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The Impact of Web 2.0 on the Website Use of Small Italian Hotels

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Purpose: The digital revolution is causing profound transformations, characterised by how companies and customers approach the market, helping to significantly transform the tourism sector. Traditionally, the Internet was used to search for timetables, find information and compare prices, or book basic tourist products. Today, thanks to Web 2.0, people can create their own trips by following the advice and examples of other users on the Net who have shared the contents of their tour and expressed opinions on their own travel experience. The study aims to investigate how small accommodation enterprises use their website for marketing following the development of Web 2.0, which differs from the initial concept of the Internet because it departs from the classic static websites.

Study design/methodology/approach: After the analysis of the literature, which relates to the relationship that has gradually developed over the years between small businesses in the tourism sector and the use of the Internet for marketing purposes, it was decided to carry out an empirical survey on a sample of websites of small Italian hotels. The research hypothesis is that website adoption is conditioned by the marketing communication of the tourist experience that favours interactive tools. Sixty websites of micro-enterprises with less than thirty rooms were analysed, revealing an important use of social media for marketing communication.

Findings: The research results show that small hotel enterprises present a limited use of the website, limited to the web presence, while the customer relationship is managed through social networks.

Originality/value: This work is believed to provide useful ideas for starting a more substantial study activity in the field of small accommodation to understand the reasons behind the low use of the website.

Keys words: website, web 2.0, small hotels, digital marketing, marketing communication, Italy

Introduction

In recent years, the socio-economic context has undergone profound changes, mainly due to the Internet's evolution and the collaborative economy's progress. Together with the globalisation of markets and the advent of new media of communication, the digital revolution has helped to significantly transform the tourism sector, which, as we know, represents one of the most important productive sectors of the Italian economy. Tourism activities are directly attributable to more than 5% of GDP and over 6% of the country's employment. Italy is first in Europe for the number of accommodation facilities and second only to France for the number of beds offered by professionally organised structures. However, the total number of beds available to customers is much larger if we also consider those offered by individuals, on which there are no exhaustive data, due to the lack of uniform registration requirements throughout the national territory.

According to the 2020 Report on Italian Tourism by the National Research Council and the Research Institute on Innovation and Services for Development (IRISS), Italy has 556,000 activities, of which 430,000 belong to the catering category, 34,000 to the services and 91,000 to the hospitality category. Of the three categories, the receptive one traditionally represents the most typical tourist component, aimed almost exclusively at guests and travellers. According to data from the National Institute of Statistics, in 2020, there were 32,202 hotels and almost 195,000 non-hotel establishments in Italy, offering a total of about 5.2 million

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beds. Of the total 226,855 accommodation establishments, small enterprises account for more than 60% of the tourist offer.

Considering the importance of small businesses in the Italian hotel industry, this paper aims to examine the impact of Web 2.0 on the use of websites by small tourism establishments.

The prevailing literature on the subject of small hospitality businesses and the use of digital tools focuses mainly on the commercial advantages brought by the Internet (Bizirgianni & Dionysopoulou 2013, Pencarelli 2015, Popescu 2018, Fyfe 2020, Panahande 2021) and only a small part addresses the role of the website. Through this research, hypotheses have emerged based on the level of use of the website conditioned not only to the reduced availability of resources and skills within the organisation, which we know characterise smaller businesses but also to the peculiar tourist experience, the promotion of which requires interactive tools.

H The website adoption is conditioned by the marketing communication of the tourist experience that favours interactive tools.

The value of the experience becomes essential through the quality of the network of relationships brought into play to ensure the provision of the experience. At the same time, the representation of the experience far from the reality of the place, or even invented, leads to the creation of untrue and unbelievable experiences. This can happen especially during the contact between the tourists and the local community with active participation. In this case, the customers act on the performance or event by producing an experience (e.g. those who actively participate in the realisation of a handicraft product).

The collection of the main elements on 60 websites of small hotels made it possible to integrate the contents highlighted in the literature, verifying the level of use of the website in terms of marketing and whether it can represent a valid communication tool.

The survey shows how in recent years, the small enterprises in the Italian hotel sector have embarked on a path towards the use of the Internet, which has led them to make extensive and prevalent use of this tool compared to other types of marketing and communication strategies to relate with the demand side of the market. One denotes a much less pronounced use of the tool of one's own website in marketing terms compared to online intermediation platforms and social media.

Literature analysis

The issue concerning the relationship between website use and marketing strategy lies at the crossroads of two very broad areas of investigation:

- the topic of the benefits brought by the use of digital tools: has interested many studies in order to investigate whether the use of new technologies can contribute to business development (Martini 2001, O'Toole et al. 2007, Pencarelli 2015, Popescu 2018, Fyfe 2020);
- the topic of Web 2.0 evolution, analysing whether the advent of social networks has contributed to the development of the market approach typical of small businesses (Badrinathan, 2006, Antonioli Corigliano & Baggio, 2011, Tuten & Solomon, 2012, Bizirgianni & Diony-sopoulou 2013, Valeri 2018, Pachucki et al. 2022).

Against this backdrop, assessing the impact of Internet development on the design of the company website from a marketing perspective is problematic since small companies adopt a different approach to the market than larger establishments.

Operators in the tourism sector, both in the field of offer and promotion, have immediately understood the importance of the new tool represented by the Web and have tried to exploit

its potential. Already with Web 1.0, in fact, the tourism sector showed great interest in starting to use the Internet for the promotion of services and online advertising. Martini (2001) carefully examines the advent of the Internet as an entirely new phenomenon, capable of bringing large masses of consumers, and on the other hand, tourism enterprises of all sizes and sectors closer to the technologies, capable of making an important contribution to the structure of the tourism market. According to the author, tourism organisations must pay special attention to such elements as:

- the definition of the nature of the site, distinguishing between e-commerce sites and promotion or electronic communication sites;
- to the peculiarity of the investment in the implementation of e-commerce sites;
- to the need to act on the purchasing behaviour of tourists.

The evolution of the Web has had a significant impact on the sector's growth, as it has created the 2.0 tourist, a type of traveller willing to take several short and personalised holidays. To meet their needs and create a tailor-made holiday, today's tourists conduct research, analyse and compare the different facilities available. This is all possible thanks to the Web, which provides innovative and functional tools. If the Web, during its journey, has become 2.0, tourism could only make the same leap. The features of the Web and the possibility of harnessing the potential of Information Communication Technology offer powerful tools for modernising the industry. If 1.0 tourism was informational, 2.0 is participatory. Users collaborate, exchange data and criticism on any topic, from the most popular to the niche (Garibaldi, R., & Peretta, R., 2011).

Several authors specifically analysed the benefits of Web 2.0 and ICT, including O'Toole et al. (2007) and Lim S., Saldaña A. Z. and Saldaña P (2011). Researchers point out that Web 2.0 allows companies to increase their reputation, generate new product ideas, enhance the network's collective intelligence and build communities among consumers.

Travel 2.0, the collective realisation of Web 2.0 in our industry, embodies how companies can differentiate themselves in a vast, dynamic space. It is unleashing the power of the Internet and enabling the realisation of many exciting possibilities. New travel researching and planning approaches are empowering consumers in unprecedented ways. As with Travel 1.0, this phenomenon is not entirely about technology. On the contrary, 2.0 is focused on solving big problems for all types of travel customers by exploiting the latest advancements. Travellers are keen to take control and find/create the perfect trip, not just the cheapest trip (Badrinathan, 2006). To succeed, companies in the sector must create a web strategy that considers interaction, sharing and listening, which are necessary to retain their customers (Antonioli Corigliano & Baggio, 2011). Valeri (2018) emphasises how the advent of the sharing economy has contributed to supplementing the conventional tourism offer with new proposals, enriching and diversifying the options available to the consumer. The sector as a whole has benefited, not only because of the emergence of countless new digital-oriented operators but because the competitive pressure has also stimulated many traditional players to reinvent their offerings and take up the challenge of innovation, through direct investments or by developing partnerships with platforms. In this scenario, it is evident how the fragmentation of consumer needs, such as the preference for authentic local experiences, represents an opportunity for small accommodation enterprises, which can propose a valuable product in line with the new trends. In this respect, the Internet appears to be the ideal space to build the digital customer experience during the planning and purchasing process. In the XXV edition 2020-2022 of the Italian Tourism Report, the theme of experiential tourism is addressed, highlighting how authenticity becomes a potential asset for the enhancement and growth of small destinations as local resources and traditions become an element of

differentiation and competitive advantage (Pine and Gilmore, 2008). Several studies (Birenboim, 2016; Rihova et al., 2014; Cardoso et al., 2014; Graham, 2021) show how nowadays, motivations to travel, and consequently the choice of destination, are driven by the search for new experiences. These memorable events engage individuals on a personal level. The personalised tourist experience, a key element of the competitive advantage of small businesses, becomes a valuable set of information to be effectively communicated on the Web. The most striking examples of online tourism exchange sites have been the online travel agencies (OTAs), which use the available information stream to present comparable travel options, often drawing on user and professional reviews. Online agencies offer some opportunities for small business operators to enjoy the same exposure as larger ones. However, the space the OTAs make available does not inform the tourist of the peculiarities typical of small accommodation facilities, which is a strength compared to large hotels.

Several studies have brought to light the existence of a correlation between the ability of small hotel enterprises to perform well in the use of digital tools and the success they achieve in business, even if limited to social networks (Pencarelli 2015, Popescu 2018, Fyfe 2020). Some studies have brought to light the existence of a correlation between the ability of small hotel companies to be performing in the use of digital tools and the success achieved by them in the commercial field, even if limited to social networks and OTAs (Pencarelli 2015, Popescu 2018, Fyfe 2020). Along the same lines is the study by Panahande (2021), which demonstrates a positive correlation between the ability to use social media and the success of marketing strategies in small enterprises. These studies stated that with Web 2.0, it is possible to benefit from a new use of the Web, which is sharing information across multiple channels. To confirm this, scholars Tuten and Solomon (2012), in their monographic contribution, have shown how social media represent powerful managerial tools to achieve marketing goals in four critical areas:

- social community, where businesses can build customer relationships and develop market research;
- social publishing, where advertising and public relations activities can be carried out;
- social commerce, aimed at buying and selling commercial transactions;
- social entertainment, dedicated to gaming and entertainment activities aimed at strengthening the link with the brand.

Still, regarding social media use, Rivetti and Migliaccio (2022) show how important the shared experience on the Net is for evaluating tourism products. Personalising the customer experience is an effective strategy for small businesses to increase bookings.

If we look at the website, one wonders if it can be used for marketing and communication. A study conducted in 2020 on a sample of 4,093 small accommodation facilities belonging to Aigo-Confesercenti (Italian Association of Hospitality and Hospitality Managers) shows how the website is used as a basic information tool. In particular, when asked, "*How is the website used?*" we found that, on this aspect, the sample appeared rather fragmented. Three of the four proposed response options (shop window site, e-commerce site, interactive site, "I do not have a site") were selected from a significant percentage of respondents. Table 1 shows the survey responses.

Table 1: How is the website used?

Description	Absolute data	Data in %
showcase site	63	42,8%
e-commerce site	43	29%
interactive site	9	6,1%
I do not have a website	32	22,1%
Total	147	100%

Specifically, the one that obtained the greatest consensus (42.8%) was the option relating to the "showcase site", the website where the user can't interact dynamically with the entity that manages the business. This is followed with 29% by the option relating to the "e-commerce site", in which it is instead possible for users to conclude transactions of purchase of goods and services directly from the site. In third place, in order of preference (22.1%), there is the option of the total absence of the website. Finally, with 6,1% (less consistent percentage of respondents), we find the option related to possessing an "interactive site" portal through which it is possible to activate a two-way communication with the user.

It is therefore evident that there is a panorama in which 71.8% of the companies interviewed move with a showcase site possibly connected to the OTA booking system.

Therefore, it is clear that there is a fundamentally diverse landscape in which the small and medium-sized enterprises included in the sample are moving unevenly.

However, overall there seems to be a tendency towards shyness in using the website tool. Essentially, this is because the two response options that implied a greater distance from this tool (i.e. its non-use and the use only as a static "showcase" site) constitute a clear majority (64.9%), thus describing a scenario in which there is considerable room for improvement in terms of a more pronounced use of this instrument. On closer inspection, this result converges with the findings in the literature regarding the prevalent use of social networks instead of websites. This also demonstrates the importance attributed to the website by hoteliers to interact with the public.

The companies that own a website, to be known by an adequate number of users and potential customers, need a good level of visibility on the main search engines. Furthermore, in order for their website to be interesting in the eyes of consumers, it is essential that it presents conditions of general aesthetic appeal and respects certain parameters, such as (Matta, 2010):

- presence on the homepage of the indication of useful contacts to communicate with the facility;
- easy and intuitive menu, which allows you to find information easily;
- the information expressed simply and clearly;
- a clear indication of the exact location of the facility and the information needed to reach it;
- attractive and realistic photos, able to show the real characteristics of the structure, highlighting its strengths. The resolution should not be too small or too large;
- clear and precise indication of both the services offered and their prices so as not to create misunderstandings and, at the same time, to ensure that a truly interested customer is attracted;
- care in updating the site and avoiding leaving old and/or outdated information published, both to avoid misunderstandings and to avoid giving an image of negligence;
- track of access to the site, but not in a way that is visible to all;
- lack of intrusive advertising banners;
- translation of the information into one or more foreign languages.

The above parameters are fundamental to implementing the marketing plan, which aims to manage the value offered on the Internet. While monitoring the results, the need to use specific web analytics metrics emerges. These must be set concerning the intended plan and the objectives set and allow to obtain information on the behaviour of visitors on the site or the company blog (Dodson I. 2016). It follows that the company must use specialised personnel to design, promote and monitor marketing actions through its website.

Therefore, company size is a significant factor in influencing micro-business behaviour concerning technologies. Smaller businesses do not feel the need to adopt the Internet because they have to manage a reduced level of information complexity compared to larger businesses. As the organisation grows, the complexity of being managed from an information point of view increases and, therefore, the incentive to invest in Internet technologies (Gregori, Gian Luca, et al. 2014). In the same contribution, the authors also propose another perspective to explain the relationship between micro-businesses and the use of technology, according to which small businesses are affected by a lack of financial, management and knowledge resources. In the hotel sector, we find a study conducted by Popescu et al. in 2018, where the opportunities presented by using the Internet were correlated with the difficulties faced by small businesses in the tourism sector. The study results show that concerning opportunities, the expectations of short- and medium-term goals, such as acquiring new customers, clearly prevail. Moreover, concerning difficulties, the need to conduct appropriate training comes first, both in the company and with the customers.

Several studies have examined the effect of the pandemic on the role that new information technologies will play in future tourism. According to Corbisiero et al. (2021), the pandemic has inevitably influenced everyone's tourism choices, regardless of how much their specific area of residence has been affected by the virus. The research data highlight the resilient nature of tourism, which transforms but does not cease to exist, and the role of technologies will be to communicate the new peculiarities of the travel experience. The study by Pachucki et al. (2022) argues that the COVID-19 epidemic has increased the importance of social media for tourism destinations. Specifically, this study analyses how and to what extent the pandemic changed the communication of tourist destinations and consumer engagement on social media. The results showed how consumer engagement on social media increased, measured in terms of likes, shares and comments.

In conclusion, the literature review shows that the most popular digital tool used by small hospitality businesses is social networking, which enables interaction between users, the sharing of the tourism experience and active participation in creating the hotel stay. In this scenario, the website proves to be a less used tool than social media, mainly due to the unfavourable risk-return ratio compared to social media.

Methodology used

The research begins with a careful survey of the existing literature on the subject, ensuring that the hypotheses formulated consider research already carried out by other scholars. The evolution of Web 2.0 was explored, analysing how the advent of social networks has contributed to the development of the market approach typical of small businesses. We live in the Web 2.0 and Travel 2.0 era, where active participation and coordination of the means used is necessary. Therefore, it seems important to us to check the level of use of the website as a marketing tool by small hotels.

For identifying articles, the main titles and a set of keywords relevant to the research topic were considered. Next, studies were selected by verifying that there were elements in their content relevant to our question.

The following articles were considered:

- publication dating back no more than twenty years. The publications before 2000 have not been considered, as they are not up-to-date enough. This is because the subject under examination is strongly linked to the technological and, consequently, socio-economic innovations which have occurred in the last twenty years on the use of the Internet and the transformations of the world of tourism;

- coming from an authoritative scientific source or an institution;
- presence, in the treatment, of at least one of the following elements:
    - Dealing with small and medium-sized enterprises in the tourism sector;
    - Dealing with the relationship between small and medium enterprises in the tourism sector and the use of the Internet;
    - Ability of the Internet to influence demand in the tourist market;
    - Results achieved by small and medium-sized enterprises by using the Internet.

Once the articles and sources of interest had been identified, a critical summary of the work examined was drawn up, and the information collected was systematically organised. In short, the results of the studies show a positive relationship between the results achieved and the use of social networks, and this has to do with their website only in a minimal part.

As mentioned in the introduction, to complement the contents highlighted in the literature, it was decided to conduct an empirical investigation of a sample of websites of small accommodation facilities.

The company websites have been identified starting from the following series of keywords, which are used by tourists to search for information and to book or create their own trip: “hotel in Rome”, “hotel in Florence”, “hotel in Venice”, “cheap”, “unique experience”, “city art trip “.

Then, the identified sites were selected, verifying that they were traceable to small businesses and belonged to the non-hotel category. On the other hand, in the case of hotels, only 2-star ones were considered.

The quality criteria of the websites taken into consideration in the selection phase are three:

- Structure size. Since this study refers to small hotel enterprises, the criterion of the number of rooms has been taken into account by distinguishing three classes:
    - from 3 to 15 rooms;
    - from 15 to 30 rooms;
    - over 30 rooms.

This criterion was chosen in line with the annual survey of the capacity of accommodation facilities in Italy by the National Institute of Statistics (ISTAT), which considers the following size classes by number of rooms: up to 24, from 25 to 99, 100 and more.

- Type of site. We decided to highlight the peculiarity of the website considering the following forms:
    - Simple showcase site that illustrates the main qualities of the structure;
    - Showcase site with online booking through OTA (Online Travel Agency);
    - Showcase site with online booking through the e-shop function owned by the company.
- Type of contact on the site. We decided to derive the role of the website in terms of marketing communication, proceeding with the classification of the site according to the following three forms of contact:
    - only email address or phone;
    - via a link to the social network;
    - via chat to interact online.

The group who collaborated in the research ensured compliance with the selection criteria by contacting the accommodation facility where necessary.

The data used for this study were collected by analysing 60 sites, 20 of which were accommodations in Rome, 20 in Florence and 20 in Venice. The survey was conducted in April 2022.

Table 2 indicates the categories that make up the sample. It was decided to examine hotels up to 2 stars to ensure that the sample was represented exclusively by small businesses. It is noted that the selected websites are equally distributed among small hotels, bed and breakfasts and a slightly lower share attributable to guesthouses.

Table 2: Composition of the sample

Description	Absolute data	Data in %
hotel up to 2 stars	23	38%
bed and breakfast	21	35%
guesthouses	16	27%
Total	60	100%

In Italy, accommodation facilities are classified according to national legislation and regional regulations in hotels and extra-hotels.

Hotels are companies that provide accommodation, possibly food and other ancillary services, in rooms located in one or more buildings or parts of buildings and are classified from 1 to a maximum of 5 stars based on certain requirements. In particular, hotels with one or two stars can be traced back to fourth and third-category hotels.

The accommodation facilities outside the proposed classification belong to the so-called *non-hotel category*, which consists of a reduced number of rooms compared to even a small hotel, with a personalised service and with the possibility for the customer to come into close contact with the reality of the place where he/she is staying. Generally, these businesses are classified into campsites, bed and breakfasts, holiday homes, guesthouses, agritourism, youth hostels, mountain huts and tourist villages. Specifically, the guesthouses are structures composed of a maximum of six rooms with independent access from the other rooms in no more than two furnished apartments of the same building. At the same time, the bed and breakfasts represent a type of hospitality in private homes where the owners provide some apartment rooms or the entire house.

In this paper, we speak of small hotel businesses, which relate to accommodation facilities in general, both hotel and non-hotel.

The analysis includes all types of activities that make up the universe of micro-enterprises. These organisations are defined by the European Commission Recommendation no. 361 of 2003 as such if they have:

- less than 10 employees;
- an annual turnover or total assets of less than 2 million euros.

At the end of this paper, the survey results were presented, confirming small entrepreneurs' propensity to use brokerage platforms and social networks to promote their tourism offers, as they are considered more effective tools than the website.

Presentation of the results obtained

The study relates entirely to small enterprises. This is reflected by the data in Table 3, which shows that 87% of the selected establishments have fewer than 24 rooms, while 74% of the sites can be traced back to microenterprises, with several rooms between 3 and 15.

Table 3: Structure size

Description	Absolute data	Data in %
from 3 to 15 rooms	44	74%
from 15 to 30 rooms	8	13%
over 30 rooms	8	13%
Total	60	100%

The results, which we have represented in Table 4, show how small hotel companies use the site as a tool to allow the user to book online, mainly via links to the OTA shop. By far, the most prevalent use among those shown (83%) is the type of site that acts as a showcase for online booking through a link to the intermediary portals (such as Booking). The decision to have a website for the presentation of their company follows at a great distance. In contrast, only 7% of the sites considered have their own booking system without resorting to OTA.

Table 4: Type of site

Description	Absolute data	Data in %
simple showcase site	6	10%
showcase site with booking through OTA	50	83%
showcase site with booking through an e-shop	4	7%
Total	60	100%

Concerning the contact methods proposed on the website, whose data are shown in Table 5, it emerges that 60% of the domains analysed have a link to a social account (mainly Facebook), in line with the literature cited in the systematic review. This, in particular, confirms the trend of the role played by the Web in determining the entrepreneurial success in the tourism sector, especially small, which is played by "word of mouth", which on the Internet takes the name of EWOM (Electronic World of Mouth). Interestingly, 20% of companies have a chat embedded in the portal, which highlights small entrepreneurs' ability to understand the site's potential if it was exploited for marketing purposes.

Table 5: Type of contact on the site

Description	Absolute data	Data in %
only email address or telephone	12	20%
link to your social network	36	60%
chat through which interact online	12	20%
Total	60	100%

The survey shows limited use of corporate websites as a tool employed in the web marketing strategy of small hotel enterprises that prefer social platforms. This confirms the numerous studies that attest to the extensive use of online intermediaries (see, among others, O'Toole et al., 2007; Stephen & Galak, 2012; Tuten & Solomon, 2012; Leung et al., 2013; Pachucki et al., 2022).

Conclusion

The research has allowed us to describe and interpret the degree and forms of use of web tools in the field of tourism communication of small Italian companies.

The analysis carried out on 60 websites has shown a general situation of evident under-use of the potential offered today by the Web and little interest in creating a stable and loyal relationship with customers. In the three phases that create the tourist experience, in most cases, the website is relegated to a marginal role that does not allow exploiting the potential that could arise from its correct and conscious use.

In general, it appears that small businesses do not make full use of the website's potential, which is conceivably explained by the limited availability of the resources needed to use digital tools strategically. However, there also seems to be a potential marketing orientation

based on the communication of the special offer, which distinguishes itself from the standardised product promoted by large hotel chains and prefers social media sites, places where user communities are born, over its own website, which does not enjoy the notoriety of the Internet.

From the analysis conducted, it seems that small hotels are aware that one factor influencing the adoption of e-marketing is the personalised experiential value. Personalisation is one of the trends emerging most strongly from the sector's digital revolution. In this regard, small businesses have the advantage over large hotels to build on the element of living an authentic local experience. Taking advantage of external connectivity through the Internet, which can connect tourism services to users, is the key element in the use of sharing economy practices related to the creation and booking of services.

Specifically, the website can be mostly conceived as an operational tool, which guarantees the visibility of the structure on the Internet. On the other hand, social networks seem to represent the ideal spaces where the co-creation of the tourism product and activating strategic marketing communication can occur. For these reasons, the research hypothesis seems valid, also taking into account the difficulties that small businesses encounter in the digitisation of management and, in particular, in the strategic design of a website. Furthermore, in light of the literature, it seems safe to say that in the future, the website of small tourism enterprises will be increasingly relegated to the function of a shop window. At the same time, the relationship with the tourist will shift more towards social media. However, it is considered that the use of the website in terms of marketing can bring important advantages, such as, specifically, the ability to govern your personalised offer on the market, thanks to the increased capacity to reach wider customer segments, thus creating innovative offers, even of an "experiential" type (Dolnicar, 2018).

We are aware that the research has some limitations.

First, the analysis of the case studies is limited to 60 websites of hotel companies in the three main art cities of Italy. Of course, we know that our country's tourist market also includes different segments (e.g. beach tourism, lake, mountain, etc.). For this reason, it is considered that a further point of improvement of this survey could be represented by the possible extension of the sample to tourist structures other than those already affected by this analysis located in different tourist contexts.

Secondly, the selection of websites was made from the keywords used by the online tourist.

These limitations can lead to insights for empirical research perspectives on how small tourism businesses use the website as an operational marketing tool. It would be interesting, for example, to investigate how much the operators are aware of the potential and possible positive effects such instruments could have on their economic activity.

Overall, thus it is considered that this work has been able to provide useful ideas for the launch of a more substantial and structured study activity in the field of small accommodation facilities operating in the tourist sector in Italy. This could take place through subsequent investigations aimed, at the same time, at enhancing the ideas that emerged from this discussion and overcoming the limits inevitably connected to it, in the ways and according to the methods mentioned above.

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