ACADEMIC WEEKLY DIGEST

YOUR WEEKLY DIGEST OF KEY RESEARCH FINDINGS

DMOS IN THE DIGITAL WORLD

Can DMOs still remain relevant?

While the tourism sector shifts towards digital transformation, Destination Management Organisations (DMOs) often struggle to adapt to their changing technological environment.

A study by Dr Husna Zainal Abidin, Professor Caroline Scarles and Professor Christine Lundberg explores the topic of digital transformation for micro-DMOs and how effective digital collaboration can be achieved.

ANTECEDENTS OF DIGITAL COLLABORATION FOR DESTINATION MANAGEMENT

Dr Husna Zainal Abidin & **Prof Caroline Scarles**

Destination Management Organisations are considered as important institutions which help to support meaningful destination development. Unfortunately, most DMOs experience extreme staff shortages as over 79% of DMOs in the UK are characterised as micro-DMOs (i.e. employing less than ten staff). DMOs are struggling to adapt to technological changes due to limited financial resources and skilled staff. Therefore, collaboration between destination stakeholders and the integration of technology is seen as a crucial solution to overcome such limitations. This study identifies the success factors for digital collaboration on an enhanced digital platform for micro-DMOs.

An integrated sequential qualitative approach was adopted by conducting multiphased interviews, in addition to designing and trialling a real-world trial digital platform. Visit Surrey, FdK Design Consultants and Minted Box were key industry collaborators in the study. The research provides empirical evidence that digital collaboration is essential for micro-DMOs, necessitating them to transform their current "websites" into digital platforms which act as a hub for business stakeholders to actively be involved in. Success factors for digital collaboration include mutuality, trust, control, and leadership which may be manifested differently from non-digital collaboration. For tourism practitioners and UX designers, guiding principles on how best to design a collaborative digital platform for destination management are identified.

The current state of DMO websites should be transformed into an enhanced multi-sided digital platform, allowing business stakeholders to have their own portal to collaborate digitally for knowledge sharing, networking and marketing.

Zainal-Abidin, H., Scarles, C., & Lundberg, C. (2023). The antecedents of digital collaboration through an enhanced digital platform for destination management: A micro-DMO perspective. *Tourism Management*
Link: bit.ly/3oFLbIp