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BUILDING REPUTATION AND SOCIAL MEDIA – HOW EFFECTIVELY DO ATTRACTIVE EUROPEAN TOURIST DESTINATIONS COMMUNICATE ON THEM?*

Petra Pártlová¹, Radim Dušek², Nikola Sagapova³

^{1,2,3} *Institute of Technology and Business in České Budějovice (VŠTE), Okružní 517, 370 01 České Budějovice, Czech Republic*

E-mails: ¹ partlova@mail.vstecb.cz; ² dusek@mail.vstecb.cz; ³ sagapova@mail.vstecb.cz

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Abstract. The paper focuses on evaluation the use of social media Instagram, YouTube and Twitter by 13 attractive European tourist city destinations for online marketing communication concerning building their reputation in the tourism sector. The following data were collected for all individual social media accounts using the online tool Social Blade: number of uploaded posts/media; number of comments, number of likes/views; number of follower/subscribers. According to the results of the analysis of available data, the quantity of the published content does not automatically mean the high degree of interactions of specific social media users. To determine the effectiveness of published posts (images, videos, textual posts) for individual analysed destinations, the index of Social Media Effectiveness (SME) was created and applied.

Keywords: social media; reputation; tourism; destination; marketing communication; index of Social Media Effectiveness

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1. Introduction

The widespread use of social media enables easy access to user-generated information and can shape travel intentions. Their influential role in tourism and recreation marketing is thus widely recognized (Lim et al., 2020). Social media help build, produce or even shift the narratives of historic places and tourist destinations through visual and textual information as contextualized content promoted there (Pietrobruno, 2021). Social media and storytelling also contribute to the conservation of historic urban landscapes and attributed heritage values through the narratives shared (van der Hoeven, 2019). Their users, who are perceived as storytellers, may influence perception and buying behaviour of other people, and can co-create brands, including tourism destination brands (Lund, Cohen and Scarles, 2018). These storytellers significantly increase engagement of other social media users, destination brand image and visits intentions (Pachucki, Grohs and Scholl-Grissmann, 2021). On the other hand, social media users and their posts can as well harm and co-destruct destinations' reputation (Lund, Scarles and Cohen, 2019). Good destination reputation affects visit intention (Su, Lian and Huang, 2020), and as there is a significant relationship between tourists' prior knowledge and the reputation of the destination, effective marketing strategies focused on providing relevant information about the destination play a crucial role (Yamashita and Takata, 2020). Marketing strategies, especially in the current highly dynamic and competitive corporate environment, are an important part of corporate strategies (Straková et al. 2018, 2021b; Shevyakova, Munsh and Arystan, 2019; Onete, Vargas and Chita, 2020; Gavurova et al. 2022). A trustworthy destination brand is built on the basis of culture involvement, destination brand identification, and good reputation (Molinillo, Japutra and Ekinici, 2022). Given that in the world of social media, online posts of both the destination management organisations and visitors can alter travel and visit intentions, social media can be considered a challenge, as well as a strategic tool for a destination brand building (Iglesias-Sánchez, Correia and Jambrino-Maldonado, 2019).

The goal of the paper is to evaluate the use of social networking sites Instagram, YouTube and Twitter by attractive European urban tourist destinations for marketing communication related to building reputation in tourism by means of their official profiles. Subsequently, such destinations will be identified whose profiles can be evaluated as best managed and administrated on the basis of their activity and user interaction on the above social networking sites.

To achieve the goal set, the following research questions are formulated:

RQ1: What is the activity of individual examined destinations on their official social media profiles (Instagram, YouTube, Twitter) focused on building a given city's reputation as an interesting European tourist destination?

RQ2: Which of the European destinations examined report the highest annual average number of interactions of social network users per one post published on the official profile on Instagram, YouTube and Twitter?

2. Theoretical background

2.1 The use of social media for communication

The dynamic development of the Internet at the end of the 20th century and its gradual transformation into mass media brought modern, previously unknown forms of the communication to mankind. Many early social portals focused on connecting people with each other through virtual chat rooms. User profiles became a major feature of social networking in the late 1990s, allowing users to compile their own list of 'friends' and to search for other socially connected Internet users with the same or similar interests. However, the intention of today's users is no longer just to connect with each other and share personal information and opinions, as it was in the mid-1990s. Today, social networks are an effective tool for sharing media content - both news and journalistic (Rogers, 1986; Buhalis and O'Connor, 2015; Lindgren, 2017; Knoke and Yang, 2007; Aichner et al., 2021; Fakunle and Ajani, 2021).

As stated by Kemp (2022), in January 2022, the world population reached 7.91 billion, of which 4.95 billion (62.5%) are Internet users. The latest data from 2022 shows that there are more than 4.62 billion social media users. The three most popular social media platforms in the global ranking are WhatsApp, Instagram and Facebook. TikTok app saw the most dynamic increase, which made it the most downloaded mobile application in the world. Facebook is still one of the most widely used social media platforms in the world, with 2.91 billion users as of October 2021. Over the past year, Facebook's user base has grown by 6.2 percent (+170 million users) despite still being blocked in China. The fourth place at the global level is occupied by Instagram, which has seen one of the fastest growths of all platforms over the past year. The number of Instagram's users has grown by more than 6 % (+85 million users) in the last 90 days alone, and the rate of growth continues to accelerate. Over the last year, YouTube has narrowed Facebook's lead. The number of this platform's users is growing almost twice as fast as Facebook. The total number of active users of YouTube is 2.56 billion people. YouTube's ads reach over 2.5 billion users. However, it is definitely worth mentioning that in the last 12 months, this number increased by 11.9 percent (+ 271 million users). Social media have contributed greatly to tourism awareness by providing easy access to information and recommendations from experienced travellers and the locals (Buckley et al., 2015). Each platform is slightly different, allowing for various features a user can enjoy and a company can use for its marketing communication. Facebook enables communication in several ways, including private and public messages, using walls, groups, events, posting photos, stories, videos (Pempek, Yemolayeva and Calvert, 2009; Menon, 2022). Similarly, WhatsApp provides a platform for communication, chatting, sharing ideas, and audio-visual content, only a telephone number is required (Jabbar et al., 2020; Kurniawan et al., 2019). Instagram allows for sharing audio-visual content, communication, with the focus on visuals (Guizzo, Canale and Fasoli, 2021). TikTok enables viewing, creating, and commenting on videos (Montag, Yang and Elhai, 2021), while YouTube is a platform focused on videos, providing also incidental learning and commenting (Lange, 2018), while Twitter is a platform enabling sharing short messages, so-called tweets, detects the trending topics globally or in a specific corner of the world (Umakanth and Santhi, 2020; Asgari-Chananghlu, Nikzad-Khasmakhu and Minaee, 2020).

Among other things, social media has become a tool for selling and buying tourism services (Horvath et al. 2021). The growing need for people to socialize, interact and make new contacts has shifted to social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, and there are other online platforms that have influenced decisions on tourism activities. Today, many consumers appreciate social media for the richness and diversity of the experience. Therefore, potential customers make a purchase decision just after interacting on social media and exchanging different opinions on blogs, forums and recommendation platforms such as TripAdvisor (Manoliu, 2014).

2.2 Social media in context of destinations and their management

In a sequential choice experiment, respondents were asked to choose a preferred European city destination for their next vacation from a given set before and after they were provided some information about the destination image by a social network member. It was found that destination image based on social media extends knowledge and influences the choice behaviour. When tourists do not have a prior destination image, the effect is even stronger (Pan, Rasouli and Timmermans, 2021; Gavurova et al. 2020; Gavurova et al. 2021a,b). Using methods triangulation including a qualitative content analysis of social media posts, it was found that social media can help sharing the narratives and values of a given city, thus changing the common perception of it (van der Hoeven, 2019). Another qualitative content analysis of tweets on Twitter revealed that the destination management organizations (DMOs) and influencers play an important role in the identity formation process. As there is a relationship between tourism products associated with the nature, culture, weather etc. and the destination image, DMOs can project the destination image with fewer resources used for the communication of popular products while managing the potential of specific local aspects and brands (Garay, 2019; Vasanicova et al. 2021a,b).

Based on the sociological concepts of storytelling, performance, performativity as well as mobility, destination brand stories can circulate among users of social media and increase their engagement. DMOs need to be active in both the online and offline world, maintain interaction, cooperate with users, and co-create the stories with them (Lund, Cohen and Scarles, 2018). As stated by Diniati et al. (2022), some destinations cooperate with influencers who emphasise the digital content to attract the attention, build brand awareness and attract interest of potential tourists, as well as to modify their behaviour by providing information as found through the method triangulation, such as in-depth interviews, non-participant observation and reviewing documents including Social Blade statistics and Instagram content of a glamping site in Indonesia during the Covid-19 pandemic. The content themes highlighted mainly activities and views, health, infographics, giveaways, or product-related content Peralta (2019) used a narrative analysis to evaluate the potential and effectiveness of travel blogs and vlogs shared on Facebook for promoting destinations and their image. The results of this analysis applied in the Philippines show that the perception of destination can be changed by a projected destination image (Peralta, 2019).

A link between online reputation of the top 5 tourism destinations, namely Spain, France, Germany, United Kingdom and USA and their competitiveness was studied by Iglesias-Sánchez, Correira and Jambrino-Maldonado (2019) through the implementation of two social media analytic tools – Social Mention and Mention. The analysis included sources, online presence, sentiment, engagement, topics and influence of the destinations based on their Facebook and Twitter profiles. Finally, a combination of quantitative methods was proposed (Iglesias-Sánchez, Correira and Jambrino-Maldonado, 2019). Another analytical tool, Netvizz, was used to collect data on the content published on Facebook to examine three destinations: Hong Kong, Japan and South Korea. Text mining and thematic coding analysis for the content analysis and also statistical methods were used to examine the effects of photo posts. Notably, each destination has its own marketing strategy with different image content, where the interactions between destination and image themes were found statistically significant. The themes were divided into 11 categories including e.g., modern architecture/object, historical architecture/object, town/landscape, nature/landscape, festival/habits/entertainment, food/restaurant (Song, Park and Park, 2021). A sentiment analysis based on reviews on TripAdvisor for the city of Marrakech was conducted to explore the fundamental topics and sentimental polarity of the destination regarding its negative online reputation. The most negative aspect identified was the citizen's behaviour followed by shopping experience. The knowledge of the main reasons for a bad reputation is necessary in order to remedy it and reduce tourists' dissatisfaction (Ali et al., 2021).

3. Data and methods

For the purpose of selecting popular tourist urban destinations in Europe the paper is focused on, we used the methodology of determining the most attractive European destination for the year 2020 according to the number of bed nights. The results released on the portal Statista (2022) include a total of 13 European tourist destinations with the highest number of bed nights for the year 2020 (foreign and domestic tourists). The results for individual destinations, which are further processed within this research, are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Leading European urban tourist destinations in 2020 according to the number of bed nights

Name of tourist destination	Number of bed nights (in millions)	Percentage share
London	20.77	18.56
Paris	14.13	12.63
Berlin	12.28	10.97
Istanbul	9.89	8.84
Munich	7.03	6.28
Stockholm	6.9	6.17
Hamburg	6.88	6.15
Amsterdam	5.8	5.18
Rome	5.35	4.78
Madrid	5.05	4.51
Vienna	4.93	4.40
Prague	4.9	4.38
Frankfurt	4.09	3.65
Barcelona	3.92	3.50
Total nights	111.92	100.00

Source: Statista (2022)

In the next step, official and active accounts on social media were carefully searched for all 13 European destinations analysed. Social media selected for the analysis include Instagram, YouTube and Twitter. This set of social media combines graphical content, video and textual content, a large number of active users, and are also among the currently popular online marketing communication tools in the tourism sector, which is the reason why they were chosen for the analysis. The names of individual analysed destinations' official profiles on social media are presented in the Results chapter. For all accounts on individual social media, the year when the first post was published was sought.

Next, the following data were collected for individual accounts using the online tool Social Blade (2022):

1. Instagram: *Number of uploaded media/Number of Likes/Number of Comments/Number of Followers*
2. YouTube: *Number of uploaded videos/Total views of uploaded videos/Number of Subscribers*
3. Twitter: *Number of tweets/Number of Followers*

The date to which the above data were collected was 7 April 2022. The data obtained were then tabulated. The initial order of destinations in individual tables is based on Table 1, i.e. the ranking of destinations according to the number of bed nights. The presented values concerning the activity on social media (see Table 2-4) are as of the aforementioned date (7 April).

To determine the effectiveness of published posts (images, videos, textual posts) for individual examined destinations, the index of Social Media Effectiveness (SME) was created. In addition to the number of published posts, the index also considers the period for which the individual destination profiles active on the examined social media (i.e. from their creation to 2022). The results of the index thus indicate the average level of effectiveness of individual profiles of analysed destinations for one year according to the substituted variable. After substituting relevant values (number of likes, views, followers, or subscribers), the result of the index shows the average annual increase in a given variable per 1 published post, e.g. the number of new subscribers, likes, or views (see Table 5).

$$\text{Social Media Effectiveness}_{\text{variable}_{\text{destination}}} = \frac{\text{variable}}{\text{total posts (current year - year of account creation)}} \quad (1)$$

Legend:

Social media: Instagram, YouTube, Twitter

Variable: sum of likes, sum of views, sum of followers

The above process is shown in the example of London and its Instagram profile:

$$\text{Instagram Effectiveness}_{\text{likes}_{\text{London}}} = \frac{\text{sum of likes}}{\text{total Instagram posts (2022 - year of account creation)}} \quad (2)$$

Aggregate online activities of individual destinations on analysed social networks were evaluated using the ranking method, specifically the multicriteria ranking method. For each social media, the ranking of destinations was determined according to several variables on the basis of calculated SME values (Table 5). For Instagram, it is an average annual number of likes and new followers per 1 post, for YouTube, an average annual number of views and new subscribers per 1 post, and for Twitter, an average annual number of new followers per 1 post. The order of the 13 destinations was then determined for all 5 variables. The final ranking of the analysed destinations within their aggregate activities on all monitored social networks was determined on the basis of the average value of all rankings of each destination (see Table 6).

4. Results

4.1 Instagram

The growing popularity of graphic and video content on Instagram (launched in 2010) was an incentive for some of the analysed European destinations to create official profiles in 2012. The first posts to entice potential visitors by means of their official Instagram profiles were published by Paris, Vienna and Stockholm, followed e.g. by London and Berlin in the next year. However, there are also destinations that started to use this social network relatively late compared to other destinations, e.g. Prague, Amsterdam, Istanbul, or Munich (see Table 2).

About half of the official profiles use also the word “visit” together with the name of the given destination. This is supposed to clearly indicate what kind of content Instagram users will find there. From its launching until April 2022, most posts were published on the profiles “Visit Stockholm” and “I amsterdam” (Amsterdam). These profiles thus show some of the most aggregate values of “likes”, which exceeds 21 million in the case of Stockholm. However, the first position in terms of the highest number of “likes” and “followers” is occupied by the profile “Visit London”. Although this profile was the one with the highest number of posts, nearly 3,5 k photos or videos have got more than 31 million likes since 2013. This profile, as the only one of the analysed accounts, has more than 1 million followers. For the Instagram account of Istanbul, the data are available until the end of February 2022, after that, the account was removed for unknown reasons, although on the official tourist website of Istanbul, there is a link to this already not existing profile. Istanbul further communicates its graphic content primarily through Twitter.

Table 2. Official Instagram profiles of destinations and their activity

Destination	Account created	Media uploads	Likes	Comments	Followers	IG account name
London	2013	3 325	31 504 375	206 150	1 092 974	<i>Visit London</i>
Paris	2012	3 315	19 243 575	116 025	662 485	<i>Paris Je t'aime</i>
Berlin	2013	2 103	7 966 164	77 811	302 592	<i>Visit Berlin</i>
Istanbul*	2018	1189	621 847	7 134	7 374	<i>Visit Istanbul*</i>
Munich	2018	1079	665 293	8427	36 783	<i>Simply Munich</i>
Stockholm	2012	4 457	21 010 298	218 393	292 475	<i>Visit Stockholm</i>
Hamburg	2013	1 954	1 905 150	15 632	59 467	<i>Hamburg ahoi</i>
Amsterdam	2016	4 120	15 392 320	144 200	278 665	<i>I amsterdam</i>
Rome	2014	3 782	2 344 840	18 910	70 388	<i>Turismo Roma</i>
Madrid	2012	1 603	4 570 153	33 663	143 044	<i>Visita Madrid</i>
Wien	2012	3 252	16 230 732	334 956	310 767	<i>Vienna Tourist Board</i>
Prague	2016	422	734 280	5 486	64 212	<i>City of Prague</i>
Frankfurt	2015	1 304	1 942 960	15 648	45 336	<i>Visit Frankfurt</i>
Barcelona	2014	2 272	12 461 920	131 776	407 283	<i>Visit Barcelona</i>

* the official profile Visit Istanbul was removed from Instagram at the turn of February - March 2022

Source: Social Blade (2022)

4.2 YouTube

The general increase in the video content published on YouTube was closely related mainly to its takeover by Google at the end of 2006. In the first period, YouTube accounts of Berlin and Stockholm were created (2005, or 2006). Other popular European destinations started to create their profiles mainly in the years 2007 – 2010. The highest number of videos published on YouTube was recorded in the case of Madrid, which has shared more than 750 videos with the users of this platform since 2008. However, the highest effectiveness to the overall number of views was recorded in the case of Vienna’s account. Almost three hundred videos have had nearly 48 million views and more than 35 k subscribers since 2007 (see Table 3).

Rather little attention is paid to YouTube as a communication channel for building a reputation of an attractive tourist destination by the destination management of Istanbul, Prague and Frankfurt. The profile of Istanbul was created in 2018; and there is not much content and both the number of views and subscribers is very low. In the case of Prague, almost 160 published videos have only 459 k views, which is highly below-average value compared to the accounts of other destinations. Frankfurt, along with Istanbul, has the lowest number of subscribers to the published videos.

Table 3. Official YouTube profiles of destinations and their activity

Destination	Account created	Total uploads	Total views	Subscribers	YouTube account name
London	2010	186	14 792 643	31 100	<i>Visit London Official</i>
Paris	2011	156	2 343 619	5 950	<i>Paris je t'aime</i>
Berlin	2005	68	1 535 183	4 640	<i>Berlin</i>
Istanbul	2018	14	220 610	116	<i>Visit Istanbul</i>
Munich	2018	130	1 619 290	N/A	<i>Simply Munich</i>
Stockholm	2006	118	7 069 585	2 870	<i>Stockholm</i>
Hamburg	2010	175	2 312 176	1 230	<i>Hamburg ahoi - travel</i>
Amsterdam	2010	435	3 654 837	5 290	<i>I amsterdam</i>
Rome	2008	156	459 003	1 420	<i>Turismo Roma</i>
Madrid	2008	754	8 182 039	12 500	<i>Visit Madrid</i>
Wien	2007	269	47 539 326	35 300	<i>Vienna</i>
Prague	2014	78	16 090 690	6 880	<i>Prague City Tourism</i>
Frankfurt	2009	82	638 892	877	<i>Visit Frankfurt</i>
Barcelona	2013	285	6 356 477	2 030	<i>Visit Barcelona Official</i>

Source: Social Blade (2022)

4.3 Twitter

Twitter was launched in 2006 primarily as a platform for sending short text messages. With its growing popularity mainly in the USA, this communication platform further developed and other features started to be added, including the possibility to use more characters in the published posts and easier sharing of links and multimedia content. These changes increase the use of Twitter in marketing communication of important European tourist destinations. From the analysed destinations, the first official tourist profiles were created for London, Amsterdam and Berlin. Other destinations appeared on Twitter mainly in the years 2010-2011.

The highest activity is recorded on the profiles of London and Paris. Both profiles also have a high number of followers, which is almost 700 k Twitter users in the case of London. In contrast, the profiles of Frankfurt or Hamburg show below-average activity in terms of the posts published and the related number of followers. The official profile of Munich, “Simply Munich”, was created in 2016; however, not a single post has been published there since then (see Table 4).

When comparing the content published by the destinations on Instagram and Twitter, it can be stated that in most cases, the same multimedia content appears on both social networks. However, Twitter posts put more emphasis on the textual part of the post, including the possibility to insert various hypertexts thematically related to a given post.

Table 4. Official Twitter profiles of destinations and their activity

Destination	Account created	Total tweets	Followers	Twitter account name
London	2009	54 306	686 560	Visit London
Paris	2011	27 262	358 252	Paris je t'aime
Berlin	2009	21 307	91 020	Visit Berlin
Istanbul	2013	2 553	7 637	Visit Istanbul
Munich	2016	0	18	Simply Munich
Stockholm	2011	7 479	36 880	Visit Stockholm
Hamburg	2013	2 120	4 459	Hamburg ahoi
Amsterdam	2009	13 994	391 153	I amsterdam
Rome	2012	15 796	109 711	Turismo Roma
Madrid	2011	18 638	80 109	Visita Madrid
Vienna	2010	8 828	10 135	WienTourismus #CelebrateVienna
Prague	2010	4 118	18 542	City of Prague
Frankfurt	2010	441	2 577	Visit Frankfurt
Barcelona	2010	13 717	21 653	Visit Barcelona

Source: Social Blade (2022)

4.4 Effectiveness of marketing communication of destinations on social networks

Table 5 shows the evaluation of effectiveness of individual analyzed destinations' profiles in the form of average values for a specific selected variable for one year on the basis of the calculated SME index. In addition to the number of published posts, likes, views of video content, and followers, also the period was considered for which the individual destination profiles are active (i.e. from their creation until the year 2022, when their profile was analyzed).

Table 5. Effectiveness of content published by destinations in terms of user interaction

Destination	Instagram		YouTube		Twitter
	avg. likes/ 1 post	avg. new followers/ 1 post	avg. new views/ 1 video	avg. new subscribers/ 1 video	avg. new followers/ 1 post
	SME - PER 1 YEAR		SME - PER 1 YEAR		SME - PER 1 YEAR
London	1053	37	6628	13.93	0.97
Paris	581	20	1366	3.47	1.19
Berlin	421	16	1328	4.01	0.33
Istanbul	131	2	3939	2.07	0.33
Munich	159	9	3114	-	1.31
Stockholm	471	7	3744	1.52	0.45
Hamburg	108	3	1101	0.59	0.23
Amsterdam	623	11	700	1.01	2.15
Rome	78	2	210	0.65	0.69
Madrid	285	9	775	1.18	0.39
Vienna	499	10	11782	8.75	0.10
Prague	290	25	25786	11.03	0.38
Frankfurt	213	5	599	0.82	0.49
Barcelona	686	22	2478	0.79	0.13

Source: Own processing

As for Instagram, the highest level of effectiveness was detected for the “Visit London” profile. The annual average numbers per one published post are 1,053 likes and 37 new followers. High values in terms of the annual average number of likes were recorded for the profiles of Barcelona, Amsterdam and Paris; the lowest recorded values were in the case of Rome and Hamburg. Although even on YouTube, London as the most visited destination in 2020, shows above-average values for the published videos in terms of the number of views and new followers, the highest values were recorded in the case of Prague and Vienna. On an annual average, each video published on the profile “City of Prague” gets about 26 k views and 11 new subscribers. Although compared to the currently most popular videos and their millions of views, this is rather a negligible number, in the comparison with the values of other analysed destinations, these are very below-average values. For example, the average values of destinations such as Rome, Madrid, or Paris do not exceed 1,400 views per one video post published on the given profiles. The graphical comparison of values concerning the average values of likes per Instagram post and views of a video on YouTube for all destinations is presented in Figure 1 below.

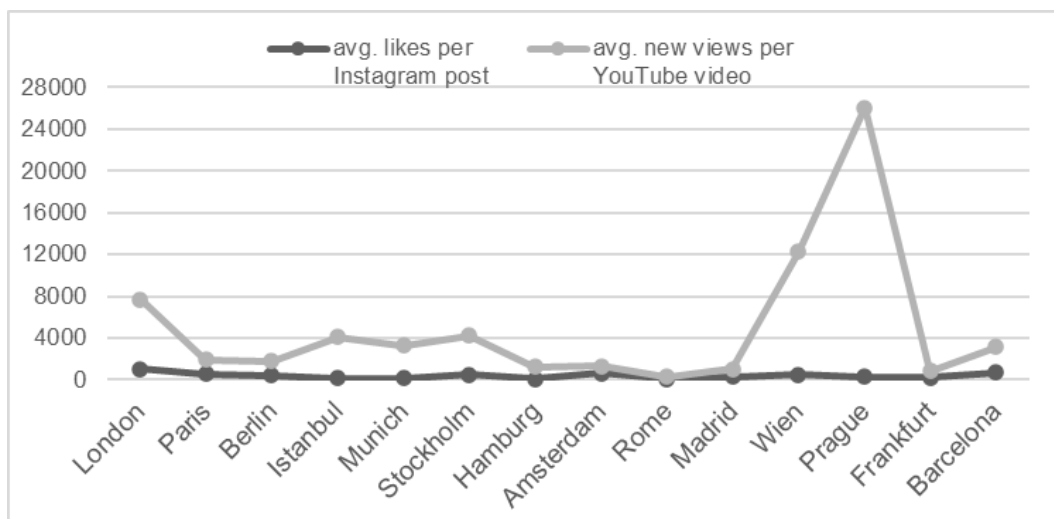


Figure 1. Graphical comparison of interaction on content published by official destination profiles

Source: Own processing

Given that for posts published on Twitter, it was not possible to obtain relevant data on the number of likes, only one indicator was calculated, namely the average annual number of new followers per one published post. Compared to Instagram, the values are significantly lower. Amsterdam, Munich, and Paris manage to gain 1 – 2 new followers per post. The values for other destinations are negligible.

4.5 Destinations ranking in terms of effectiveness when building reputation on social networks

The ranking of all analysed destinations in terms of all examined factors related to building their reputation in the online environment of Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter is clearly specified in Table 6 on the basis of values presented in Table 5. In Table 6, the individual destinations are also primarily ordered by their ranking of leading destinations for the year 2020 according to the number of bed nights.

Table 6. Comparison of individual official profiles of destinations according to the interactions of social network users

Destination	Leading destinations position (<i>bed nights, 2020</i>)	Instagram		YouTube		Twitter	SME: order based method results	
		avg. likes position	avg. new followers position	avg. new views position	avg. new subscribers position	avg. new followers position	avg. of positions	pos.
London	1.	1.	1.	3.	1.	4.	2.0	1.
Paris	2.	4.	4.	8.	5.	3.	4.8	3.
Berlin	3.	7.	5.	9.	4.	11.	7.2	8. – 9.
Istanbul	4.	12.	14.	4.	6.	10.	9.2	11.
Munich	5.	11.	9.	6.	-	2.	7.0	6. – 7.
Stockholm	6.	6.	10.	5.	7.	7.	7.0	6. – 7.
Hamburg	7.	13.	12.	10.	13.	12.	12.0	14.
Amsterdam	8.	3.	6.	12.	9.	1.	6.2	4. – 5.
Rome	9.	14.	13.	14.	12.	5.	11.6	13.
Madrid	10.	9.	8.	11.	8.	8.	8.8	10.
Wien	11.	5.	7.	2.	3.	14.	6.2	4. – 5.
Prague	12.	8.	2.	1.	2.	9.	4.4	2.
Frankfurt	13.	10.	11.	13.	10.	6.	10.0	12.
Barcelona	14.	2.	3.	7.	11.	13.	7.2	8. – 9.

Source: Own processing

In most cases, the order of individual destinations is very different by specific online platforms. One of the few exceptions is represented by official London profiles, where the measured values mean twice the first position on Instagram, the first position on YouTube in terms of the average annual number of new subscribers per one published video and the third position in terms of the average number of views per one video. The high-quality administration of profiles on social media is confirmed by the ranking for individual factors of the popular European destination, Paris. Prague, which occupies the 12th position on Instagram and especially YouTube in terms of the number of bed nights within the analysed destinations, occupies leading positions in the ranking of effective communication for building a reputation as an attractive destination.

Based on the calculated average values for all three social media and subsequent ranking for individual monitored factors (see Table 6), an average value was calculated for all positions of individual destinations. The calculated values enabled the final ranking in terms of using official profiles of tourist destinations on social media to attract their users. The factors considered were thus the number of years of active use of the profile and the ability to get likes for individual posts, views of published videos, and attract new followers. From this perspective, the most successful profiles on Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube were London, Prague, Paris, Vienna, and Amsterdam. The last positions of the ranking were occupied by the official tourist profiles of Hamburg, Rome, Frankfurt, or Istanbul.

5. Discussion

In general, according to the findings presented in this research, the analysed destinations are most active on Twitter in terms of the total number of posts. The total number of tweets published on their profiles is 190,559. The most active destination on this media is London, followed by Paris and Berlin. In contrast, there are destinations that do not use this media at all, such as Munich, which has not published a single post, or use it to a lesser extent, such as Frankfurt. Another analysed social media is Instagram, where the destinations published a total of 34,177 posts. The most active destinations on Instagram include Stockholm, Amsterdam and Rome, the least active one is Prague. An interesting case worth mentioning is Istanbul, which removed its Instagram profile at the beginning of 2022. The least used social media is YouTube, where the analysed destinations uploaded a

total of 2,906 videos. The most active destinations on YouTube are Madrid, Paris and Barcelona; the least active ones include Istanbul, Prague and Frankfurt. Of all the social media analysed, Twitter appears to be the most popular microblog platform very valuable for tourism. In the last decade, its use in this sector has become more popular, with regard to the possibility of using this media in crisis communication and terrorist attacks the destinations might face (Ćurlin, Jaković and Miloloža, 2019). Social media also play an important role in evaluating the attractiveness of tourism destinations in terms of health safety and trust they build by providing information about a given destination (Țuclea, Vrânceanu and Năstase, 2020). On the other hand, social media are also an important tool for promoting destinations and events that take place there (Pino et al, 2018).

However, there shall be mentioned the importance not only of the intensity of using social media by destination management companies but also how they manage to attract and engage followers, subscribers or other users of these platforms. The intensity of using social media has a positive effect on brand awareness, which affects also brand equity and destination image (Stojanovic, Andreu and Curras-Perez, 2018). However, the engagement of social media users, e.g. the number of likes and comments, is also determined by the visual content, which can be subsequently reflected in the effectiveness of marketing in this environment (Song, Park and Park, 2021). Social media are important in enhancing brand image, but they are also a strategic platform for achieving tourist engagement (de las Heras-Pedrosa et al., 2020). For example, the highest average annual number of interactions with Instagram users in terms of the average number of likes per one post is shown by London, Barcelona and Amsterdam, while Rome shows the lowest numbers. The highest average number of new followers per one Instagram post was also recorded in the case of London, while the worst results in this metric are achieved by Rome, Istanbul and Hamburg. Destination management organizations can facilitate the interaction between the destination management, stakeholders and tourists, which may lead to destination value co-creation as well as marketing innovations (Straková et al. 2020, 2021a, 2021c). Social media can be used to evaluate the performance of destination management and the effects of the used destination strategy through audience size, user-generated content, as well as interaction (Trunfio and Della Lucia, 2018). Tourists can consider all content shared on a social media, although some of them might prefer the content created by other tourists. This may even strengthen the effect of using these tools for destination marketing and encourage potential tourists to experience something similar to what other individuals that have shared some posts from given destinations already experienced (Dedeoğlu et al., 2019).

6. Conclusions

The goal of the paper was to evaluate the use of social media Instagram, YouTube and Twitter by attractive European tourist destinations for marketing communication concerning building their reputation in the tourism sector. The research focused on 13 popular European urban destinations with the highest number of bed nights in 2020 and data from official profiles of these destinations on the above social media. In terms of the published content, the results show that while the most active profiles on Instagram are Stockholm and Amsterdam, the highest number of videos on YouTube is posted by Madrid. Twitter is most commonly used for communication by the official profiles of London and Paris.

However, according to the results of the analysis of available data, the quantity of the published content does not automatically mean the high degree of interactions of specific social media users. For example, on the Instagram social media, the highest degree of effectiveness is shown by the Visit London profile, with the annual average number of likes and new followers per post being more than 1,000 likes and almost 40 new followers. On YouTube, the highest average annual number of views was achieved in the case of videos published by Vienna and Prague, although these destinations published a lower total number of videos than other important destinations. In terms of the overall evaluation of building reputation using social media, it can be stated that the official profiles of London, Prague, Paris, Vienna and Amsterdam show the most effective communication. Official tourist profiles of Hamburg, Rome, Frankfurt and Istanbul occupy the last positions of the ranking.

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Petra PÁRTLOVÁ is the Associate professor at the Department of Tourism and Marketing of the Institute of Technology and Business in České Budějovice. Her research deals with the issues of corporate management, focusing on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and regional policy. She deals with the issues of external environment and sustainability and profit of small and medium sized businesses in the Czech Republic. Within the major changes, modifications of the corporate architecture are proposed. It is a fact that the production and economic and social base for SMEs is a rural area that is the subject of research within the territorial regionalism.

ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2404-6073>

Radim DUŠEK is an Assistant Professor at the Institute of Technology and Business, Faculty of Corporate Strategy. As a member of the Department of Tourism and Marketing, he focuses on teaching subjects related to marketing, marketing communication, and retailing. His current main research interests are the latest global trends in digital marketing communication.

ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1381-0064>

Nikola SAGAPOVA is the Research Assistant at the Department of Tourism and Marketing of the the Institute of Technology and Business in České Budějovice (VŠTE). Her research interests include tourism, marketing, trade, bioeconomy, regional management and sustainable development. She is a member of World Wildlife Fund, International Association for Landscape Ecology, and International Society for Ecological Economics.

ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1628-7758>

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