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Exploring the Interplay of Museum and City Reputation: Insights from the Uffizi Case Study

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Abstract

This study examines the concept of a museum's reputation and its interaction with the reputation of the city. In particular, it reflects on their interplay in the online environment. To contribute empirically to the reflection, the case of the Uffizi Galleries and Florence was analyzed. The research adopts an holistic approach, reviewing literature from management, branding, regional economics, and sociology. The study employs a single case study methodology, utilizing interviews, participant observation, and secondary data analysis. Additionally, topic modeling, sentiment analysis, and emotions analysis were conducted on articles from three newspapers—local, national, and international. Key findings highlight the impact of the museum's digital strategies, leadership, and collaborations on its reputation. The analysis of online media reveals positive sentiment and emotions associated with the Uffizi, reinforcing its reputation as a prestigious cultural institution. However, limited interaction between the museum's and the city's reputation emerged. Even if the Uffizi enhance Florence's attractiveness as a tourist destination, from the analysis it emerged that the Uffizi Galleries' brand is distinct and autonomous form the city of Florence's brand. The paper concludes with practical recommendations for museums to invest in digital strategies, cultivate strong leadership, and develop collaborations to enhance their reputation, and policy recommendation for cities that want to leverage their museums to enhance the city's reputation contributing to urban economic and cultural vitality.

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1. Introduction

In recent decades, the concept of reputation has garnered significant attention across various disciplines, including organizational management, marketing, and sociology. This focus is particularly evident in the context of tourism, where reputation plays a crucial role in influencing the attractiveness and economic performance of destinations. Museums, as pivotal cultural institutions, are integral to this dynamic, acting not only as repositories of cultural heritage but also as active agents in shaping the reputation of the cities in which they are inserted. This paper aims to explore the intersections between museum reputation and city reputation. To this end, the case of the Uffizi Galleries in Florence will be analyzed.

Museums compete for limited public and private resources by demonstrating their ability to generate social, cultural, and economic value for their localities (Cerquetti, 2014). The evolution of the museum sector over the past fifty years has intensified this competition, necessitating that museums leverage both tangible and intangible assets to sustain themselves. Among these assets, reputation stands out as a critical factor, allowing museums to differentiate themselves in the competitive environment (Solima, 2022). The online dimension has further amplified the importance of reputation, with digital platforms creating new avenues for opinion formation and dissemination.

The reputational interplay between museums and cities is particularly noteworthy. Cities, like museums, possess reputational capital that can significantly impact their economic performance and attractiveness (Wolman et al., 2004; Harmaakorpi et al., 2008; Akhmetshin et al., 2020). Museums enhance a city's symbolic capital by creating meaningful associations, thereby increasing the city's attractiveness to investors, residents, and tourists (Plaza et al., 2015). They are especially intertwined with the tourism industry, often becoming key tourist attractions (Palmer, 1999). However, museums contribute far beyond tourism. A highly esteemed museum can act as a cultural ambassador, bolstering the city's identity, preserving its memory, and enriching its sense of place (Cooke & Lazzeretti, 2008; Cerisola, 2019; Grincheva, 2020; Panzera, 2022).

The literature on reputation is multidisciplinary, encompassing studies in management, branding, regional economics, and sociology. All these disciplines, adopting different perspectives, have examined the mental associations that museums contribute to city reputations. For instance, branding studies have focused on the "brand associations" that emerge from co-branding relationships between museums and cities (Lucarelli, 2018), while sociology, on the other hand, views museums as symbols of local identity, conveying a sense of place that is both recognizable and authentic (Giovanardi et al., 2013).

The digital transformation brought about by Web 2.0 has added a new layer to this reputational dynamic. The convergence of digital and physical realities has made the reputation of museums and

cities multi-dimensional, necessitating a thorough exploration of how online activities influence reputation (Lazzeretti, 2023). Understanding this relationship is vital for policymakers and museum managers aiming to maximize the potential of museums in enhancing urban attractiveness and economic sustainability.

Despite the growing recognition of the importance of reputation, the literature remains nascent, with many concepts used arbitrarily and without a cohesive theoretical framework.

This paper, adopting an holistic approach, seeks to address this gap by offering a brief review of the concept of reputation in the museum's and city's field, the interplay between them, and the role of the online environment. Then, the paper contributes empirically to the literature with a case study analysis: the Uffizi Galleries in Florence.

2. Theoretical Background

The concept of reputation has evolved significantly over the past few decades, gaining prominence across various fields, including management, marketing, and sociology. Reputation is broadly defined as the collective perception held by a broad audience regarding an entity's attributes and behaviors. It is a socially constructed, multi-dimensional concept that reflects cumulative judgments based on direct experiences and mediated information (Fombrun, 1996; Walker, 2010; Ferris et al., 2014). According to Lange et al. (2011), reputation can be analyzed through three main lenses: visibility (being known), quality (being known for something specific), and favorability (being liked or esteemed). These dimensions highlight how reputation is not only about awareness but also about the quality and desirability of what the entity is known for. Moreover, reputation can act as a valuable intangible asset that significantly influences stakeholder trust and engagement (Koufaris & Hampton-Sosa, 2004; Chen & Barnes, 2007; Fuller et al. 2007).

For museums, reputation is crucial, as it influences public perception, funding opportunities, and visitor engagement (DiMaggio, 1986; Frey & Meier, 2006; Bennett, 2017; Camarero et al., 2023). Despite the significant role museums play in cultural, social, and economic development today, they face the challenge of evaluating and proving their value and success (Whelan, 2015). Given the reduction the cultural sector's funding and management models, museums are becoming increasingly conscious of the significance of their reputation. Indeed, reputation is a key component of their intangible assets, enabling them to stand out in a competitive landscape (Solima, 2022).

To cultivate a positive reputation, museums are placing greater emphasis on brand management to create specific, favorable mental associations around the museum's name (Baumgarth, 2009). The museums that more use branding strategies to promote themselves are called in the literature 'branding museum' (Greffe et al. 2017) or 'superstar museums' (Frey, 1998), They leverage their

brand to add value and innovate globally, significantly contributing to the local economy through international tourism.

In doing so, they increasingly use online communication channels to convey their mission and identity, fulfilling the information needs of various stakeholders (Solima, 2012). When digital tools align with the museum's vision and mission, they can effectively engage both current and potential audiences by portraying the museum as a dynamic and engaging entity. Museums utilize online platforms and social media for three primary purposes: reaching a wide audience, facilitating interaction and dialogue, and gaining a deeper understanding of their audiences (Kyprianos & Kontou, 2023). Digital platforms have become increasingly significant in shaping and disseminating museum reputation, with online reviews and social media interactions playing crucial roles. Having a strong reputation on online platforms leads to increased visits, as the average rating from visitors influences others' decisions to visit the museum [Budge, 2017; Fernández-Hernández et al., 2021].

In addition to the institution's overall reputation, the personal reputation of the museum director can play a significant role. In business studies, the reputation of the company leader has been shown to have a persistent impact over time on museum performance and broader across sectors than corporate reputation, and that the reputation of the leader maintains a positive effect even when corporate reputation is poor (Weng & Chen, 2016). As has emerged in the literature, the reputation of the leader is crucial for the company's reputation, and it is necessary to manage it as best as possible, since negative news about the leader can heavily impact the purchase decision (Sohn et al., 2009) and attraction and retention of human resources (Graeme & Katie, 2018). Even if there are limited studies in this regard in the literature on museum management (Bagdadli & Paolino, 2006), by observing the practice it is clear that the director's expertise, leadership, and vision are critical in shaping the museum's strategic direction and public image. A director with a strong personal reputation can attract high-profile exhibitions, partnerships, and donations, further elevating the museum's status. Their actions and public statements often become intertwined with the museum's identity, influencing how both are perceived by stakeholders.

Cities, much like individuals and businesses, possess reputations (Aula & Harmaakorpi, 2008; Harmaakorpi et al., 2008; Wæraas, 2015). These reputations are shaped by the perceptions, evaluations, and opinions of stakeholders regarding various factors, including the quality of urban infrastructure, economic performance, cultural vibrancy (Anholt, 2006). The reputation of a city plays a crucial role as it impacts the actions and decisions of its stakeholders (Govers & Go, 2009). Indeed, cities with good reputations attract tourists, investors, and new residents, contributing to their overall economic and social vitality (Braun et al., 2018). Still, it is also crucial for citizens' well-being and

cities' economic sustainability (Dastgerdi & De Luca, 2019). Therefore, having a good reputation is a valuable asset for cities.

Even in cities not recognized as "cultural", the interplay between a museum's reputation and the city's reputation is particularly significant. Museums, being "highly symbolic places", can enhance a city's image by serving as cultural landmarks and symbols of local identity, maintaining citizens' identity and quality of life (Kunzmann, 2004; Smith & von Krogh Strand, 2011) and reinforcing the city's appeal and attractiveness (Plaza et al., 2015). Tourists, in fact, seek experiences that involve learning about and immersing themselves in local culture (Cetin & Bilgihan, 2016).

Online communication plays a crucial role in building and maintaining the reputation, significantly influencing public perception. With the advent of Web 2.0, museums have expanded their communication platforms, utilizing websites, social media, blogs, and forums to interact with the public and share information about their collections, events, and educational programs. This digital presence not only increases the museum's sustainability (Galluccio & Giambona, 2024), but also the museum's visibility, facilitating the spread of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), which can enhance the museum's perceptions (Mandarano, 2019). Big data from online platforms can significantly enhance museums' competitiveness by providing insights into audience perceptions and engagement levels. This data, combined with traditional satisfaction tools, aids strategic decisions and improves visitor experiences. Online conversations reflect public opinion and reputation, while data analytics extract valuable information from diverse sources to support museum decision-making (Fernández-Hernández et al., 2021; Ginsburg, 2016; Grincheva, 2018; Kydros & Vrana, 2021; Nuccio & Bertacchini, 2022).

In the same way, the hospitality industry and in general tourist destinations can effectively use online communication to enhance their reputation (Šerić & Vernuccio, 2020; Gössling et al., 2018), also promoting themselves as "cultural cities" (Beccherle et al., 2024). Several studies in the literature have analyzed how the online reputation of tourist destinations, including cities, is crucial. For this reason, monitoring and analyzing perceptions on online platforms is increasingly considered important by scholars and practitioners (Micera & Crispino, 2017; Simeon et al., 2017; Iglesias-Sánchez et al., 2019; Carrasco-Santos et al., 2021).

In the literature is proven that the visibility of museums in the online press has the power to impact tourist flows (Plaza et al. 2015). At the same time, museums, through communication by collaborating with local and national media and building a supportive network by implementing various marketing strategies, can established themselves as attractive not only to tourists but also to the local community (Aprilia & Kusumawati, 2021).

From what emerged in the literature, museums not only can potentially promote culture and education, but also act as city's ambassadors both offline and online, enhancing the place's overall reputation and making it a more attractive tourist destination.

3. Research Design

The aim of the research is to explore the concept of museum's reputation, reflecting on the role of the museum's online activity in influencing it, and the interrelation with the reputation of the city.

To contribute empirically to the literature, the case of the Uffizi Galleries and Florence was analyzed.

The Uffizi Galleries were chosen as a case study as in the past years focused on online communication channels to contribute to their reputation. Furthermore, it was the object of analyses and research devoted to understanding digital strategies and changes in the organization over time (Lazzeretti et al., 2024; Giusti, 2024), and about how the tourist pressure in Florence influences the Uffizi's reputation (Ciappei et al., 2023). Based on such consideration, the Uffizi Galleries can represent a valuable case study for investigating its online dimension, visibility, image, and ultimately, reputation, reflecting on that from tourist attractiveness and local development of view.

The study employs a single case study methodology, as the Uffizi represents a unique and influential case within the Italian cultural sector. This approach is justified by the Uffizi's distinctive position, having been identified as an outlier in terms of visitors and revenue compared to other state museums (Alfano et al., 2023). The Uffizi, along with the Archaeological Park of Pompeii and the Colosseum in Rome, accounts for a significant portion of the total visitors to Italy's autonomous museums, making it an ideal subject for an in-depth case study.

Data for this study were collected from multiple sources to ensure comprehensive understanding and data triangulation, as recommended by Yin (2009).

The primary data sources include 14 semi-structured face-to-face interviews, conducted with key personnel within the Uffizi's management. Interviewees included the Director, and contact persons for various divisions such as the Curatorial, Digital Strategies, Cultural Mediation and Accessibility, Education, and Enhancement and Economic Strategies Divisions. These interviews provided insights into the museum's communication and branding strategies, the role of digital technologies, and the impact of these strategies on visitors and the city's reputation. The list of the interviewees with their role within the museum complex organization is visible in Table 1.

Table 1. List of interviewees with role and number of interviews

INTERVIEWEE ID	ROLE	N° OF INTERVIEWS
1	Director	2
2	Contact person for the curatorial division and archaeology and art history structures	7
3	Director's spokesperson and press officer	1
4	Digital strategies area representative	1
5	Cultural mediation and accessibility area coordinator, department of education	1
6	Head of the education department of the Uffizi Galleries and coordinator of the school and youth area	1
7	Representative of the legal department, department of enhancement and economic strategies	1
TOTAL		14

Source: authors' elaboration

To collect the data, researchers engaged in participant observation by attending conferences, exhibitions, and events at the Uffizi. This method provided an in-depth understanding of the museum's operations and visitor interactions, capturing nuances that might not be evident through other data collection methods (Vinten, 1994).

Secondary data sources included institutional reports, social media and website analysis, and press releases. These sources offered additional perspectives on the museum's digital strategy and public perception.

The analysis focuses on understanding the Uffizi's online reputation through the examination of public discourse in online newspapers.

The newspaper media was chosen over other online media channels because it shapes collective and individual perceptions, and it is a proxy for public opinions (DiMaggio et al., 2013), influencing organizational reputation (Deephouse, 2000).

The dataset used in this study comprises online articles from three main sources: Firenzetoday (n. 1080 articles), Il Sole 24 Ore (n. 307 articles), and The New York Times (n. 91 articles). The data spans from January 1, 2016, to December 31, 2022, corresponding to the tenure of director Eike Schmidt until 2022 (last data available). Web scraping techniques, implemented with Python, were used to retrieve the articles (Luscombe et al., 2022; Braun et al., 2018). This technique is widely used in various social science disciplines, including economics, organization, policy, communication, planning, political science, and sociology (Massimino, 2016; Cavallo, 2018; Braun et al., 2018). The articles have been downloaded from the three different online sites that had the words "Uffizi" and "Florence" in the body of the text.

The steps of the analysis include text pre-processing. This involves converting text to lowercase, removing stopwords, stemming, and tokenizing the text. Tf-idf analysis was conducted to weigh the importance of words (Salton & McGill, 1983). The words "Florence" and "Uffizi," being the keywords and therefore more likely to appear among the most significant words, were removed during the text pre-processing.

To analyze the content of articles, this research employs topic modeling, a text mining technique. Topic modeling, particularly Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA), is utilized to discover thematic structures within the text data. LDA identifies topics based on word co-occurrences, providing a probabilistic framework to explore latent themes in large text corpora (Blei et al., 2003; Mohr & Bogdanov, 2013). It is particularly well-suited for studying the phenomenon from a multidimensional and holistic perspective, considering reputation and its measurement from both qualitative and quantitative viewpoints.

Coherence scores were calculated to evaluate the quality of the topics, with the most coherent set of topics being selected for detailed analysis (Röder et al., 2015).

Finally, to analyze the sentiment of online articles, the NRC (National Research Council Canada) package was used to determine the emotions and sentiment associated with the texts, implemented with R programming language. The NRC Emotion Lexicon links English words to eight basic emotions (anger, fear, anticipation, trust, surprise, sadness, joy, and disgust) and two sentiments (positive and negative) (Mohammad & Turney, 2013; 2010). This lexicon has been widely utilized in various studies, demonstrating its reliability and robustness (Alzate et al. 2022; Ghanem et al. 2020). The articles in Italian (FirenzeToday and Il Sole 24 Ore datasets) were automatically translated into English and then analyzed by the algorithm.

The rule construction approach for emotion detection encompasses Keyword Recognition (KR) and Lexical Affinity (LA) methods. The KR method utilizes emotion dictionaries or lexicons to identify keywords in the text, while the LA method enhances KR by assigning probabilistic affinities to identified emotional words (Acheampong et al., 2020). For example, the word "good" may be probabilistically associated with "positive," while "angry" may be associated with "negative."

This methodological approach allows for a thorough and systematic assessment of the sentiments and emotions present in the texts, providing valuable insights for analyzing public perception and the reputation of organizations.

4. Results

4.1. The Uffizi Galleries' online activity strategy

The Uffizi Galleries are one of the most visited museums in Italy, located in the city of art of Florence. It represent one of the oldest museum complexes in the world and group together the historical art collections of the Medici family. It is composed of four museum sites - the Uffizi Gallery, Palazzo Pitti Museum, the Vasari Corridor, and the Boboli Gardens.

According to data from the Italian Ministry of Culture, the Uffizi Galleries was the most visited state museum institution in Italy in 2021.

By comparing data on visitors to museums that are part of the Uffizi Galleries[4] from 2005 to 2021 and tourist arrivals in the metropolitan city of Florence[5], it can be seen that there is a very similar trend. From 2017 to 2021, in particular, visits to the Galleries exceeded the number of tourist arrivals in the metropolitan city. This phenomenon can be observed in Figure 1.
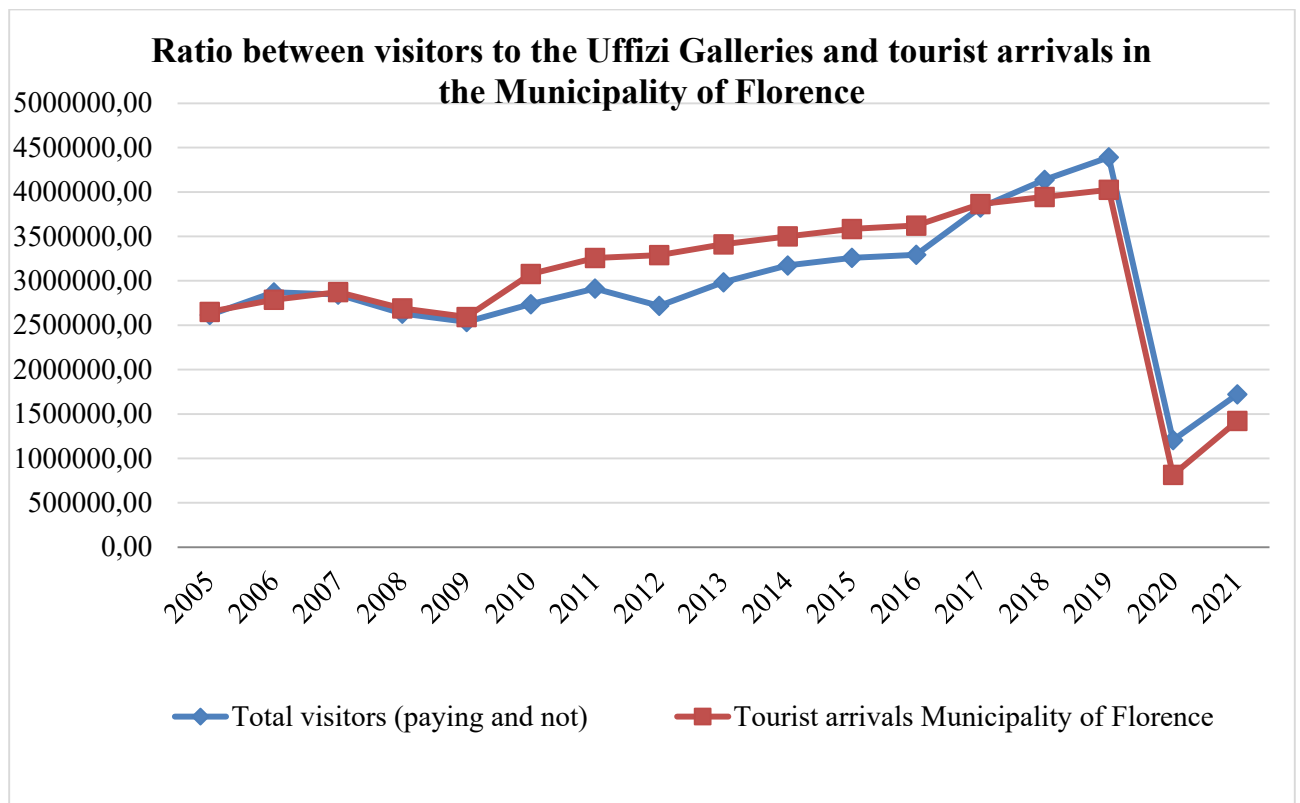

Figure 1. Relationship between the number of visitors to the Uffizi Galleries and tourist arrivals in the Municipality of Florence (Source: Authors' elaboration)

The Uffizi Galleries have undergone substantial organizational and strategic changes since the implementation of the Franceschini Reform in 2014, which aimed to grant autonomy to major state

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[4] MiBACT, Visitors and Revenue of State Museums, Monuments and Archaeological Areas,
http://www.statistica.beniculturali.it/Visitatori_e_introiti_musei.htm
[5] Metropolitan City of Florence, Tourist movements and consistency of accommodation facilities,
https://www.cittametropolitana.fi.it/turismo-2/movimenti-turistici-e-consistenza-delle-strutture-ricettive/.

museums in Italy. In 2015, Eike Schmidt was appointed as the director of the newly organized museum complex, marking the beginning of a new era for the Uffizi.

Under the direction of Eike Schmidt, the Uffizi Galleries developed the "Uffizi Galleries" brand, aiming not only to be easily recognizable but also to defend the Galleries in case of misuse by other parties. To communicate the brand the museum's mission and activities, the Uffizi have adopted a comprehensive online activity strategy aimed at engaging the widest and most diverse audience possible. This strategy leverages all available communication channels to present the various museums within the Uffizi complex to different demographic, geographic, and knowledge-based audiences.

Even if the Uffizi Gallery has always been well known and attracts tourists from all over the world every day, other museums part of the complex were less visited.

Indeed, the primary goal of this strategy is to enhance the visibility of the multitude of museums that form part of the Uffizi complex. By doing so, the Uffizi aims to showcase not only its role as a preserver and protector of artworks but also as a dynamic cultural institution where culture is actively produced.

To achieve this goal, the Uffizi has focused on narrating the everyday life of its museums, portraying them as living entities deeply embedded within both global and local social and political dynamics. This approach positions the Uffizi not merely as a static repository of art but as an active institution capable of offering valuable insights into cultural, social, and political issues. This narrative strategy helps to foster a deeper connection with the public, emphasizing the museum's relevance and adaptability in contemporary society.

The museum complex focused on the use of online communication channels, with positive effects on engaging the audiences and strengthen relationships at the local level (Lazzeretti et al., 2024).

To implement their strategy, the Uffizi Galleries utilized three types of online communication channels: the website, social media, and online press.

To support this activity, in 2016 the Uffizi had shifted its focus towards online activities, establishing an IT and Digital Strategies department. The department was tasked with overseeing digital innovation and online communication strategies, managing the museum's digital presence, including its website, social media platforms, and other online activities. Under Schmidt's leadership, the Uffizi became the most followed Italian museum on social media by 2021, with 962,987 followers. This trend continued, with the museum reaching 1,087,000 followers in 2022 and 1,179,029 followers by the end of Schmidt's tenure in 2023. These milestones highlight the success of the museum's digital and communication strategies in building a strong online presence and reputation.

In 2018, the museum complex appointed an internal press officer to further enhance its communication efforts. The Uffizi Gallery, from 2019 to the present, has been increasingly featured in both print and online media. In 2019, there were more than 2,000 articles in national and international publications (Gallerie degli Uffizi, 2020). In 2021, the Uffizi appeared in 6,996 newspaper articles (Gallerie degli Uffizi, 2022), in 2022 they appeared in 4,752 articles (Gallerie degli Uffizi, 2023a), and in 2023 in 6,326 articles (Gallerie degli Uffizi, 2023b). Among the most prominent publications are The New York Times, CNN, The Times, The Telegraph, Apollo, The Art Newspaper, Time Out Magazine, The Guardian, BBC, Der Spiegel, and China Daily.

This communication strategy has been reflected in the online communication channels, including online newspaper news. However, as noted in the literature on reputation, the entity's communication can support a positive reputation, but it cannot directly affect it [Gray & Balmer, 1998]. Stakeholder's perceptions are subject to various influences and may differ from the entity's institutional offline or online communication. Therefore, it is important for organizations and entities to monitor the reputation perceptions expressed by their stakeholders.

Therefore, studying what is written online about the Uffizi can provide an idea of the conveyed and discussed perceptions and thus the reputation of the Uffizi online, and how it is connected to the Florence's reputation.

4.2. The Uffizi Gallerie's online reputation

From the analysis of the online press regarding the Uffizi and Florence, particularly the topics covered and their positive or negative polarity, several topics emerged.

From the topic analysis of the local newspaper "FirenzeToday", 4 topics emerged, the details of which can be seen in Table 1.

Topic 1 was manually labeled as "General Information about the museum". This topic is characterized by words like the days of the week and months (e.g., "Domenica", "Dicembre", "Gennaio", "Novembre"), referring to information in those times and the names of the locations (e.g., Galleria -degli Uffizi-, Pitti, Boboli). This topic is therefore related to the importance of the museum's role in promoting its opening hours, ongoing works, and closure of rooms to allow for good planning of visits not only for national and international tourists but also for the citizens of Florence, to whom the local newspaper is primarily addressed.

Topic 2 is related to "Events and temporary exhibitions", characterized by words referring to the days of the week and months, as well as words like "cinema", "mostra" (Exhibition), "eventi", "film", "festiv", "music", "teatro" (theatre). In this case, the museum communicates not only its regular activities but also extraordinary ones such as organizing special events and temporary exhibitions,

encouraging the involvement and participation of citizens, students, and tourists in the museum even in more informal contexts.

Topic 3 concerns "Accessibility" to the museum, considering how the area around the Uffizi is in symbiosis with the urban planning and viability of the city of Florence. The management of these aspects is particularly important for participation in the museum, considering it not only culturally and historically integrated into the Florentine urban fabric but also physically located in the city. Words related to the topic include "divieti" (i.e. restrictions), "transito" (i.e. transit), "sosta" (i.e. parking), and "lavori" (i.e. roadworks). The museum is part of the city and affects the flow of tourists, and its management must therefore be considered in relation to its physical context.

Finally, the Topic 4 concerns "Director's relationship with the local administration and the Florentine's identity and Uffizi's use of social media". This topic highlights the work done by Director Schmidt in building relationships with the local and national administration and integrating the Uffizi Galleries into cultural, social, and political discussions in the city. Words related to this topic include "sindaco" (i.e. major), "presidente" (i.e. president), "polizia" (i.e. police), nardella (i.e. the surname of the mayor of Florence during Eike Schmidt's directorship), and "comune" (i.e. Municipality). This topic underscores how the museum's reputation management includes and contributes to the museum's soft power in the city and for the city, both in establishing external relationships and in enhancing the city's competitiveness and soft power.

In addition to the most relevant topics that emerged from the textual analysis, it is evident that the director's role is particularly significant, appearing among the most important words in both Topic 1 and Topic 4. The role of social media also emerges, though to a lesser extent, in Topic 4, where "social" and "video" can be easily linked to the use of social media in the museum's relationship with the city.

Table 2. Topic modelling results of the local newspaper "FirenzeToday"

Topic 1 "General information about the museum"		Topic 2 "Events and temporary exhibition"		Topic 3 "Accessibility"		Topic 4 "Director's relationship with the local administration and the Florentine's identity and Uffizi's use of social media"	
Word	**Eta**	**Word**	**Eta**	**Word**	**Eta**	**Word**	**Eta**
palazzo	0.009	Cinema	0.008	piazza	0.030	direttor	0.006
mostra	0.008	Giardino	0.006	vial	0.018	schmidt	0.005
galleri	0.007	Palazzo	0.006	lungarno	0.011	galleri	0.004
art	0.006	Mostra	0.005	tratto	0.009	oper	0.004
pitti	0.005	eventi	0.005	santa	0.008	art	0.004
oper	0.005	toscana	0.005	divieti	0.007	eik	0.003
direttor	0.004	film	0.004	piazzal	0.006	centro	0.003
domenica	0.004	festiv	0.004	transito	0.006	storico	0.003
schmidt	0.004	settimana	0.004	pont	0.006	carabinieri	0.003
boboli	0.004	musica	0.004	sosta	0.005	palazzo	0.003
visitatori	0.004	domenica	0.004	porta	0.005	sindaco	0.003
dicembr	0.004	programma	0.003	lavori	0.005	euro	0.003
giardino	0.003	maggio	0.003	borgo	0.004	president	0.003
sala	0.003	villa	0.003	domenica	0.004	piazza	0.003
progetto	0.003	pizza	0.003	senso	0.004	foto	0.003
restauro	0.003	boboli	0.003	divieto	0.003	polizia	0.003
cultura	0.003	teatro	0.003	sabato	0.003	botticelli	0.002
gennaio	0.003	torna	0.003	vigor	0.003	opera	0.002
eik	0.003	parco	0.003	corsia	0.003	fiorentino	0.002
novembr	0.003	giugno	0.003	centro	0.003	vecchio	0.002
settimana	0.002	luglio	0.003	lunedi	0.003	fiorentina	0.002
ottobr	0.002	possibil	0.003	medici	0.003	italia	0.002
opera	0.002	progetto	0.003	provvedimenti	0.003	cultura	0.002
ministro	0.002	vecchio	0.003	giovanni	0.003	nardella	0.002
natal	0.002	sabato	0.003	unico	0.003	social	0.002
dedicata	0.002	agosto	0.003	mezzi	0.003	comun	0.002
storia	0.002	euro	0.003	novembr	0.003	lavoro	0.002
torna	0.002	edizion	0.002	croce	0.003	leonardo	0.002
nazional	0.002	settembr	0.002	veicoli	0.003	video	0.002

From the analysis of the national newspaper "Il Sole 24 Ore", 3 topics emerged, which can be seen in Table 2.

Topic 1 concerns "The Uffizi in the Italian cultural heritage context", highlighting the importance of the Uffizi collection, one of the most significant in Italy. This topic includes words such as "Italia", "valore" (i.e. value), "ministro" (i.e. minister), and the names of important Italian artists like "Leonardo", "Michelangelo", and "Raffaello". The topic reveals how the Uffizi Galleries have the

reputation of being one of the most important museums in Italy, bringing visibility and prestige to the city of Florence at both national and international levels.

Topic 2 deals with the performance of the Uffizi compared to other Italian museums and is labeled as "Italian state museums' visitor performances". This topic contains words such as "visitatori" (i.e. visitors), "pubblico" (i.e. audience), referring to visitor performance, as well as words related to the Italian context like "nazionale" (i.e. national) and "Italia". There are also references to cities compared with Florence in terms of museum visitors, such as "Torino", "Roma", "Napoli", "Venezia", and "Milano". The topic highlights how the Uffizi is one of the most attractive and high-performing museum institutions in Italy, capable of drawing visitors from around the world to Florence with its collection.

Topic 3 specifically addresses the performance of the Uffizi Galleries in terms of both visitors and revenues. This topic includes words such as "visitatori" (i.e. visitors), "euro", "introiti" (i.e. income), "attività" (i.e. activity), "ingressi" (i.e. entrances), "numero" (i.e. number), "dati" (i.e. data), "totale" (i.e. total), and "lordi" (i.e. gross), which refer to these two dimensions of performance. A successful museum can increase its capacity to attract visitors, collaborations, and resources, positively reflecting on the attractiveness of the city.

As with the local newspaper, the predominant role of the Uffizi Galleries' director, Eike Schmidt, emerges across all three topics, appearing among the most significant words in each. Similarly, the use of digital media by the Uffizi Galleries also emerges in this newspaper, particularly in Topic 3

Regarding the international newspaper "The New York Times," the topic modeling analysis revealed 5 topics.

In general, unlike the other two newspapers, this one highlighted topics related to specific events and news, emphasizing the "sensational" nature of some news stories that, if they did not have that "aerodynamic" characteristic, would not have made it to the international press regarding the Uffizi Galleries.

The first topic concerns the case of the return to the Uffizi of a painting stolen by the Nazis during World War II. We find words such as "German," "return," "stolen," and "war."

The second topic discusses the Uffizi and their relationship with the nearby Galileo Museum on the occasion of an exhibition hosted at the Uffizi on Leonardo da Vinci but curated by the director of the Galileo Museum. We find words such as "Leonardo," "exhibit," "Vinci," "draw," "codex," and also "Galluzzi," which is the surname of the director of the Galileo Museum, Paolo Galluzzi.

The third topic concerns the sale of NFTs by the Uffizi Galleries, particularly the sale of a digital copy of the Tondo Doni in collaboration with the Florentine company Cinello. We find words such as "NFT" and "digit."

The fourth topic concerns the role of the Uffizi in legitimizing the attribution of a work of art, a bronze statue by Giambologna belonging to a private individual. We find words such as "bronze," "Rudigi" (referring to the surname of the owner of the bronze statue), "Giambologna," and "sculpture."

Table 3. Topic modelling results of the national newspaper "Il Sole 24 Ore"

Topic 1 "The Uffizi in the italian cultural heritage context"		Topic 2 "Italian state museums' visitor performances"		Topic 3 "Uffizi's activities and performances"	
Word	**Eta**	**Word**	**Eta**	**Word**	**Eta**
oper	0.010	mostra	0.009	visitatori	0.020
beni	0.006	palazzo	0.009	palazzo	0.007
patrimonio	0.005	visitatori	0.008	galleri	0.007
cultural	0.005	maggio	0.007	euro	0.006
leonardo	0.005	lunedi	0.006	attivita	0.006
art	0.005	april	0.006	pitti	0.005
galleri	0.005	nazional	0.006	introiti	0.005
mostra	0.005	archeologico	0.005	giardino	0.005
culturali	0.005	mostr	0.005	culturali	0.005
direttor	0.005	art	0.005	progetto	0.005
euro	0.005	pubblico	0.005	ingressi	0.004
palazzo	0.004	galleri	0.005	vasariano	0.004
cultura	0.004	cultura	0.004	boboli	0.004
italia	0.003	torino	0.004	beni	0.004
valor	0.003	roma	0.004	istituti	0.004
schmidt	0.003	pitti	0.004	numero	0.004
michelangelo	0.003	martedi	0.004	schmidt	0.004
collezion	0.003	schmidt	0.004	struttur	0.004
fiorentino	0.003	moda	0.004	corridoio	0.004
storia	0.003	direttor	0.003	scuol	0.004
biennal	0.003	domenica	0.003	dati	0.004
gucci	0.003	italia	0.003	scuola	0.003
ministro	0.002	napoli	0.003	total	0.003
casa	0.002	visita	0.003	digital	0.003
opera	0.002	venezia	0.003	statali	0.003
pitti	0.002	parco	0.003	lordi	0.003
roma	0.002	milano	0.003	registrato	0.003
raffaello	0.002	giugno	0.003	italia	0.003
scientifico	0.002	castello	0.003	pubblico	0.003

Finally, topic 5 concerns the use of social media by the Uffizi, with words such as "TikTok", "post," and "platform".

As with the other two online newspapers, the central role of director Eike Schmidt also emerges across topics 1, 3, and 4.

Table 4. Topic modelling results of the international newspaper "The New York Times"

Topic 1 "The return to the Uffizi of a painting stolen by the Nazis thanks to a social media campaign by the museum"		Topic 2 "The relationship between the Uffizi and the nearby Museo"		Topic 3 "The sale of NFTs by the museum as a new source of income"		Topic 4 "The role of the Uffizi in legitimizing the attribution of a work of art to an author"		Topic 5 "The Uffizi's use of social media"	
Word	Eta	Word	Eta	Word	Eta	Word	Eta	Word	Eta
paint	0.027	leonardo	0.053	art	0.032	restor	0.028	donatello	0.024
work	0.024	exhibit	0.020	work	0.025	work	0.027	tiktok	0.022
raphael	0.019	paint	0.018	artist	0.019	paint	0.023	artist	0.019
schmidt	0.019	work	0.018	paint	0.016	art	0.021	art	0.017
german	0.016	artist	0.015	collect	0.013	bronz	0.019	renaiss	0.016
art	0.016	itali	0.014	lisa	0.012	rudigi	0.019	video	0.014
return	0.015	show	0.014	mona	0.011	giambologna	0.016	mccarthi	0.013
italian	0.014	louvr	0.011	time	0.010	sculptur	0.015	citi	0.012
artist	0.014	vinci	0.010	citi	0.009	damag	0.013	david	0.012
itali	0.013	time	0.010	louvr	0.009	florentin	0.012	paint	0.010
world	0.010	italian	0.010	nft	0.008	exhibit	0.012	vecchio	0.010
mask	0.010	art	0.009	show	0.008	venu	0.011	time	0.009
room	0.009	life	0.009	portrait	0.008	schmidt	0.010	work	0.009
director	0.008	franc	0.008	fortun	0.007	lippi	0.010	post	0.009
verrocchio	0.008	draw	0.008	million	0.007	piec	0.008	tourist	0.009
show	0.008	world	0.008	director	0.007	director	0.008	michelangelo	0.008
offici	0.008	includ	0.007	visitor	0.007	medici	0.008	pont	0.008
famili	0.008	codex	0.007	includ	0.007	time	0.008	platform	0.008
palac	0.008	cultur	0.007	italian	0.007	historian	0.008	sculptur	0.007
renaiss	0.007	loan	0.006	statu	0.007	attribut	0.008	figur	0.007
pitti	0.007	pasta	0.006	exhibit	0.007	paper	0.008	travel	0.007
state	0.007	french	0.006	women	0.007	meyer	0.008	account	0.007
stolen	0.007	van	0.006	peopl	0.007	expert	0.007	peopl	0.007
nation	0.007	galluzzi	0.006	digit	0.007	includ	0.007	sculptor	0.006
artwork	0.006	milan	0.006	world	0.007	figur	0.007	stone	0.006
govern	0.006	collect	0.005	botticelli	0.006	attack	0.007	exhibit	0.006
war	0.006	travel	0.005	york	0.006	support	0.007	view	0.006
germani	0.006	galileo	0.005	itali	0.006	artist	0.007	look	0.006
includ	0.006	befor	0.005	fashion	0.006	princ	0.007	live	0.006

The analysis of the overall sentiment of the articles in the three different databases revealed that most articles are polarized towards a positive sentiment, with only a small portion having a negative sentiment. For example, it is possible to observe in Figure 1 that the newspaper "FirenzeToday" discusses the Uffizi with 39.49% of the total words in the articles being positive, while only 14.03% are negative. The rest of the words have a neutral tone. "Il Sole 24 Ore", as can be seen in Figure 2, presents 28.58% positive words, while 10.16% are negative. Finally, the articles related to the Uffizi

in "The New York Times", visible in Figure 3, show 17.39% of total words being positive and 9.14% negative. Although these the general tone of voice is positive in all three newspapers, it is notable that the local newspaper has a higher sentiment polarization, while the other two datasets present a greater number of neutral terms.
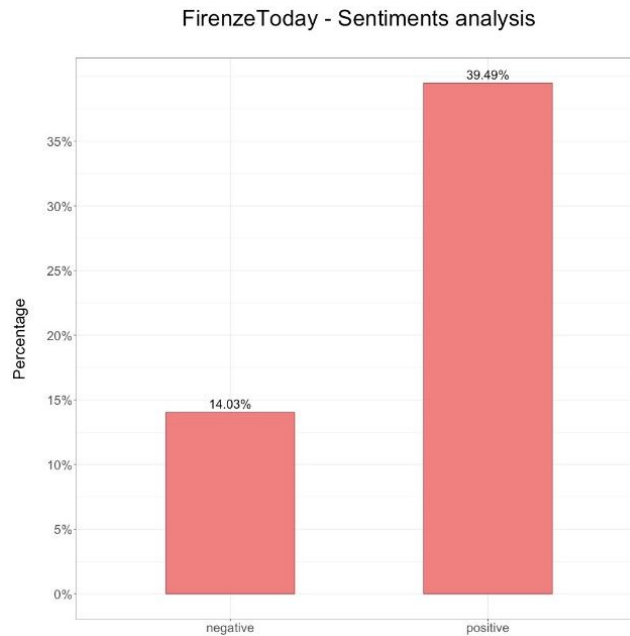

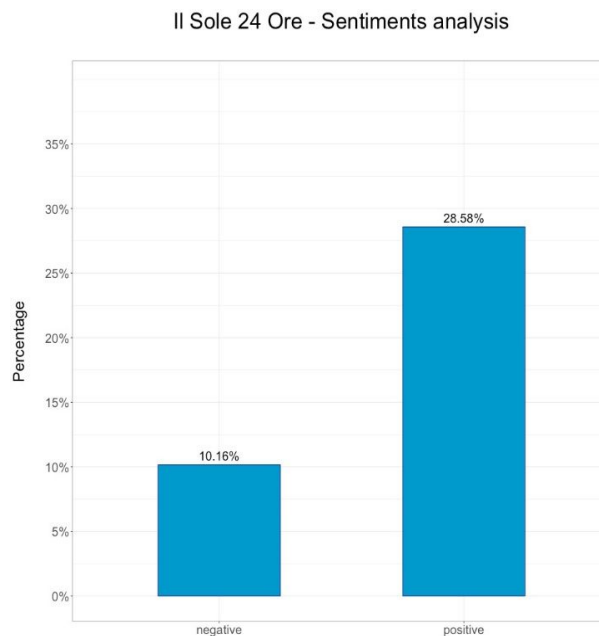Figure 2. Sentiment analysis of the articles in the local newspaper FirenzeToday
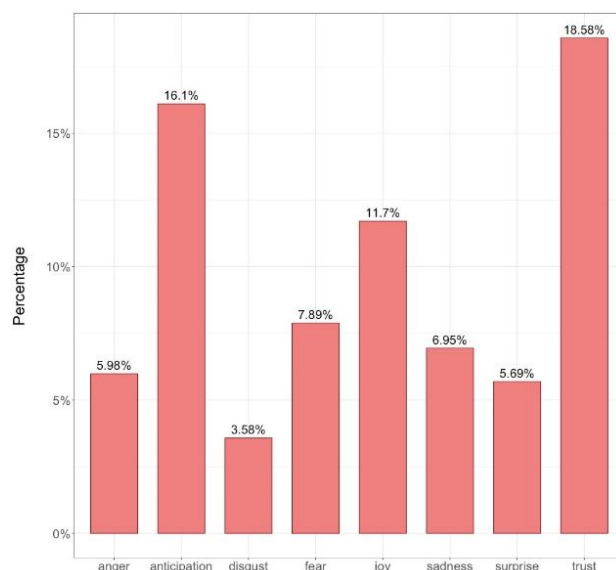

Figure 3. Sentiment analysis of the articles in the national newspaper Il Sole 24 Ore

The New York Times - Sentiments analysis
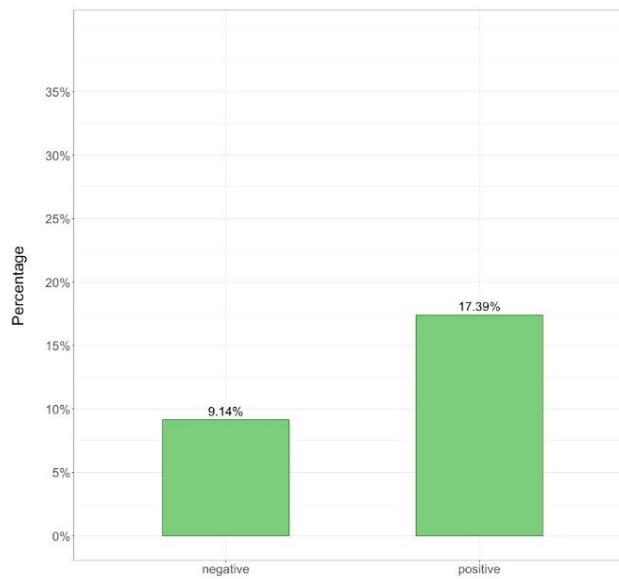
Figure 4. Sentiment analysis of the articles in the international newspaper The New York Times

Similarly, in the case of emotions analysis, the results of the three online newspapers are very similar in their trends, as can be seen in Figures 4, 5 and 6.

Specifically, in all three cases, words related to emotions of trust, anticipation, and joy are the most recurring. The lowest values are for words associated with disgust, anger, surprise, and fear. It is important to note that each word can belong to more than one emotion.

Again, it is notable that the articles about the Uffizi in the local newspaper "FirenzeToday" are characterized by a greater polarization of terms, with higher percentages of words associated with emotions compared to the other two newspapers, which have more neutral words.

FirenzeToday - Emotions analysis

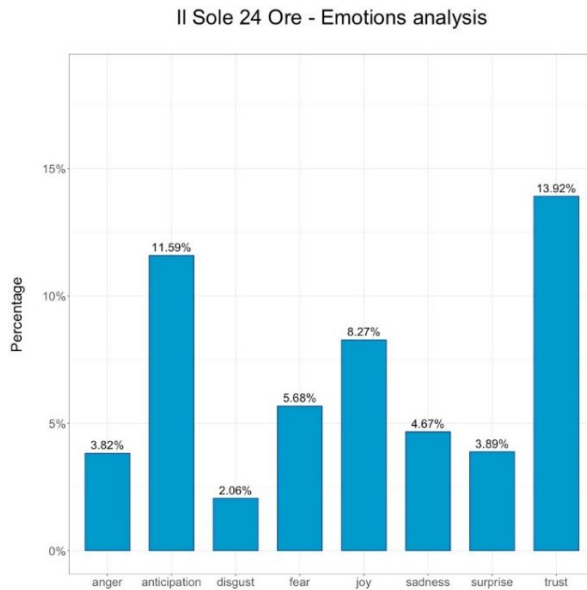Figure 5. Emotions analysis of the articles in the local newspaper FirenzeToday

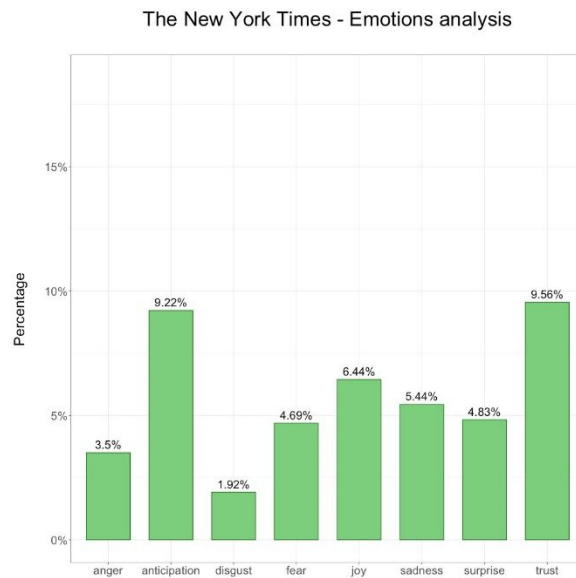Figure 6. Emotions analysis of the articles in the national newspaper Il Sole 24 ore

Figure 7. Emotions analysis of the articles in the international newspaper The New York Times

5. Discussion

The aim of this study was to explore the concept of museum's reputation, and its intersections with the city's reputation. Through the analysis of the Uffizi Galleries's perceptions on online newspapers, some key issues emerged.

Firstly, one of the most relevant findings concerns the central role of the director of the Uffizi Galleries, Eike Schmidt, in building and maintaining the museum's reputation. The director's strong and visible leadership has significantly contributed to positioning the Uffizi not only as a custodian of artistic heritage but also as a dynamic and innovative institution. This result confirms the literature,

which states that effective leadership is fundamental to the reputation of cultural organizations (Van Riel, 2019).

Then, it emerged how the Uffizi's online activities have had a notable impact on the public perception of the museum, not just in the growth of followers on social media but conveying the idea of a dynamic and up-to-date museum complex, improving their online visibility and attractiveness.

The analysis of online media revealed that the topics discussed vary depending on the geographical level of the newspapers. The local press focuses on practical information and relationships with the city administration, while the national press discusses the Uffizi's position in the context of Italian cultural heritage. The international press tends to emphasize specific events and sensational news. This diversification in themes reflects how different audiences perceive and interact with the museum.

The sentiment and emotion analysis of the texts showed a prevalence of positive sentiments and emotions such as trust, anticipation, and joy. This suggests that the online reputation of the Uffizi is generally positive, helping to strengthen the museum's image and, consequently, that of the city of Florence. Positive sentiment towards the museum increases the likelihood that tourists will choose Florence as a destination. This hypothesis is confirmed in previews studies, that have provided further evidence on the importance of museum reputation for urban attractiveness (Brida et al. 2012; Codignola & Mariani, 2017; Choi, Berridge, and Kim, 2020; Karayazı et al. 2021; Pavković et al. 2021).

However, what emerged from the analysis is that the analysis of online perceptions regarding the Uffizi shows that there is no significant link between the reputation of the Uffizi Galleries and that of the city of Florence, despite the dataset including articles that mention both "Uffizi" and "Florence".

The newspaper that most discusses the relationship between the Uffizi and Florence is the local one, where there is also discussion about the urban fabric and accessibility to the museum, as well as the relationships between the museum director and the local administration of Florence. In contrast, this relationship does not emerge in the national and international newspapers. According to interviews conducted with the Uffizi staff, this may be linked to the fact that since 2016, the Uffizi have worked to define their own recognizable and autonomous brand, separate from the brand of the city of Florence. In this case, the museum has its own life apart from the city, despite being made up of a collection and buildings that are strongly tied to the city's identity and history.

The Uffizi Galleries, therefore, constitute themselves as what Greffe et al. (2017) call a "branding museum": a museum that exploits its unique image and is consequently recognized as a brand, transmitting added value to the services to the goods and activities associated with it. The branding museum needs to communicate and engage all stakeholders in order to increase its reputation and attract audiences, partners, and resources.

6. Conclusions

This study explored the reputation of museums, focusing on the Uffizi Galleries, and their interplay with the city's reputation in the online environment. Key findings indicate that the Uffizi Galleries have a strong and positive reputation. Online media coverage often highlights the museum's exceptional collections, innovative digital strategies, and effective leadership. Local newspapers tend to discuss practical information, events, accessibility, and the director's relationship with the local administration. In contrast, national newspapers emphasize the Uffizi's role within Italian cultural heritage and make comparisons with other national museums. Lastly, international newspapers, often highlight specific events or sensational news, such as art recoveries and innovative initiatives like NFT sales. The sentiment analysis of online articles about the Uffizi Galleries shows a predominance of positive sentiment, with emotions such as trust, anticipation, and joy being the most common. This positive sentiment strengthens the museum's image and supports its reputation as a prestigious cultural institution.

However, the analysis revealed that even if the Uffizi Galleries significantly contribute to Florence's attractiveness as a tourist destination, proven by the trend of visitors to the museum complex compared to tourist arrivals in the city of Florence, there is limited interaction between the museum's and the city's reputations. This is because the Uffizi has worked to develop its own strong brand, distinct from the umbrella one of Florence as a city of art.

From the analysis, therefore, some managerial implications emerge for museums, in order to enjoy a good online reputation. First and foremost, museums should keep investing in digital strategies. Developing a robust online communication strategy is crucial for enhancing their online presence and engaging with a wider audience. The Uffizi Galleries are a great example; their strong online strategy has significantly boosted their visibility and reputation.

Another key point is the importance of cultivating strong leadership. Effective leadership plays a vital role in building and maintaining a museum's reputation. Directors need to be actively engaged in public and media relations to position the museum as a dynamic and innovative institution.

Then, collaboration is also essential. By establishing partnerships with other cultural institutions and leveraging both local and international media, museums can further enhance their reputation. Collaborative events and exhibitions can attract diverse audiences and resources.

Finally, protecting the brand is increasingly important in the digital age. Museums must safeguard their brand against misuse and counterfeiting. Implementing in-house legal departments, as the Uffizi has done, can help protect intellectual property and maintain brand integrity.

From the perspective of cities, however, some reflections and policy implications emerge.

Firstly, cities should recognize the value of their museums and leverage their reputational capital to boost local economic and cultural vitality. This can attract tourism, and investment, and enhance the city's global standing.

Policymakers should work to enhance the synergy between museums and the city. By promoting integrated cultural tourism strategies that highlight both the museum's and the city's capitals, they can foster a symbiotic relationship that benefits both.

Municipalities should support museums in their branding and digital initiatives. Recognizing the potential for museums to act as cultural ambassadors for the city, providing funding and infrastructure to facilitate these initiatives can amplify their impact.

Lastly, cities should encourage inclusive cultural policies. Implementing policies that ensure accessibility and inclusivity in cultural offerings can make museums more integrated into the urban fabric and accessible to a wider audience.

While the Uffizi Galleries have a distinct brand, their strategic efforts in digital communication, leadership, and collaboration have significantly enhanced their reputation. This, in turn, boosts the attractiveness of Florence.

In conclusion, policymakers and museum managers should collaborate to maximize the potential of museums in contributing to urban development and cultural vitality.

The limitations of this research include several crucial aspects. Firstly, the news data is not representative of all online discussions, which might omit a significant portion of the discourse related to the topic. Additionally, online discussions do not fully capture the perceptions of all museum stakeholders, leading to potential bias in the findings. Although three newspapers were considered (one local, one national, and one international), this selection still cannot encompass the entire spectrum of public opinion regarding the reputation of the Uffizi Galleries. The sentiment analysis was conducted on the entire dataset of newspaper articles rather than on the specific emerging topics, which does not provide information on how each topic contributes positively or negatively to the museum's reputation.

Regarding future research directions, it is essential to collect and analyse data from multiple sources, including other newspapers, social media platforms, forums, and review platforms, to ensure a more holistic understanding of online discussions. Furthermore, a specific sentiment analysis of the emerging topics from the various collected data could provide a clearer view of how they contribute to the museum's reputation. Finally, analysing the reputation of the Uffizi Galleries considering different time spans will help identify trends and changes in public perception over time.

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