

Analysis of Online Attendance and E-Commerce in Golf Courses Using Marketing Strategies Implementation in Sports Tourism.

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Abstract

As a sports activity with unique traditions, golf is a first class tourism resource. In choosing golf destinations, tourists rely on information available online, just as consumers do in making decisions about any resource. Therefore, in our study, we tried to profile the internet presence of golf courses in Catalonia as well as their e-commerce maturity. To this end, we developed an integrated model for the analysis of golf course websites: one based on web content analysis and a structure with four dimensions (i.e. information, communication, e-commerce and additional functions) and the stages of the development model. The finding of acceptance of internet business. This model, which is used by all golf courses in Catalonia that have a website, showed that, despite the great importance of the sport to the local economy and tourism, golf courses do not have a sufficient online presence or platforms to communicate. . The present work includes information on its theoretical contribution, implications for management, limitations, and future lines of research.

Keywords: golf courses, sports tourism, e-commerce, website content analysis

1. Introduction

The use and dissemination of information and communication technologies (ICT), in the evolution of society in general and business organizations in particular, has created the so-called "information societies" [1]. As a result, research on the use of information and communication technology has generated great interest among scientists in various fields, especially business [2-4]. To date, such studies show the contribution of ICT to the competitive advantage of organizations that have implemented them in terms of productivity [5], internationalization [6,7], performance in the labor market [8] and the ability to remain competitive. . [9,10]

Hofacker and Blanch [11] have argued that the main reason companies use the Internet and social media networks in their marketing strategies is to strengthen relationships with

customers and provide them with an important source of information. Information and communication technology also allows organizations to have better access to markets at the national and international level [12,13], as electronic commerce reduces transaction costs by eliminating geographic barriers in traditional commerce, and communication It facilitates international users [14]. For these reasons, ICT implementation is important for organizations and companies in general, even in the tourism industry.

Given this context, we analyze the online presence of all golf courses in Catalonia that have a website, as well as their e-commerce maturity, for two main reasons. The first reason is the importance of the tourism industry for the economy of Spain and Catalonia. According to the statistics of tourism movements in borders [15], Spain receives an average of more than 60 million tourists annually. Between 2004 and 2018 and in 2018, it welcomed a record of over 82.6 million people. That year, receiving 19.1 million of these tourists, Catalonia was the best tourist destination in Spain. Moreover, in the same 14-year period, as shown by the Tourism Expenditure Survey [16], the annual expenditure of international tourists in Spain has slightly exceeded 57,000 million euros on average, reaching 90,000 in 2018. 000,000 € has been reached. As a sector, tourism contributed 178,000 million euros to the Spanish economy in 2018, according to the World Travel and Tourism Council, thus accounting for 14.6% of its GDP [17].

The second reason is the importance of golf courses for tourism, especially in Spain. According to Aymerich and Annabitart [18], Spain has 359 golf courses, 40 of which are in Catalonia, and receives approximately 278,000 golfers every year. In turn, employing more than 11,000 workers, golf in Spain has a total annual economic impact of €2.07 billion. According to the International Association of Golf Tour Operators, worldwide the golf tourism market is worth more than \$17 billion and the number of people who play golf each year is 56 million. Of these, approximately 10% travel abroad each year with the primary purpose of playing golf, for an international golf tourism market of approximately 5.6 million players [19].

For people who play sports in general and for golf tourists in particular, websites are an important tool for accessing logistical information before arriving at sports facilities [20]. Consequently, it is important for researchers to explain how golf courses communicate information about the services they offer, as well as accommodation, transportation services, and other tourism resources in the region [21]. It is even necessary to use an aspect as a communication of sustainability policies in golf courses [22]. Meanwhile, for golf courses, it is necessary to have an optimal online reservation system to provide more competitive prices and differentiate attraction service offerings from competitors [23].

Considering all the above, we recognize the need to investigate the use of golf courses from the Internet and e-commerce, especially in the context described, and analyze their use of ICT and thus identify the main factors that determine their online behaviors. we gave. Therefore, the main objective of our study was whether the golf courses in Catalonia, as indicated by their websites, use the full Internet facilities. As an exploratory research, it was expected that our study would help us determine the extent to which such facilities are currently being used on our websites. Despite the value of this knowledge, few studies have been conducted examining

these aspects in detail in the golf and sports tourism sector, especially from a marketing perspective.

With that main goal in mind, we set three secondary goals. Initially, we aimed to provide an integrated model to evaluate the online presence of golf courses in four content-related categories (for example, information, communication, e-commerce and additional functions) and using the extensive model of adoption of Internet commerce (eMICA). , analyze the maturity of your e-commerce. Second, we used the proposed model to analyze the websites of all golf courses in Catalonia with an online presence. Third and last, after analyzing the use of ICT in marketing and communicating with customers on their websites, we wanted to provide practical recommendations for how golf courses can more effectively manage their online presence.

2. Golf and tourism industry

Modern tourists increasingly want more active experiences in their vacations and leisure time due to their growing interest in personal health and well-being and enjoyment of outdoor activities such as sports in natural environments. Therefore, promoting that type of sports activity can create important tourism resources for specific destinations [24,25]. In this context, an important tourism activity is golf tourism, defined by Hudson and Hudson [26] as golf played by tourists who play away from their main residence for non-commercial purposes. Golf tourism includes services provided by travel agencies that specialize in planning and providing golf tourism products [27].

Of course, golf tourism does not only include visiting golf courses away from the main residence but also other leisure activities in the destination and visiting local tourist attractions [28-30]. In the literature on this topic, an element that has been widely explored has been the destination image surrounding golf.

Courses [27,31,32]. Meanwhile, some researchers, especially in segmentation research, have focused on identifying the characteristics of golf tourists [33-36], while others have focused on identifying their behaviors. Among them, Humphreys [37] observed that participation in golf tourism resulted from satisfaction and positive experiences, while Stebbins [38] found that attitude was an important predictor of engaging in that type of activity.

In other work, Kim and Ritchie [39] distinguished three types of golf tourists: intensive golfers, multi-motivated golfers, and golf companions. They are the first tourists whose main purpose of the trip is to play golf and they often buy special golf packages. The second group are tourists who participate in non-golf activities. The last, third category, as is clear from the description, are tourists who accompany golfers and sometimes participate in the game. In contrast, Hennessey et al. [33] categorized golf tourists based on frequency of engagement—as dedicated, moderate, or infrequent golfers—each of whom exhibited significant behavioral differences based on frequency of play. These findings on the motivations and behaviors of golfers reflect the general conclusion drawn by Gibson and Pennington-Gray [40], who used role theory to describe and explain the behavior of sports tourists, especially golf tourists.

Like most tourists, golf tourists are subject to factors that influence their decision to travel and choose a specific destination [41]. Regarding the latter, Humphreys [37] has identified six such factors: vacation design, emotional travel rewards, total costs, associated services and amenities, golf course characteristics, and destination reputation.

Despite the literature on the topics mentioned, few studies seem to have been conducted on the online presence of golf courses and Internet use. Among them, a study by Powers and Tabibzadeh [42], analyzing the online marketing of golf courses in the US state of Kentucky, showed that, although the vast majority of courses have some kind of web presence, their websites are mainly They play an advertising or informational role. Likewise, in a comparative study of golf courses in Portugal,

Spain and the United States, Afonso and Martínez López [43] analyzed their use of the Internet for advertising purposes. Meanwhile, García-Tascon and Pradas García [44] studied the transparency of golf course websites in Andalusia, Spain. In contrast, Park et al. [34] conducted a content analysis of South Korean golf tourism blogs to identify features associated with seven destinations in mainland China.

In other works, Brooksbank, Garland and Werder [45] have shown that strategic marketing planning including digital media can improve the long-term sustainability of golf courses. They defined strategic marketing as a continuous, organization-wide, customer-led planning approach that facilitates optimal organizational responses to the environment. After examining the 10 basic strategic marketing practices and their relationship to competitive business performance, those authors discovered that although most golf courses had adopted strategic marketing, higher-performing tournaments placed much greater emphasis on each of the 10 practices. [45]. As other authors have shown, strategic marketing planning usually includes five stages: conducting a comprehensive analysis of the strategic situation, developing marketing objectives, formulating a marketing strategy, organizing for marketing and using strategic control methods [46]. In somewhat related research, Pereira et al. [47] analyzed advertising texts on golf-related websites as sources for identifying brand personality traits.

Considering the impact of golf tourism in Spain, the changes and needs of modern society and the importance of organizations to manage their websites, it is valuable to understand what kind of online golf tournaments in Spain and what use the different elements of digital marketing are. Available online

3. Methods

An organization's website plays a fundamental role as a member of institutional communication and is key in representing the organization as an institution. Along with other elements, such as social media, online video and email, it is a central part of designing digital communication campaigns [48]. Therefore, creating a method to identify and evaluate the features that websites should have in order to be an ideal means of communication with customers is of great interest. Researchers and clinicians alike. However, as several authors have confirmed, there is currently no universally accepted method for evaluating websites [49-52].

If we focus on the analysis, many studies refer to a set of indicators that can be grouped into four large groups: technical, commercial, content-related and design-related [53-55]. In turn, we adopted a market-focused perspective, with websites evaluated according to their focus on users as potential customers. In this way, evaluators pay special attention to aspects related to the promotion of activities, online transactions, and product and service features [56].

The proposed model in our work is a combination of eMICA and web content analysis (WCA) tailored to golf courses (Figure 1). The variables used to measure e-commerce adoption by golf course websites were adapted from eMICA and selected based on our literature review. In turn, we decided that, in order to move between levels and fix their positions, websites should display a minimum number of features [56-58]. Therefore, sites move to the next level if they have all the variables of the previous level. The scale was dichotomous for all variables

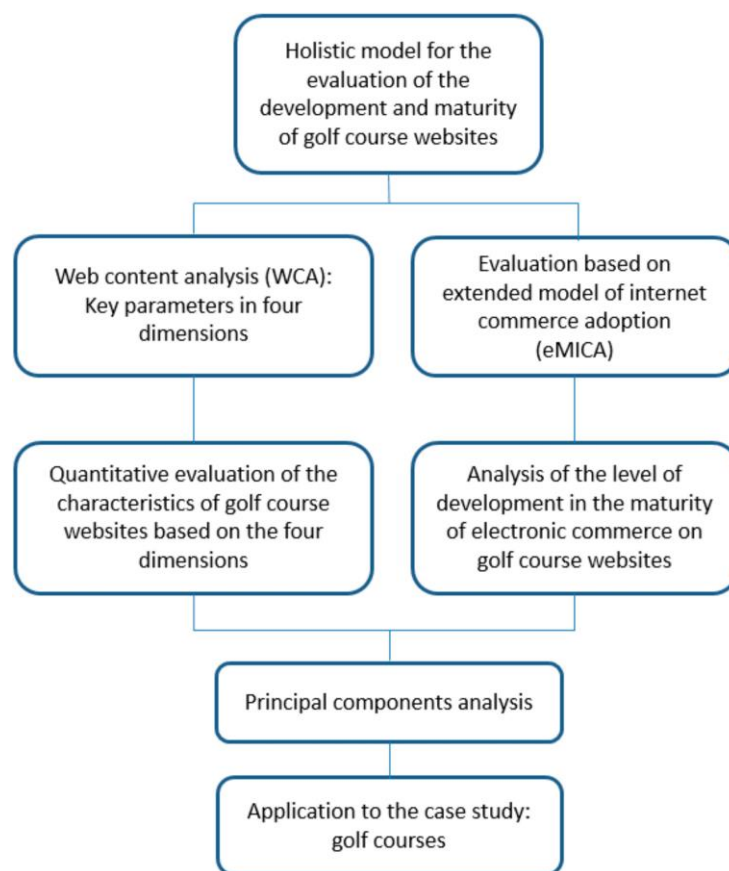


Figure 1. Process design

Our analysis is focused on the websites of golf courses in Catalonia. To fulfill the proposed objectives, we analyzed the websites of all the golf courses that are members of the Catalan Golf Federation. After excluding three golf courses without a website, 37 sites remained for analysis - 27 courses with 18 holes and 10 courses with 9 holes - meaning that 92.5% of golf courses in Catalonia have an online presence. The main goal of our work was to analyze how they use this presence.

3.1 Web Content Analysis (WCA)

We conducted a comprehensive review of the literature with the aim of developing a subsequent model for our WCA structure for golf courses [50,56,59–63] to highlight the resources that golf courses provide on their websites, for It is designed to assist users in obtaining the required information and to strengthen the interaction between the customer and the company, to carry out e-commerce activities (for example, the sale of contract products and services or various lessons).) or to discuss topics in a secure platform that meets the website's quality standards. Our proposed website analysis model is structured in four blocks: information, communication, e-commerce and additional functions (Table 1). Each block contains features that are evaluated and evaluation indicators for different dimensions are also mentioned.

<p>1. Basic golf course information</p> <p>I.1.1- Description of the golf course (address, membership information, origin, history, etc.).</p> <p>I.1.2- Contacts: phone, fax number and email address.</p> <p>I.1.3- Pictures of the golf course.</p> <p>I.1.4- Visual and textual information about the services provided.</p> <p>I.1.5- News / communication events I.1.6- Golf course location information.</p> <p>I.1.7- Links to websites evaluating the services provided by the golf course.</p> <p>I.1.8- Virtual tour.</p> <p>I.1.9- Working hours of the golf course.</p> <p>I.1.10- Information about the Federation's tournament schedule for a specific golf course.</p> <p>2. Golf course facilities</p> <p>I.2.1- Golf course plan.</p> <p>I.2.2- Booking golf tournaments on the official website.</p> <p>I.2.3- Price information</p> <p>I.2.4- Golf lesson information; Lessons for adults / children.</p> <p>3. The local environment of the golf course</p> <p>I.3.1- Tourism information about the region.</p> <p>I.3.2- Weather reports.</p> <p>I.3.3- Information about access to the golf course (airports, trains, highways, etc.).</p> <p>4. Advertising</p> <p>I.4.1- Advertising events, advertising campaigns, news, banners, exhibitions, advertising calendar and events on the golf course.</p> <p>I.4.2- Incentives: vouchers / vouchers, exclusive Internet offers, online contests, promotion .of various services</p>
<p>1. Customer interaction.</p> <p>C.1.1- Email address and telephone number of the golf course.</p> <p>C.1.2- Ability to send comments online by customers.</p> <p>C.1.3- Instant messaging C.1.4- Online surveys.</p> <p>C.1.5- Frequently asked questions section.</p> <p>C.1.6- Option to receive course newsletter (information bulletin).</p> <p>C.1.7- Restricted access area for customers and members.</p>

<p>C.1.8- The possibility of customers voting on the quality and satisfaction of the services provided.</p> <p>2. Web 2.0. Sources</p> <p>C.2.1- Content Syndication (RSS) / Podcast.</p> <p>C.2.2- Programs that allow users to publish content.</p> <p>C.2.3- Facilities that allow users to share content with their contacts.</p> <p>C.2.4- Link to the company's blog.</p> <p>C.2.5- Links to external image and video operating systems.</p> <p>C.2.6- Link to the company's social networks. C.2.7- Content Syndication (RSS) / Podcast.</p> <p>C.2.8- Programs that allow users to publish content.</p> <p>3. Foreign language facilities</p> <p>.C.3.1- The website is available in more than one language</p>
<p>EC.1- Online payment.</p> <p>EC.2- Secure online transactions (in purchasing processes, digital signatures, encryption, security)</p> <p>E-commerce variable</p> <p>Additional variable functions</p> <p>code via mobile text).</p> <p>EC.3- Interaction with the server: database consulting (customer access to his profiles, the possibility of making changes, access to purchase history, etc.)</p> <p>.Information security .1</p>
<p>1. Information security.</p> <p>AF 1.1. AF Privacy Policy and Legal Notice 1.2. Data protection laws</p> <p>AF 1.3. Website security</p> <p>2. Certificates.</p> <p>AF 2.1- Golf Environmental Organization (GEO) certificate. Sealed by the Golf Environment Authority</p> <p>AF 2.2- Environmental management systems (EMS) help to identify, prioritize and manage environmental risks.</p> <p>AF 2.3- Environmental certification (ISO 14000). The Environmental Policy has been developed by the National Golf Center</p> <p>AF 2.4- other certificates.</p> <p>3. Mobile version.</p> <p>AF 3.1- Having an internet link to the mobile version of the website.</p> <p>.AF 3.2- Availability of the official golf course app</p>

Table 1. Dimensions items

As mentioned, to achieve our main goals, we evaluated websites from a marketing perspective. After identifying online content and services offered on websites, we analyzed informative content and interactive services that were considered useful or attractive to users [56,61]. Items

were selected from the literature review and new elements were added to suit the context of golf courses.

During the fieldwork, carried out in April and May 2019, we used the proposed model to prepare a template that contains different aspects that were selected for review after the literature review. Finally, the model included 46 indicators (i.e., items) to analyze the dimensions of information, communication, e-commerce, and additional functions of golf course websites.

Content analysis was performed from a quantitative perspective to evaluate online presence, information level and interaction of websites [54,56,61]. Following Neuendorf [64], our content analysis consisted of eight steps. First, to formulate the research questions, we considered that websites that have adopted e-commerce to a more advanced level will use various web-based facilities more. Second, we identified variables related to information, communication, e-commerce and additional functions provided by websites. Third, we defined categories and measurement units for the analysis of all websites, which includes identifying the unit of analysis (for example, a golf course in Catalonia) and defining the categories - that is, the different items that are present Web Designates Four-Fourth Golf Courses To create a coding scheme, we developed a codebook that included the categories and how they were measured. All items are included in the four dimensions mentioned (eg, information, communication, e-commerce and additional functions). Fifth, for sampling, we selected websites belonging to golf courses in Catalonia. Sixth, the codebook was tested by two trained coders who evaluated the websites, and seventh, coding for the sample was done independently by referring to the codebook. Eighth and lastly, the data was analyzed by assessing the presence or absence of certain characteristics and collecting the data in tables and graphs.

3.2 Extended Internet Commerce Adoption Model (eMICA)

Burgess and Cooper [65] developed the Internet Business Acceptance Model (MICA) when studying the metal fabrication industry in Australia. MICA believes that when developing business websites, companies usually start with a simple web page and their online presence becomes more complex by incorporating new processes due to increased experience and knowledge about ICT. Representing three levels of business processes, this model includes three corresponding stages: (a) web advertising, (b) providing information and services and

c) transaction processes. These steps represent a road map that shows the level of development of e-commerce applications in different business sectors - in our case, golf tourism. Beyond that, acknowledging that websites evolve continuously, MICA assumes that the various stages of development, from initiation (e.g., promotion through) through consolidation (e.g., presentation) to reaching Maturity (eg processing). It also includes levels of website complexity and functionality that reflect the evolution of companies as they develop from a static Internet presence to a dynamic website, typically with increasing levels of interaction, incorporating value chain integration, and hosting innovative programs that Added value. Information management and performance [66,67].

Since its creation, MICA has been used in sectors other than manufacturing, especially in the tourism industry [68–72] but also in sports facility management [55,73–75]. In the process, by making improvements to the model and adding several layers of complexity, MICA evolved into eMICA to accommodate new virtual environments and Internet features (Table 2). In short, eMICA prescribes a step-by-step evaluation that allows websites to be evaluated from the promotional level to higher transactional stages. However, this model has its limitations. As Schmitt et al. [76] have argued, eMICA tends to reduce the complexity of research and can place websites at two levels of simultaneous development or at none. Nevertheless, since our goal, after adapting the model, was to evaluate the maturity of golf course websites, eMICA was evaluated as appropriate because it includes the logical dimensions that a website, as a technology platform, should have: Information, communication and transactions [77]. In using eMICA, we considered that sports tourism companies, despite being important sources of tourism for their destination, do not always use all the opportunities offered by ICT [78]. In our case, as studies have shown, golf course websites rarely use advanced functions that maintain relationships with customers and are not used for communication, which allows for more customer interaction and Customer prevents

Level 1: Basic information (at least 3 of the 5 suggested variables)

Contact details: name, address, phone number and golf course map, and other items opening days and hours

Golf course map, golf course photos, location information

Level 2: Rich information (at least 4 of the 7 proposed variables)

Email and / or contact form

Information about services offered (kids, golf buggies, golf carts, golf club hire, etc.)

Weather forecast

Website available in more than one language Awards and quality certificates News/events information

Internet-based promotions and incentives (vouchers/coupons, exclusive Internet offers, online contests)

Level 1: low level of interaction (at least 4 of the 9 proposed variables)

Members' season ticket rates and prices, interactive golf course map

Price and basic information

Links to external information: accommodation, restaurants, others game tips (clothing, technique, etc.)

Full race calendar lesson

Online review of services provided Links to related pages

Level 2: Medium interactive level (at least 4 variables out of 9 suggested variables)

Web site map of webcam reservation facilities

Ability to download brochures and photos, email bulletins (newsletter)

Privacy Policy and Legal Notice Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) Suggestions

Online shop

Level 3: high level of interaction (at least 4 of the 9 proposed variables)

Multimedia applications Blogs, forums and chats unique to the customer / member area

Access to profiles on golf course social networks. Facility to send comments online by customers
The possibility of evaluating the satisfaction of the virtual tour services provided in golf courses
Mobile version of the website facility to download the mobile application
Secure online transactions, (in purchase processes, digital signatures, encryption, security code via mobile text) (secure forms of payment using credit / debit cards or PayPal) server interaction: database consultation (access to customer profiles with the possibility of modification, access to purchase history, etc.). Private registration area

Table 2. Assessment steps

3.3 Integration of eMICA and WCA

After using these two methods, we derived the results of the proposed integrated model—that is, we combined the eMICA items and the WCA dimensions. Again, our goal was to create and compare web content and technology maturity of golf courses, or in other words, to compare the overall experience and complexity of websites. First, the relationship between the obtained eMICA level and the average of the WCA dimensions was calculated. To do this, we compared the means according to the type of golf course determined by analysis of variance (ANOVA). When the relationships between eMICA levels and WCA dimensions were analyzed, ANOVA was supplemented with principal component analysis (PCA), a multivariate method of interdependence analysis for a data set with numerical variables. PCA is useful for reducing a set of variables to a small number of artificial components or factors with minimal loss of information. In our analysis, the variables were the total number of occurrences (ie, frequency) of each WCA dimension and the eMICA level for each golf course website. SPSS version 20.0 was used for all analyses.

4. Results

4.1 WCA results

Table 3 sets out the percentage of golf course websites that include WCA elements, the level of presence of each item and the statistical significance and strength (i.e. Cramer's V) of the relationship between the type of golf course and the analyzed item.

Information Holes	18	9 Hole s	Tota l	V.C. and Sig.
1. Golf course information				
I.1.1- Description of the golf course	100	100	100	-
I.1.2- Contacts: telephone and fax numbers, email address	100	100	100	-
I.1.3- Images of the golf course	100	100	100	-
I.1.4- Text and visual information about services offered	96.3	100	97.3	0.10 1
I.1.5- News/events communications	88.9	70.0	83.8	0.22

				8
I.1.6- Information on the location of golf courses	100	100	100	-
I.1.7- Links to assessment websites of services provided by the golf course	18.5	0.0	13.5	0.24 1
I.1.8. Virtual tours	7.4	0.0	5.4	0.14 5
I.1.9. Golf course opening hours	48.1	60.0	51.4	0.10 5
I.1.10- Information on the golf course's federation tournament calendar	96.3	90.0	94.6	0.12 4
2. Golf course facilities				
I.2.1- Golf course plans	96.3	80.0	91.9	0.25 1
I.2.2- Facility to book rounds of golf	81.5	50.0	73.0	0.315 *
I.2.3- Price information	96.3	20.0	75.7	0.79 0 **
I.2.4- Golf lesson information: courses for adults/children	100	100	100	-
3. Golf course surroundings				
I.3.1- Local area tourism information	40.7	20.0	35.1	0.19 3
I.3.2- Weather forecasts	40.7	30.0	37.8	0.09 8
I.3.3- Access routes to the golf course	81.5	60.0	75.7	0.22 2
4. Promotions				
I.4.1- Event promotions, public campaigns, news, banners, fairs, calendar of	70.0 77.8		75.7	0.08 0
I.4.2- Incentives: vouchers/coupons, exclusive offers, online	internet 88.9	70.0	83.8	0.22 8

Table 3. Information indicators with percentages based on the type of golf course

4.1.1 Information

Next, the information analyzes the mechanisms through which golf courses use their websites to communicate their core features, facilities and environment, as well as promote their products. As shown in Table 3, the information about golf courses (I.1) and their facilities (I.2) have higher scores than the information provided about their environment (I.3) and their improvement level (I.4) have obtained. Information was lacking especially in the local environment, especially information about tourists and weather forecast. Among other results, websites for 18-hole courses have more information than for 9-hole courses. Therefore, it can be concluded that the information published through websites is evaluated differently based on the analyzed category. In the first place is the information about the golf course, in the second

place is the information about the facilities, and in the third and fourth places (instead of each other) is the information about the environment and advertising. Last, the presence of some aspects of digital marketing, including virtual tours (I.1.8) with 5.4% of the total and links to evaluation websites (I.1.7) with 13.5% was minimal.

4.1.2. connections

The communication dimension included tools that promote company-customer interaction on golf course websites and other digital marketing elements, as well as offering content in more than one language. As shown in Table 4, items related to company-customer interaction (for example, use of instant messaging and use of social media networks) depend on the type of golf course, especially among 18-hole courses. There is a significant difference. At the same time, 18-hole courses used the Internet far more than their nine-hole counterparts.

Communication	18 Holes	9 Holes	Total	V.C. and Sig.
1. Client interaction				
C.1.1- Golf course email address and telephone number	100	100	100	-
C.1.2- Facility for clients to post comments online	81.5	10.0	62.2	0.655 **
C.1.3- Instant messaging	81.5	0.0	59.5	0.737 **
C.1.4- Online surveys	0	0	0	-
C.1.5- Frequently asked questions area	22.2	0	16.2	0.268
C.1.6- Information bulletin	66.7	50.0	62.2	0.153
C.1.7- Private client/member zone	22.2	0	16.2	0.268
C.1.8- Facility for clients to vote on the quality of, and satisfaction with, services provided	0	0	0	-
2. Website resources				
C.2.1- Content syndication (RSS)/Podcasting	29.6	20.0	27.0	0.096
C.2.2- Applications that allow users to publish content	0	0	0	-
C.2.3- Facility to share content with friends and contacts	0	10.0	2.70	0.274 ^
C.2.4- Link to company blog	11.1	10.0	10.8	0.016
C.2.5- Links to external image and video platforms	33.3	0	24.3	0.345 *
C.2.6- Links to company social networks	74.1	30.0	62.2	0.404 *
3. Language capabilities				
C.3. Website available in more than one language	81.5	50.0	73.0	0.315 ^

Table 4. Correlation indices with percentages based on the type of golf course

Overall, the most common method of company-customer communication was via telephone and email (C.1.1), which all websites offer, followed by online comment boards (C.1.2) and newsletters (C.1.6). . Notably, no website provided a way to evaluate the quality of service provided or online surveys, and the score for online engagement was lower than company-customer engagement. In this case, the use of social media networks was prominent with a score of 62.2% (C.2.6), while the score of other items was significantly lower. For example, only 2.7% of websites offer content sharing (C.2.3) and only 10.8% have their own blogs.

To complete the analysis of communication variables, we examined the capacity of websites to provide information in different languages. In general, information is provided in more than one language on websites, although not to a significant extent. About 73% of sites offer their content in two or more languages, which largely depends on the size of their golf courses. The vast majority of 18-hole course websites (81.5%) operate in multiple languages compared to only half of 9-hole courses (50%). Such data are important because, according to Aymerich and Anabitarte [18], the impact of the golf industry on the Spanish economy is 2.07 billion euros, of which 564 million euros are directly attributable to tourism. Although golf courses that provide relevant information in multiple languages on their websites will have a clear competitive advantage in attracting tourists, nearly 40% of the analyzed courses have clearly wrong websites. They have committed a sin.

4.1.3. electronic commerce

The dimensions of e-commerce are the availability of online payment services, secure online transactions and server interactions on golf course websites (see Table 5). This analysis identified a stark difference in the implementation of digital business elements by type of golf course. These elements were significantly present in the 18-hole course websites (70.4%) in the three sub-sections EC1, EC2 and EC3, but completely absent in the 9-hole course websites. Overall, 51.4% of golf courses analyzed display these three items on their websites.

Electronic Commerce	18 Holes	9 Holes	Tot al	V.C. and Sig.
EC.1- Online payment	70.4	0.0	51.4	0.625 **
EC.2- Secure online transactions (in purchase processes, digital signature, encryption, security code via mobile text)	70.4	0.0	51.4	0.625 **
EC.3- Interaction with the server: database consultation (access to client profile with the facility to modify, access to purchase history, etc.)	70.4	0.0	51.4	0.625 **

Table 5. E-commerce indicators with percentages based on the type of golf course.

4.1.4. Additional functions

The additional functions dimension (Table 6) includes general aspects considered for inclusion in websites for golf courses in three basic categories: information security, quality certification and availability of the mobile version of the website. Finally, this dimension showed behavioral results similar to the other results. The score for privacy policies and legal notices (AF.1.1) was 67.6%, while the score for the availability of information about data protection laws (AF.1.2) was 56.8% overall and only 30%. It was for 9 hole course websites. Not only is this figure significantly low, but it also indicates that a significant percentage of websites have access to their customers' or partners' information using registration processes and are therefore not compliant with data protection laws. . Similarly, only 40% of websites provided information about their privacy policies. Beyond that, few websites advertised or at least indicated that their courses had quality certificates. Only 7.4% of 18-hole course websites are certified by the Golf Environment Authority and only 3.7% indicate having environmental certifications. Tellingly, no website for a nine-hole course shows certification information. Last, 75.7% of sites provide links to their mobile versions (FA 3.1), although a much smaller number (10.8%) indicate having an official mobile app (AF 3.2).

Overall, the analysis of these four dimensions showed that a significant part of the golf courses in Catalonia had only a static and basic online presence, and undoubtedly the 18-hole tournaments had the most activity. These results are consistent with the findings of applied research in different sectors, which show that websites are often static showcases of products and services that do not use the capabilities of the web for company-customer interaction, and therefore do not strengthen the two-way relationship between the organization and the customer. do [44,56,80].

5. Discussion

In this section, the results of using WCA and eMICA in an attempt to review the websites of golf courses in Catalonia are presented in a consolidated manner. Focusing first on the WCA, we observed that, as far as dissemination of information is concerned, golf courses have the basic requirements for informing potential customers about their golf and other facilities. For example, results in the communication dimension show that businesses in the sports industry typically make limited use of online interactive tools to communicate with users. However, this conversation can provide golf courses with a better knowledge of their customers and therefore improve the services provided.

For another, although engagement is critical to the online presence of any company or organization [82,83], our results show that golf courses have considerable work to do before they can significantly take advantage of the opportunities offered by the Internet. must do At the same time, these companies are present in social media and other media that act as the main vessels of communication. Of course, by type, the 18-hole courses in our study were more active online, although their nine-hole counterparts made it easy to share content with friends and contacts.

Next, in the case of e-commerce, many differences emerged depending on the type of golf course. While most 18-hole course websites had online booking and payment systems, 9-hole course sites did not. These results are consistent with previous findings on web content provided by golf courses [21,43].

Last, regarding additional functions, the presence of quality certificates on websites was poor, and only sites for 18-hole courses showed environmental permits, if any. Of course, as research has shown, results in other areas such as food and socioeconomics and even the findings of snow sports facilities have been similar [55,57,58]. In any case, a minority of the facilities offered by the websites we evaluated reported information on environmental or quality certifications.

Overall, the use of eMICA has shown us that golf courses in Catalonia have not reached maturity in their e-commerce activities. Meanwhile, according to the WCA with eMICA, the online presence of most courses is in the middle stage of development - that is, it is primarily used as a tool for communication. Therefore, the use of a wide variety of online career opportunities among courses, especially nine-hole courses, is not well established.

6-Conclusion

Since ICT has a significant impact on sports organizations in general and in the golf industry in particular, the management and marketing of golf courses must adapt to take advantage of the benefits offered by the Internet in all its dimensions.

Research has shown that golf course websites have a high level of communication in all aspects related to resident information, meaning information about location, facilities, access routes and courses, among other things. However, the degree of communication is much lower for indicators that provide non-static information and functions, including weather conditions, content sharing programs, links to blogs and social media. This type of information can be very useful, however, increasing the perceived credibility of organizations and the trust that customers feel towards them [84].

Golf courses have high tourism and economic effects in their place of residence. However, in Catalonia, the opportunities offered online to promote golf and its related facilities are not fully exploited. Many websites for golf courses neither provide information in multiple languages nor promote local tourism resources, both of which can be important decision-making factors for tourists when choosing or booking a travel destination. Beyond that, environmental sustainability policies are also not advertised. However, environmental policies can be decisive for customers, many of whom are increasingly aware of sustainability and climate change.

Our results also show differential online presence depending on the type of golf course. 18-hole course websites have higher engagement, provide more information and are better at conducting transactions and securing the Internet than nine-hole course websites, which are far behind in every step and at every level considered.

Methodologically, we have further demonstrated that our integrated model is applicable and can contribute to a systematic and reliable evaluation of the content and adoption rate of e-

commerce, which provides a proper understanding of the development stage of golf courses and the required aspects. provides introduced or improved.

Regarding management recommendations, golf course management should first of all be aware that their market segment is technically advanced, has high purchasing power and is accustomed to immediate responses [85]. Their company websites are often the first point of contact their potential customers have with the organization and thus key to image formation. Golf course managers should consider the proposed model so that their websites can match the expectations of the golf consumer profile, which will greatly increase the number of visitors and reservations and customer-company interaction. In turn, they should also create synergies with tourism destination managers. They may conduct joint advertising campaigns to position the area as a specific destination for golf tourism. After all, golf courses can be important poles of attraction that can generate many tourists by providing an attractive complementary activity to others offered by the destination. At the same time, the results show that only slightly more than half of the analyzed golf courses mention data protection laws on their websites, which is of course highly recommended to know the company's compliance with the law. to be

A limitation of our study was that we conducted our analysis at one point in time, and since golf course websites may change at any time, results may vary from one moment to another. also change. Another important limitation was the number of websites analyzed. Although they represent all the golf courses registered in Catalonia, it is necessary to expand the number of websites analyzed. Therefore, a proposed line of research in the future could be to extend the analysis to golf courses in other regions and countries to collect more information and compare the results. In addition, personal interviews may be conducted with golf course managers to identify the main obstacles they face in improving their online presence and improving customer engagement.

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