Enhancing Media Literacy to Combat Gender-Based Disinformation in Tourism

Insights from the MEDEA Project

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MEDEA

ZONTA CLUB OF JELGAVA

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Importance of media literacy in tourism

Impact of gender-based disinformation

Understanding Media Literacy

Media Literacy: The ability to critically analyze, evaluate, and create media content responsibly

Digital Literacy: Focuses on navigating online platforms and verifying online sources

Fact-Checking: Assessing the accuracy of information before accepting or sharing it

Media Literacy

A 2024 survey indicated that **72%** of Americans believe media literacy skills are crucial for identifying misinformation [bu.edu](bu.edu)

Despite this, **half of the respondents** were unaware if their local public libraries offered media literacy training, pointing to a gap in education [bu.edu](bu.edu)

The tourism industry heavily relies on **user-generated content**, making it susceptible to the spread of disinformation

UGC content

Travelers rely on user-generated content (UGC) such as TripAdvisor reviews, social media, and blogs to make decisions
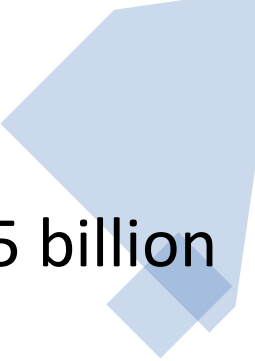
Fake news and manipulated images can misrepresent destinations, leading to unrealistic expectations or deterring tourism

Women in tourism—whether as entrepreneurs, employees, or influencers—can face defamation, false reviews, or deepfake content, impacting their credibility and business

Media literacy helps stakeholders in tourism—hotels, agencies, influencers—maintain ethical standards in storytelling and marketing

61.4% of the world's population — a whopping 4.95 billion people — use social media (Statista, 2023)

A UNESCO report highlighted that only around **20% of the global population has adequate digital literacy skills.** This gap in skills hinders individuals from recognizing credible information and increases susceptibility to online scams, misinformation, and cyberbullying (UNESCO, 2022)

The Economist Intelligence Unit reports that **38% of women worldwide reported personal experiences with online violence and 85% have witnessed digital violence against other women** (EIU, 2023)

Cyber violence against women and girls

Violent online behavior ranges from online harassment and public shaming to the desire to inflict physical harm including sexual assaults, murders and induced suicides. With more access than ever to the internet, cyber violence against women and girls (cyber VAWG) has taken on a global dimension.

73% of women are abused online

In Europe, 1 in 10 women have experienced cyber-harassment since the age of 15

Women aged 18-24 are at a heightened risk of cyber VAWG

In the U.S., 81% of women have been harassed on social media

#ZontaSaysNO | #16Days
www.ZontaSaysNO.com

Sources: European Institute for Gender Equality, Statista, UN Women

ZONTA SAYS NO TO VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

12 stories held by Straw Dolls

SALMIEM NESĀP, BET SIEVIETEI?

ATPAZĪSTI VARDARBĪBU!

Klātienē un tiešsaistē

26.novembrī
12:00 - 13:15

ZONTA SAKA NĒ
VARDARBĪBAI PRET SIEVIETI

ZONTA Jelgavas klubs   Jelgava   A.G.A. LTD   silva

16 Days Against Violence November 25- December 10, 2024

More than 400 online event news
More than 4000 people reached via facebook

Can We Influence Our Wellbeing?

«You have power over your mind – not outside events. Realize this, and you will find strength» - Marcus Aurelius
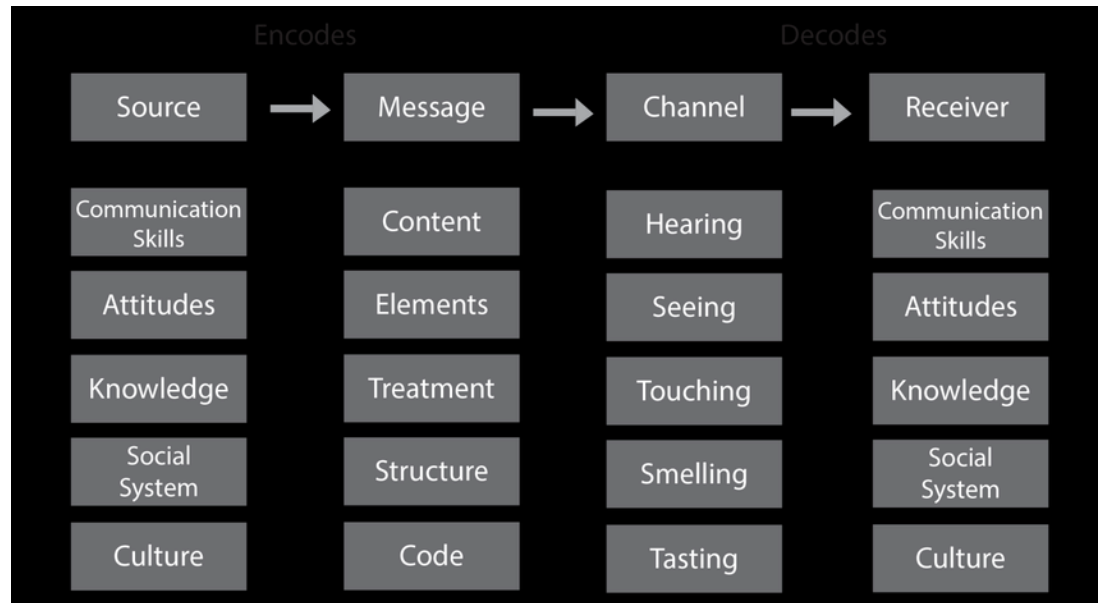
«No one can make you feel inferior without your consent» - Eleanor Roosevelt

«Yesterday I was clever, so I wanted to change the world. Today I am wise, so I am changing myself» - Rumi

Berlo's SMCR Model

- Emphasizes the role of the sender in encoding the message, selecting an appropriate channel for transmission, and the receiver's role in decoding and understanding the message. Feedback is also considered as a crucial element for effective communication (Berlo, 1960)

Kurtzo, Fawn & Edgar, Leslie & Edgar, Don & Graham, Donna & Russell, Mark. (2019). Exploring Communication Tendencies of Program Facilitators. Journal of Applied Communications. 103. 10.4148/1051-0834.1415.

Berlo's SMCR Model: Communication Misunderstandings in Tourism

- **Message Misunderstanding (M) – Tour Descriptions & Safety Concerns** A tour company advertises an "exciting and extreme adventure tour" without mentioning safety measures. Male tourists perceive it as a thrilling experience, while female tourists hesitate due to missing information about safety and accessibility.

- **Issue:**

- The message fails to address different gender-based concerns

- Women may require additional safety details, while men may not perceive it as a concern

Berlo's SMCR Model:
Communication Misunderstandings in Tourism

Receiver Misunderstanding (R) – Cultural Expectations & Gender Roles

A female tourist visits a traditionally male-dominated country and tries to engage in a conversation with a male tour guide. However, the guide avoids eye contact and keeps responses brief, as cultural norms discourage men from conversing casually with women.
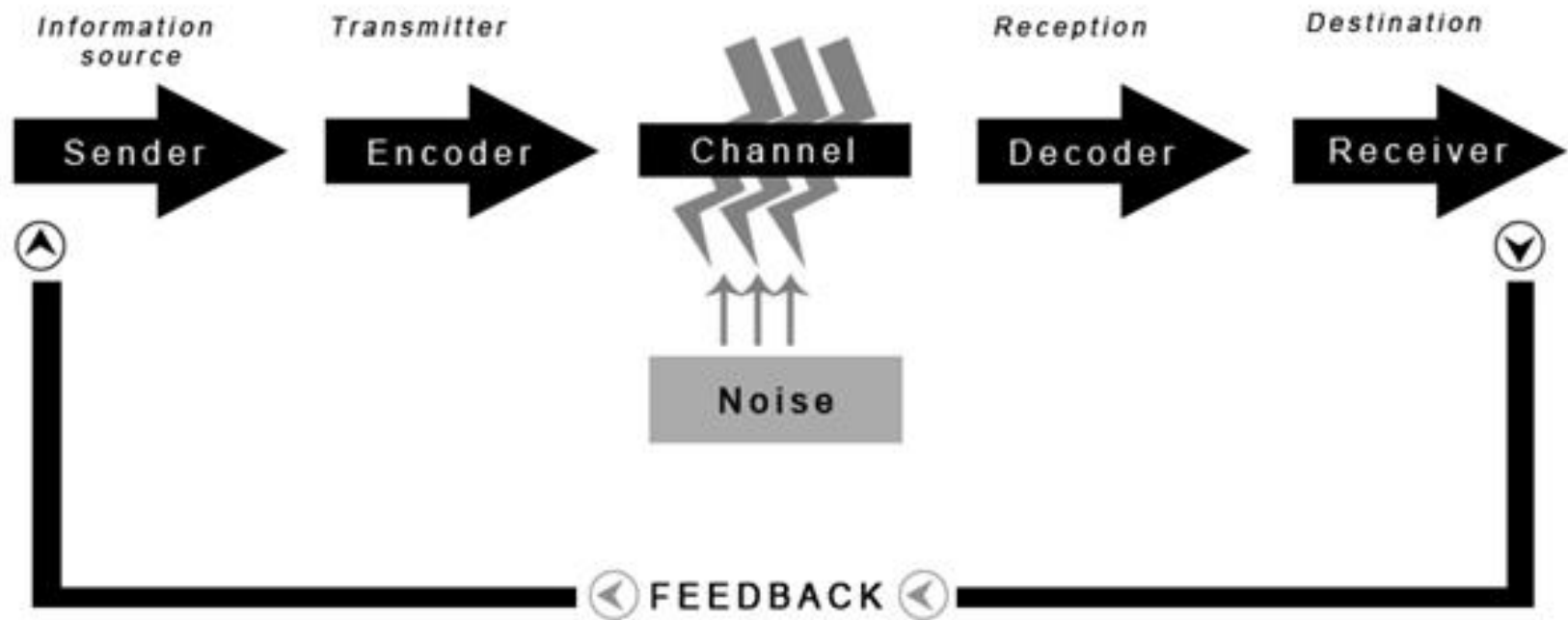
Issue:

The **receiver's background** (cultural and gender norms) affects how the message is interpreted.

The female traveler may feel ignored, while the male guide believes he is acting respectfully.

Shannon-Weaver Model

SHANNON-WEAVER'S MODEL OF COMMUNICATION

Shannon-Weaver Model

Scenario: The agency posts a video on Facebook promoting a guided tour of historical sites in Rome

Feedback:

Positive: "Wow, this looks amazing! I've always wanted to visit Rome. Is this tour available in July?"

Negative: "The video focuses too much on the Colosseum. What about other historical sites like the Roman Forum?"

Neutral/Question: "How long is the tour, and what's included in the price?"
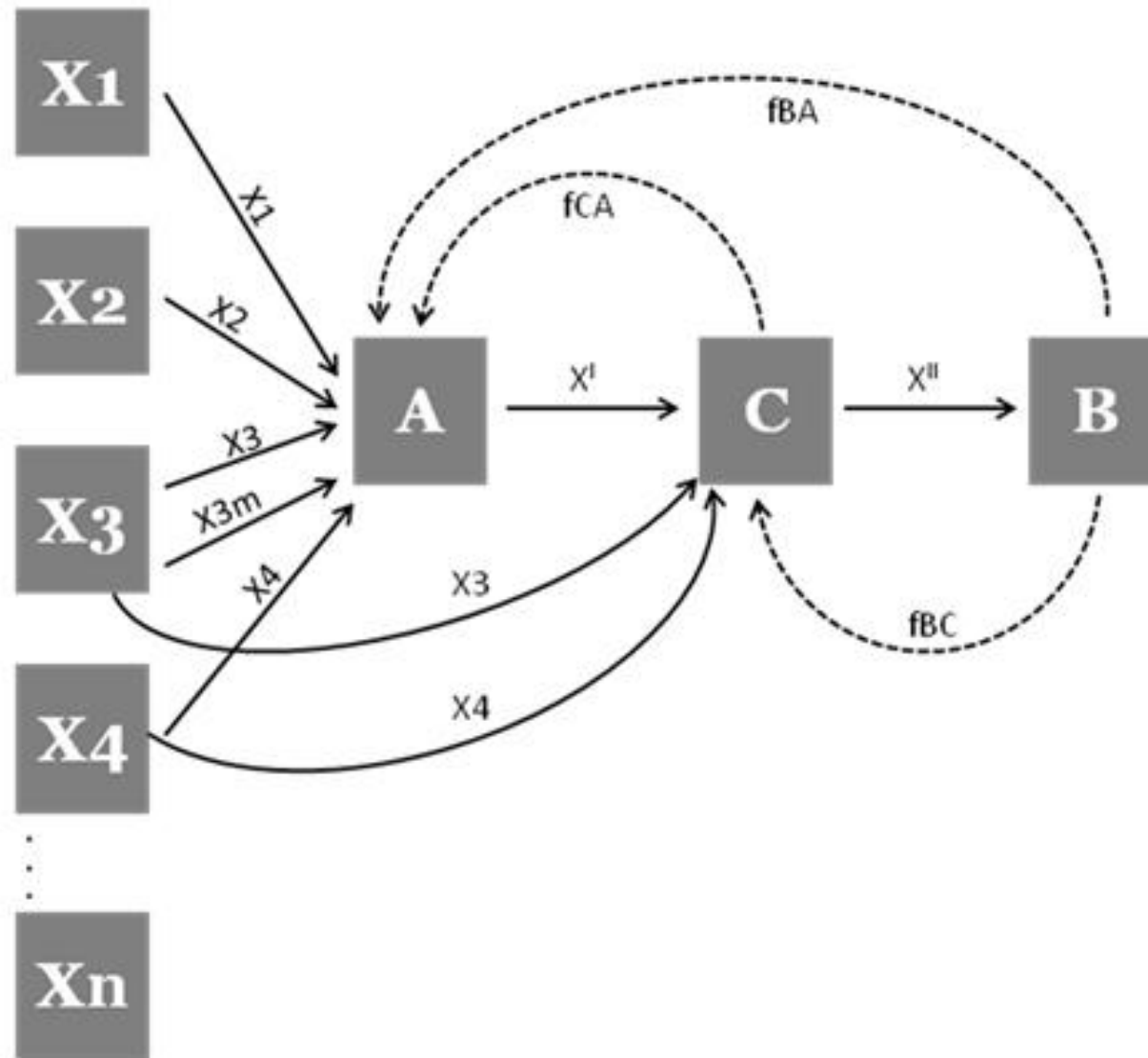
Social media comments provide a mix of feedback.

The positive comments indicate interest and potential conversion. The negative comment highlights a potential flaw in the message (the video's focus).

The question shows engagement but also a need for more information. The agency can use this feedback to adjust their marketing strategy, perhaps creating additional content about other historical sites or providing more detailed tour information.

Westley and MacLean's Model of Communication

Conclusions

Gender Stereotypes: Tourism relies on traditional gender stereotypes, which can lead to misunderstandings and alienate potential travelers

Inclusivity: It's crucial to create marketing materials that are inclusive and appeal to a diverse audience, regardless of gender identity or expression

Representation: Visuals and messaging should reflect the diversity of travelers and avoid perpetuating outdated or harmful stereotypes

Understanding Diverse Needs: Tourism providers should be aware of the different needs and interests of various traveler segments and tailor their communication accordingly

Conclusions

Tourism is a global industry driven by narratives, reviews, and visual content

Misinformation and gender-based disinformation can shape perceptions of destinations, cultures, and professionals in the sector

Media literacy equips tourism professionals and travelers with the skills to critically assess content, reducing the spread of misleading narratives

Ethical tourism promotion requires accurate representation, avoiding stereotypes and bias.Impact of Gender-Based Disinformation

Thank you!

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