



MONITORING ONLINE REPUTATION OF TOURIST DESTINATIONS IN FINLAND

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This research is done in the framework of the Project 2020-1-CZ01-KA203-078479 “Online reputation management” co-funded by Erasmus+ Program of the European Union

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General information about research

This research is done in the framework of the Project 2020-1-CZ01-KA203-078479 “Online reputation management” co-funded by Erasmus+ Program of the European Union

This article analyses 3 answers (from 16 sent) from Finnish tourist destination marketing organizations (DMO's), which were chosen randomly

Keywords: Erasmus+ project, online reputation, ORM, eWOM, destination, DMO, Finland



INTRODUCTION

The main objective of this project:

is to create a syllabus and teaching materials for a new course that will enable to teach the topic of online reputation management (ORM) systematically, based on real data and experience

The outcomes will include:

- *syllabus,*
- *presentations,*
- *textual support for teachers,*
- *case studies,*
- *best practices (e-book),*
- *experimental online module*



The purpose of this study

is to analyze answers from Finnish destination and DMO managers, how they monitor and manage online reputation, and to collect a real data for educational purposes to use them in university syllabuses of tourism management and marketing courses and modules for future specialists



Research methodology

- Online semi-structured interview
- The qualitative questionnaire was formed by 8 main questions in important macro-areas
 - external and internal sources of online reviews,
 - company instruments of monitoring online reviews,
 - marketing strategies used by the company,
 - expected outcomes of managing online reviews
- Each macro-area (main question) included 5-8 smaller questions, which helped the interviewee answering the main one
- Mid November – mid December 2021
- Finnish tourist boards and destination bureaus' managers



RESULTS: Sources of online reputation

External sources (charts, blogs, feedback surveys...)

- All respondents said that they are actively using different external sources but prefer to monitor reviews that are not controlled by the company, so called peer reviews
- Channels that are valued most are e.g. Google, Tripadvisor, Booking.com, etc.
- Social networks are also important, like Facebook or Instagram
- Themed communities about domestic travel Matkailu kotimaassa – “Travelling inside the country”
- Influencers are considered a good choice for paid marketing
- One respondent said that they aim to bring themes close to their operations to local, national and international media and follow yearly visibility afterwards



RESULTS: Sources of online reputation (cont.)

Internal sources (service, structure, amenities...)

- Different earned media is important in destination marketing strategy
- DMO's and tourist information centers are trying to give an image of the destination as a friendly one with fine local experiences
- Competence is also communicated on the destination website with
 - the highest quality images or photos
 - good
 - the information is kept up-to-date



RESULTS: Monitoring online reputation

Methods of monitoring

- Yearly media coverage reports include positive/negative implications within the visibility
- DMO's ask for feedback on the website and social media where they are presented
- All respondents state that they have communicating mission and vision of their company
- All DMO's have deadlines for reporting to their stakeholders - they have defined and structured procedures, when reports are done regularly
- DMO's monitor external sources like chat and emails on a daily basis and respond to them immediately

- Two DMO's do not follow social media conversations about the destination's main town
- All DMO's do not have a full-time online reputation manager



RESULTS: Monitoring online reputation (cont.)

Instruments of monitoring

Destination companies adopt a qualitative and quantitative approach to monitor corporate online reputation media and social media regularly.

- Destination companies use both paid and free instruments of monitoring
- DMO's monitor online mentions, including sentiment scores and resource authority
- Net promoter score (NPS) is widely used as an indicator of customer loyalty
- Coverage analyses include
 - mentioning resource authority
 - positive exposure vs negative exposure
 - tracking referral traffic from mentions
 - spotting tourism industry influencers
 - identifying mention sentiment



RESULTS: Managing negative feedbacks

- Negative reviews are not only indicating a bad customer experience, but they also show a lack of a brand's willingness to resolve the issue
- If it is something negative about destination activities, DMO replies positively, if the feedback is about some company in their region, they forward this feedback to the company
- Destination companies answer or react in a positive way, and they provide an employee contact information
- Answers to negative feedbacks are provided by the person, responsible for a particular channel



RESULTS:

Online reputation management strategies

- All respondents said that they do NOT have any online management training nor strategy
 - Interns or other staff that work directly with B2C customers are taught how to answer and forward feedback
 - If a reputational problem occurs (e.g. with an influencer or on social media), they are organizing an internal meeting to discuss how to proceed
 - Main problem for all destination managers is getting companies to be active in digital channels. Even though DMO's cannot control regional company's service quality, their main goal is to increase the income of the tourist companies in the region



CONCLUSION

- This research gives educational institutions an affordable and reliable real data information for creating a studying module of ORM for students as it evaluates answers of the Finnish destination managers about ORM and their digital strategies
- Online reputation is an invaluable intangible asset that should be monitored by organizations of all sizes, types, and popularities
- Electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM) is managed well in Finland, and Finnish destination managers understand well the importance of the destination online reputation
- Social media networks and destination websites are mostly appreciated by the Finnish DMO's
- Paid and earned media, influencers are playing an important role in the digital strategy of the destination
- It is important to target all existing digital channels and not just one more reviewed
- It would be wise to include into the course a topic about consumer online behavior to understand psychological basis for answering positive and negative reviews

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[Online reputation management in Tourism - Xamk](#)

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