

# Chapter 16

## Online Tourism Destination Image by User– Generated Content: A Systematic Literature Approach

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### ABSTRACT

*Destination Image is a concept studied for a long time in tourism. Over the past two decades, due to digitalisation changes, tourism research increasingly examines the online Destination Image, which represents a challenge in selecting sources, defining methods, and drawing conclusions and implications. The present study aimed to systematically capture the approach to analyse the online Destination Image through User Generated Content using studies from the last ten years. Therefore, the Systematic Literature findings showed that TripAdvisor.com is the primary online Destination Image analysis source. Results showed that previous studies mainly used cognitive and affective approaches to studying destination images.*

### INTRODUCTION

Destination Image is “the sum of beliefs, ideas, and impressions a person has of a destination” (Crompton, 1979, p. 18). Over the past 30 years, it has been an essential concept within tourism, leisure, and destination management (Baloglu, & McCleary, 1999; Crompton, 1979; Gartner, 1986; Tasci et al., 2007). The reason for such importance lies in the claim that people are likelier to choose the destination

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they have positive thoughts (i.e., image) and feelings about. Thus, destination managers and tourist marketers must identify their destination's predominant image and shape it in the desired way.

Thus, with the growth of the travel market over the past years, researchers continue to try to understand how destination image influences the decision-making process and destination choice (Pan et al., 2021), customers' experience, loyalty, place attachment (Zhou et al., 2023), satisfaction (Lam et al., 2020), revisit intention (Adam et al., 2023). In addition, it has been argued that new analysis methods are needed to extend the DI (Destination Image) research (Wang et al., 2020). Finding trends and cohesion among the existing framework and, at the same time, identifying research gaps remains a challenging task (Li et al., 2022).

Since the research field of online DI, with an online dataset collection, is still relatively new (Marine-Roig & Clavé, 2016), it can be helpful to have an unbiased systematic overview of the methods used in the past to analyse DI online through UGC. Tourism marketing researchers encourage further investigation of online DI analysis (Mak, 2017). Therefore, the present study aims to close this research gap and provide a systematic overview of the current situation in online DI analysis through UGC (User Generated Content). The specific goals are: (i) To identify and explore the actual state of the art of online DI analysis through UGC; (ii) To examine and provide future research avenues addressing the DI online. Following the proverb "learn from the past to prepare for the future" the relevance of the present research lies within the classification of gained knowledge into a larger context, thus facilitating orientation for future online DI studies. The paper is structured in six sections without considering the present introduction. First, the theoretical foundations of DI will be presented. Next, the methodology used will be explained. Afterwards, the findings and discussion will be explored, including an outlook for future studies. Lastly, conclusions will be drawn.

## **DESTINATION IMAGE**

### **Destination Image from a Traditional to a Contemporary Approach**

DI is one of tourism management's most widely studied topics (Echtner & Ritchie, 1991, 1993; Skinner et al., 2022; Zhou et al., 2023). According to Skinner et al. (2021), destination image formation can be divided into two main perspectives: The first posits the existence of a primary and a secondary image (Kislali et al., 2020). The primary image emanates from the individual experience at the destination or setting. According to Gunn (1988), the secondary image is formed from three sources: the first is the organic image which describes the impressions tourists have of a particular destination without ever having visited it. This image is based on organic sources without any commercial intent, like the Word of mouth (WOM) of family and friends, newspaper articles or television reports (Gunn, 1988; Nayak et al., 2023). Nowadays, such sources of information can originate from informal sources, such as social media (Nayak et al., 2023). In the second category, the image is supplemented by marketing efforts of tourism authorities and travel agencies, called induced image (Gunn, 1988). The third dimension, the complex image, results from the actual visit to the destination and the experiences made there (Özdemir & Şimşek, 2015).

Also, Marine-Roig (2019) defined DI as an individual's judgment about a destination based on evaluating features, available activities, and possible disruptive factors. These perceptions can be both positive and negative. Echtner and Ritchie (1993) developed a model for DI that consists of three components.

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