledge or wisdom)	
Dazed (mentally perplexed or confused)	
Inspired (filled or stirred with uplifting emotion or passion)	
Fulfilled (feeling deeply satisfied, gratified, or complete)	
Humbled (in the presence of greatness or something incredible)	
Connected (joined or united with something greater than yourself)	
Special (lucky or privileged to be there)	
Other, please describe in your own words:	

How do you rate the likelihood that you would recommend this attraction to a friend or colleague?

0 = not likely

10 = very likely

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10