Articles and essays

The Image of Rio de Janeiro Projected by Tourists in a Social Medium: experience, quality and value*

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Abstract

Sharing information in social media enables people to access quickly and freely content created by tourists who have already lived a certain experience, which can have influence on the others' choices and imposes a new dynamic to consumption relations, impacting the destinations' image and competitiveness. This study investigated the image projected by tourists who visited Rio de Janeiro in 2015 and 2016 concerning the following aspects: experience in the city's main attractions, perceived quality of services, and evaluation of prices and value. For such, it was performed a content analysis of 612 comments posted on the TripAdvisor website, the most consulted social medium oriented towards tourism in the world. The results showed that most of tourists reported favorable experiences, evaluated service quality and values positively, presenting high level of satisfaction in the city's main attractions. The experience dimensions most present in the comments were esthetic and entertainment, reaffirming the significance of natural and architectural wonders in the constitution of Rio de Janeiro's image. Regarding the negative comments, the content analysis showed points that must be monitored and improved by public and private administrators connected to tourism.
Keywords: Tourism; Social media; User-generated content; Tourist destinations image, Consumer behavior.

Resumo

A Imagem do Rio de Janeiro Projetada por Turistas em uma Mídia Social: experiência, qualidade e valor

O compartilhamento de informações em mídias sociais possibilita que as pessoas tenham acesso de maneira rápida e gratuita a um conteúdo gerado por turistas que já vivenciaram determinada experiência, o que pode influenciar a escolha de outros, e impõe uma nova dinâmica às relações de consumo, afetando a imagem e a competitividade dos destinos. Este estudo investigou a imagem projetada por turistas

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que visitaram o Rio de Janeiro nos anos de 2015 e 2016 em relação aos seguintes aspectos: experiência nos principais atrativos da cidade, qualidade percebida dos serviços e julgamento de preço e valor. Para tal, foi realizada a análise de conteúdo de 612 comentários postados no site TripAdvisor, a mídia social dedicada ao turismo de maior audiência no mundo. Os resultados mostram que a grande maioria dos turistas relatou experiências favoráveis, avaliou positivamente a qualidade dos serviços e o valor, apresentando altos níveis de satisfação nos principais atrativos da cidade. As dimensões da experiência mais presentes nos comentários foram a estética e o entretenimento, reforçando a importância das belezas naturais e arquitetônicas na formação da imagem do Rio de Janeiro. Quanto aos comentários com teor negativo, a análise do conteúdo revelou pontos que devem ser monitorados e aprimorados por gestores públicos e privados ligados ao turismo.

Palavras-chave: Turismo; Mídias sociais; Conteúdo gerado pelo usuário; Imagem de destinos turísticos; Comportamento do consumidor.

Resumen

La Imagen de Río de Janeiro Proyectada por los Turistas en un Medio Social: experiencia, calidad y valor

El intercambio de información en las redes sociales permite a las personas acceder forma rápida y gratuita a los contenidos generados por los turistas que ya han experimentado determinada experiencia. Este contenido puede influir en la elección de otros turistas, lo que impone una nueva dinámica a las relaciones de consumo, influyendo en la imagen y en la competitividad de los destinos. Este estudio investigó la imagen proyectada por turistas que visitaron Río de Janeiro en los años 2015 y 2016, con relación a los siguientes aspectos: experiencia en los principales atractivos de la ciudad, calidad percibida de los servicios y juicio de precio y valor. Con este fin, se realizó un análisis de contenido de 612 comentarios publicados en el sitio TripAdvisor, el medio social dedicado al turismo de mayor audiencia en el mundo. Los resultados muestran que la mayoría de los turistas relató experiencias positivas, evaluó positivamente la calidad de los servicios y el valor, presentando altos niveles de satisfacción en los principales atractivos de la ciudad. Las dimensiones de la experiencia más presentes en los comentarios fueron la estética y el entretenimiento, reforzando la importancia de las bellezas naturales y arquitectónicas en la formación de la imagen de Río de Janeiro. En cuanto a los comentarios con contenido negativo, el análisis del reveló puntos que deben ser monitoreados y mejorados por gestores públicos y privados vinculados al turismo.

Palabras clave: Turismo; Medios sociales; Contenido generado por el usuario; Imagen de destinos turísticos; Comportamiento del consumidor.

INTRODUCTION

Along with the development of new information technology, consumer behavior has gone through significant changes, as the sharing of perceptions and evaluations through social media, as known as "user-generated content," by the users themselves, who transmit their opinions regarding the experiences lived. For that reason, sharing experiences in websites, such as TripAdvisor, has become an important source of information for travel planning. Research suggests that the information spread out by tourists affect the choice of services and the image of tourist destinations (Baka, 2016; Litvin, Goldsmith & Pan, 2011; Xiang & Gretzel, 2010).

The image of destinations is constituted by a complex set of internal and external attributes that are strongly influenced by traditional media, by the movies and other means of disseminating information, artistic or mediatic, controlled by a small number of social interest groups (Baloglu & Maccleary, 1999; Beerli & Martín, 2004). However, this reality changes when tourists have the possibility to produce content through reporting their experiences, which can interfere on the image constitution about brands and places.

Given the significance of this reality, which imposes a new dynamic to consumption relations, affecting the competitiveness of destinations, this study had as its aim to investigate the image projected in social media by Brazilian and foreign tourists who visited the city of Rio de Janeiro regarding the following aspects: experience lived in the city's main attractions, perceived quality of services performed, and evaluation of prices and value. To do so, we analyzed 612 comments posted on the TripAdvisor website, the most accessed social medium in the world, in 2015 and 2016.

DISSEMINATION OF TOURISTIC EXPERIENCE ON THE INTERNET

Experience sharing by tourists and consumers is an important source of information on products and specially, services, since these have an intangible nature. Social media have opened the space so that intrapersonal influence could happen on-line, enabling informal and disinterested content production and sharing among individuals. According to Liu and Park (2015), on-line comments have become important sources of information in consumption processes.

User-Generated Content (UGC) is every manifestation that a user produces on the web, sending files (photos, videos, documents), information and media created by the general public (Arriga & Levina, 2008). In the UGC dynamics, the users are the main point of activity, since they play simultaneously the roles of content producer and consumer on the internet. This content is considered an ally for tourists when planning their trips and it has changed deeply the touristic activity's dynamic.

UGC has been used more frequently to communicate and share information related to trips, helping travel planning and creating expectations on other tourists (Gretzel & Yoo, 2008; Leung et al., 2011). Instead of edited and manipulated photos on booklets, leaflets, or advertisement, tourists can base their choices on spontaneous reports and more realistic photos posted by other tourists. Besides reducing the uncertainty level of future consumers, this content affects the image of tourist destinations, since the information is available online and free (Baka, 2016). The comments are capable to complement and even compete with the information provided by the official websites of touristic attractions (Wong & Qi, 2017). Because of that, the companies, specially those related to the experiences segment, as the touristic attractions, need to value consumers' evaluations on social media (Fang, Ye, Kucukusta & Law, 2016).

Among the on-line platforms that allow the production of collective content oriented towards tourism, the most highlighted and important one is TripAdvisor. Its main functions are gathering and spreading user-generated content, such as opinions, ratings, photos, and videos, within the touristic experience scope. TripAdvisor (2016) considers itself as the biggest travel community in the world, having 340 million visitors per month and 350 million ratings and opinions, covering more than 6.5 million lodgings, restaurants and attractions. Lee, Law and Murphy (2011) consider the website collaborators as a relevant "critical mass" and even highlight among them the so called "useful reviewers", who are those who travel more and actively post comments, belonging to all age and gender groups. Many authors who have studied the UGC dynamics consider TripAdvisor as the most significant website of user-generated content (Buhalis & Law, 2008; Litvin, Goldsmith & Pan, 2011; Jeacle & Carter, 2011).

THE INFLUENCE OF UGC ON TOURIST DESTINATIONS' IMAGE

TripAdvisor's significance on the UGC context has motivated recent studies about the tourist destinations and attractions' images under different perspectives: Baka (2016) performed a study about on-line image management; Pantano, Priporas and Stylus (2017) have researched the future preferences of tourists; Wong & Qi (2017) have analyzed the development of Macau's image. These works indicate that TripAdvisor is a widely used repository, capable of reflecting the tourists' perceptions and affecting the reputation and image of tourist destinations.

Chen and Tsai (2007) define the destination image as the representations of a person's knowledge, their feelings and perceptions of a certain destination. The authors also show the importance of the image on the visitor's behavior in two aspects: the first is related to the influence on the decision-making process when choosing a destination; the second, to the conditioning of post-decision behaviors such as participation, evaluation and future intentions.

Chagas (2008) explains that the image concept is constituted by the user's interpretation, be it based on something or emotional, from their cognitive and emotional evaluations. The emotional dimension refers to sentimental factors between the touristic user and the destination (Chagas, 2008). According to Baloglu and McCleary (1999), such dimension is related to the assessment of quality using personal factors. Beerli and Martín (2004) affirm that emotional evaluation is composed by psychological aspects (values, motivation, personality) and social aspects (education, status, age), which differ from one person to the other.

Cognitive dimension refers to intellectual aspects, that is, the destination analysis is done rationally, based on measurable factors (Chagas, 2008). Baloglu and McCleary (1999) explain that cognitive evaluation is based on the knowledge about the place's objective attributes. For Beerli and Martín (2004), cognitive evaluation is created by the sum of information sources (traditional media, movies, social media), previous experiences, and distribution material (maps, marketing communication elements, touristic guides).

Based on this views in literature, it is adequate to conclude that a destination's image will be affected by a series of factors, among them are the cognitive and emotional evaluations posted by tourists on social media. These evaluations reflect the experiences lived by the users, who take on the role of correspondents from different visited places (Baka, 2016). Thus, the UGC built on the TripAdvisor platform is an information source that has the potential of influencing the tourist's choice.

TOURISTIC EXPERIENCE AND PERCEIVED QUALITY

Tourists usually travel hoping to live memorable events that somehow mark their lives. Such events are called experiences and can represent unique, special or extraordinary moments (Pezzi & Santos, 2012). According to Pérez (2009), touristic experience combines sounds, smells, colors, interrelationships, amusement, hospitality, activities, enrichment, cost-benefit relation, accessibility, among other factors that comprise a destination's attractions.

Since travel destinations cover touristic products, the experiences lived by individuals in attractions and services affect the destination image. These experiences are individual; thus, the same experience can be perceived differently (Pine & Gilmore, 1999). If the tourist has not lived the expected or promised experience, the destination image can be compromised.

As a manner of classifying the different kinds of experiences that can be promoted to a person, Pine and Gilmore (1999) proposed a model with four experience domains: entertainment, educational, escapism, and esthetic. Entertainment is related to the passive absorption and involves stimuli that use the individual's senses to occupy their attention pleasantly and in a funny way. In opposition, the person who has an educational experience absorbs the experience actively, educational events can involve mind and body and, for the experience to happen, the traveler needs to learn with the activity and be informed about the content presented, in such a way so their knowledge is widened. The escapism domain is also characterized by active participation, but the experience happens in an immersion. The person gets involved with the environment, since the individual is the one who makes the experience happen (Pine & Gilmore, 1999). In the esthetic domain, for the experience to happen, the person needs only to be in a certain place and to observe the environment's elements. When individual go through an esthetic experience, they are immersed in the activity, but take part passively. Each one of these domains can be present in different attractions of a tourist destination, shaping its image and defining its competitive profile. Some destinations will be valued by their ability of providing educational experiences, while others will be remembered as places of esthetic immersion.

It is perceived that the kind of touristic experience is able to affect the image of a tourist destination. Thus, the products the comprise the destination, including the attractions, need to provide not only positive experiences, but also memorable ones (Pine & Gilmore, 1999). The memorable experiences and the ones that exceed the tourists' expectations help in the destination's competitiveness and are also related to the perceived services' quality.

Perceived Quality of Services

The tourist's satisfaction depends on the experiences lived in a destination's attractions, which included the quality of performed services, which is based on the perceptions and evaluations the users have on the service, and that can happen during or after the service performing (Gianesi & Corrêa, 1994). The perceived quality should correspond or even exceed the clients' expectations (Ghobadian, Speller & Jones, 1994), which vary and are influenced by the image the other tourists have of the destination. Services' quality has been studied since the 1980s, and the most significant studies are based on the comparison between expectations and experiences for many quality attributes (Gronroos, 2003).

Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry (1988) created the Servqual model, a tool that measures how the users evaluate a service based on five dimensions called determinants of perceived quality. The first dimension is reliability, which involves performing the service safely, properly, within the defined deadline, and that promotes trust in the consumer. Tangibles is the determinant related to equipment, physical facilities, personnel and material. Empathy involves the individual attention to the client by the organization, it includes the effort in meeting the clients' particular demands. The responsiveness determinant is related to the prompt attendance and quick answers, besides being willing to help clients and the proper execution of services. Lastly, assurance is the lack of risk or doubt during the performance of a service.

In the tourism scope, Mondo (2014) suggested a specific model to assess the perceived quality in attractions. This model involves the following determinants: access, environment, human element, experience, safety, and technical quality. The access category concerns tourists' arrival at the touristic attraction, it involves accessibility for Disabled People (DP), easiness in buying, time waiting for the service, among other factors. As for the environment, it is related to temperature and if the place is inviting and comfortable. Human element refers to the attention given by the guides and monitors, for example; however, it is not always present in touristic attractions. The category experience, adapted from Pine and Gilmore (1999), involves learning, entertainment, esthetic and evasion (escapism). Safety is a determinant that involves the user's perception concerting the safety of the performed service. Technical quality represents the attraction's operational issues, as price, infrastructure, signaling, load capacity, among others (Mondo, 2014).

Gronroos (2003) affirms that a place's image depends on the quality perceived by the clients, thus, is the perception is negative, the image is affected negatively. Therefore, it is possible to affirm that it is significant to assess how the tourists evaluate different dimensions of the quality of services performed in a destination's attractions.

Touristic Attractions and the Image of Destinations

A touristic attraction can be understood as a place, object or event that motivates the travel of tourists. The attractions are part of the touristic offer

and are greatly responsible for the individuals' interest in visiting a destination (Barreto; Beni, 2009). They represent the raison d'être of tourism, since they are capable of moving the system and, besides that, can help in education, historical heritage preservation, and nature protection (Mondo, 2014).

If an attraction is planned and managed properly, it can meet the demands and provide memorable experiences for the ones visiting it. When planning an attraction, it is necessary to think on the expected frequency and adapt it to the tourists' profile. Some attractions can grasp the attention of a great number of visitors, because of that, it is important to control the flow of people, besides training the employees to attend the visitors properly, keeping equipment in good conditions and looking good, signaling the area to make the access easier, offering safety for the visitors, among other factors that can affect positively the tourist's experience (Mondo, 2014).

The attractions can represent the main image people create of a place. The city of Rio de Janeiro, for example, is comprised by many internationally known attractions, such as Pão de Açúcar, Corcovado, and Maracanã stadium. The experiences lived in Rio de Janeiro and the quality perceived in the services offered at the city are related to the visitations to touristic attractions. Thus, they represent more than leisure areas and play an essential role in the constitution of Rio de Janeiro's image.

METHODOLOGY

An exploratory study was performed, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches. The methodology chosen for the analysis of the comments posted by tourists was the content analysis, a set of techniques that aim to describe the content available in oral, visual or written communication processes. Systematic procedures of content coding, categorizing, and quantification are used, enabling the analysis and markers gathering (quantitative or qualitative) for the meaning interpretation and knowledge deduction (Bardin, 1977).

The social network dedicated to tourist TripAdvisor was chosen given its significance, the number of users and the amount of comments it promotes. The information posted by the tourists are public, which makes the gathering process easier. However, there are no general information about Rio de Janeiro city, but on its touristic attraction. Consequently, a set of attractions that are significant to the city's tourism context was chosen, based on TripAdvisor's ranking of "best attractions" in the city of Rio de Janeiro. Among the most significant ones, the ones that did not offer structured services (as beaches and parks) were excluded, since one of the research's goals is getting to know the tourist's perception about the quality of the services in the city. Besides that, attractions built due to the investments for preparing the city for the 2016 Olympic Games were included. The attractions studied were Corcovado, Pão de Açúcar, Sambódromo, Maracanã and the Museu de Arte do Rio (MAR). The Museu do Amanhã was not included in this study because it was opened in December of 2015 and, therefore, there would be not possible to compare with the period defined for data gathering.

Comments of 2015 and 2016 were gathered in order to establish a comparison. The period chosen for the sample was during carnival (from Friday

to Ash Wednesday), from the 13th to the 18th of February 2015 and from the 5th to the 10th of February 2016. Since it is high season, there is a great number of tourists in the city for a short period of time, which makes data gathering easier. This period was enough to gather a significant amount of comments about the Corcovado and Pão de Açúcar attractions, but the amount of comment about the other attractions was too little, as was the case of Sambódromo, Maracanã and MAR. The comments made by residents in the Rio de Janeiro metropolitan area were excluded, as well as comments written in Portuguese by people that did not inform where they were from. Comments that said the visitation to the attraction did not happen on the same dates they were posts were also excluded. After the exclusions, 612 tourists' comments were selected for the final sample.

The comments were registered and went through a process of analysis and codification, according to the categories and concepts found in literature (Chart 1).

Chart 1 – Content analysis categories

Experience	• Esthetic • Escapism • Education • Entertainment	(Pine & Gilmore, 1999)
Service quality	• Reliability • Empathy • Tangibles • Responsiveness • Assurance of the service performed	(Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry, 1988)
	• Access – DP (disabled people); internet shopping; transportations; lines • Load capacity • Perception of public safety (feeling of safety around the attractions) • Touristic information	(Mondo, 2014)
Perception of prices and value	• Evaluation of prices • Value perception (cost x benefit)	(Monroe, 2007)

Source – Elaborated by the authors, 2016

To consolidate the information and identify the image of Rio de Janeiro projected by tourists, the creation of a *wordcloud* was chosen. The words in the cloud have sizes that vary proportionally to the significance or number of times they were mentioned (Viégas & Watteberg, 2008; McGee & Craig, 2012). Articles and prepositions were excluded from the wordcloud, as well as the names of the assessed attractions. It was also chosen not to translate the titles in English and Spanish.

RESULTS

Tourists' Profile

TripAdvisor classifies its collaborators into six levels, establishing a score by level that indicated the amount and kind of contributions posted by users (ratings, photos, videos, articles, among others). Thus, it is possible to affirm that higher-level collaborators are the most active in the community and have higher chances of influencing the opinion of a greater number of tourists. Regarding the collaborators' levels, 68.7% of the 612 participants of this study's sample were among the highest influence levels (4,5 and 6).

Regarding the gender, an equivalent number of men (42%) and women (40%) was found in the sample (18% did not inform the gender). Most consulted users did not inform the age (50%), but the ones who did aged mostly from 25 to 49 years-old (36%).

Concerning the tourists' origin, 362 identified themselves as being foreign (50%) and 195 as Brazilian (38%). Among the foreign tourists, the country with the highest representativeness was Argentina (20%), followed by the United Kingdom (6.1%), Chile (5.5%), and the United States (3.6%). Among national tourists, São Paulo was the state with most users (11%), followed by Rio Grande do Sul (3.2%), the Federal District (2.8%), Minas Gerais and Paraná (2.5% each).

Experience at the Attractions

In the comments' evaluation, it was possible to identify that 562 tourists (92%) reported positive experiences, 25 (4%) reported negative experiences and the other 25 (4%) did not say if the experiences were positive or negative. When comparing the amount of positive and negative experiences reported in 2015 (92%) and 2016 (91%), no significant changes were observed.

The most present experience dimension (Pine & Gilmore, 1999) in the tourists' comments (Chart 2) was the esthetic one, having 127 mentions in 2015 (51%) and 183 mentions in 2016 (50%). The tourists showed, in their reports, great excitement concerning the natural wonder of Rio de Janeiro's landscapes, specially when visiting attractions as the Corcovado and Pão de Açúcar. Even with natural wonder being the main responsible for the positive experience, many comments also highlight the architectural beauty of MAR and Maracanã stadium, besides the esthetic beauty of the *samba* schools parade. The second most mentioned experience dimension was entertainment, having 73 mentions in 2015 (30%) and 151 in 2016 (41%). The education dimension was also present in the reports about the experience at the attractions studied (4% in 2015; 0.3% in 2016). In 2015, only two tourists mentioned the escapism dimension in their comments (0.8%). This result can be explained by the fact that, for this study, the attractions selected had more contemplative characteristics, where the tourist lives the experience as a spectator, without active participation.

Chart 2 – Examples of commentary in different experience dimensions

Experience at the Attractions		
Experience Dimensions	**Positive comments**	**Negative comments**
Esthetic	"The monument is very pretty and the place has a privileged view of Rio de Janeiro city"**(**adapted from Portuguese) (Corcovado 2016, collaborator level 6). "One of the most beautiful touristic attractions of Rio de Janeiro" **(**adapted from Portuguese)(Pão de Açúcar 2015, collaborator level 4). "The stadium modified for the 2014 World Cup is very beautiful" (adapted from Spanish) (Maracanã 2016, collaborator level 5). "I recommend everybody to make this choice and to watch, at least once in their lifetime, this joyful and colorful show that is very pretty!" **(**adapted from Portuguese)(Sambódromo 2015, collaborator level 5). "The building's architecture is a wonder!" **(**adapted from Portuguese)(MAR 2016, collaborator level 3).	"I went on a cloudy day and because of that, I could not enjoy the view" (adapted from Spanish) (Corcovado 2015, collaborator level 6). "Obviously the view is not pretty on a day that is not clear" (Pão de Açúcar 2016, collaborator level 6). "We visited it some days before the carnival parade and they were still painting and making the last touches" (adapted from Spanish) (Sambódromo 2015, collaborator level 3).
Entertainment	"It is a must tour if you are in Rio, totally worth it" (adapted from Spanish) **(**Corcovado 2015, collaborator level 3). "The best thing in visiting Pão de Açúcar is if you are in Rio de Janeiro" (Pão de Açúcar 2016, collaborator level 4). "I thought the tour was worth it" **(**adapted from Portuguese)(Maracanã 2015, collaborator level 4).	"The tour was boring and outrageously short" (Maracanã 2016, collaborator level 5). "In fact, I didn't like it [...] it is nothing but a large street with fences around it" (adapted from Spanish) (Sambódromo 2015, collaborator level 2).
Education	"There are many interesting stories about the building and the mount"**(**adapted from Portuguese) (Corcovado 2015, collaborator level 5). "This museum is very interesting, with many works, paintings, sculptures, and a wonderful show of old and awarded photographs" **(**adapted from Portuguese)(MAR 2016, collaborator level 6). "The environment is very good, with detailed information, very interesting exhibitions [...] I learned a lot, saw many cool things and I recommend to whoever visits Rio"**(**adapted from Portuguese)(MAR 2015, collaborator level 4).	
Escapism	"I had the privilege of parading in the special group in the last carnival. The audience cheers for you, playing together, it is awesome!" **(**adapted from Portuguese) (Sambódromo 2015, collaborator level 6). "I'm biased because I parade with *Unidos de Vila Isabel*. Mutual energy, total synergy" **(**adapted from Portuguese)(Sambódromo 2015, collaborator level).	

Source – Elaborated by the authors, 2016

Perceived quality of the services

Mentions related to the determinants of perceived quality (Parasuraman et al., 1988; Mondo, 2014) were identified in 415 of the comments assessed (68%), with 315 (51%) being positive and 100 (16%) of the sample) being negative. In the comparison between 2015 and 2016, the amount of positive comments grew from 40% in 2015 to 60% in 2016. It was also possible to verify that most of the comments from 2015 had informative character, destined to clarify to the other TripAdvisor users which were the prices and the best means of transportation to get to the attraction. In the comments from 2016, on the other hand, it was possible to identify a higher amount of comments exposing the experiences lived at the attractions and the quality conditions perceived in the services.

Of the determinants of perceived quality proposed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1988), the most present dimension in the tourists' comments was the reliability: there were 61 mentions in 2015 (25%) and 177 mentions in 2016 (48%). In the positive comments, it is possible to identify that the tourists express their satisfaction when receiving an efficient service, performed on time and format established by the managing company. In the negative comments, the tourists show their disappointment when they receive a dissatisfactory service, which does not offer quality according to the expectations, marked by poor management in lines and lack of organization when waiting.

The "tangibles" dimension was the one that received more attention from the tourists after reliability, with 44 comments related to the attractions' physical aspects in 2015 (18%) and 85 in 2016 (23%). Regarding this dimension, the tourists were amazed by the facilities' appearance and functionality in the positive comments, and identified problems as the lack of maintenance and equipment need for the good operation of services. The empathy dimension received 15 mentions in 2015 (6%) and eleven in 2016 (3%), while responsiveness was not mentioned in any analyzed comment. The dimension of assurance in the performance of services have six mentions in 2015 (9%) and four in 2016 (1%).

Regarding the determinants of touristic attractions' quality suggested by Mondo (2014), the ones analyzed were access, load capacity, touristic information and perception of public safety. In the access determinant (transportation, lines, buying tickets on the internet, and DP), transportation was the item that showed up the most in the sample's comments: 53 mentions in 2015 (21%) and 67 mentions in 2016 (18%). In these comments, it is possible to identify the tourists concern in point out to the community the best available paths, routes, and means of transportation. The line item also had a significant amount of mentions, specially in 2016, having 34 comments (9%), a number higher than in 2015, when there were 14 (6%) comments talking about this item. The tourists expressed their dissatisfaction with long lines and the lack management strategies to mitigate the wait. The item buying tickets on the internet had ten comments in 2015 (4%) and ten more in 2016 (2%). While the structure for DP (disabled people) was the theme of two comments in 2015 (1%) and 9 in 2016 (2%).

The attractions' load capacity was mentioned, mostly, negatively: there were 64 negative comments (9.3%), in opposition to eight positive ones

(1.2%). The tourists were dissatisfied with the way load capacity is managed at the attractions. Many were disappointed for not being able to fully enjoy the attraction due to overcrowding. A small number of tourists evaluated the touristic information in their comments, of the total sample, there were 10 positive comments (1.5%) and 14 negative ones (2.3%). The mentions related to public safety within and around the attractions were also few, in 2015 as well as in 2016, adding up to 21 tourists who made positive comments and 11 who commented negatively. The comment of a tourist who visited Sambódromo in 2016 is an example of the perception of lack of safety: "Everything was very confusing, many blockages and robbers, which made me feel unsafe". Another tourist, who visited Corcovado in 2016, had a positive perception of safety: "There were crowds, but the military police was controlling properly" (adapted from Spanish) (Chart 3).

Chart 3 – Perceived quality of the services

Perceived Quality of the Services		
Perceived Quality of the Services	**Positive Comments**	**Negative comments**
Reliability	"A must. Well organized despite having a renovation going on"(adapted from Portuguese) (Corcovado 2016, collaborator level 2). "A unique experience… worth to be lived… With lots of excitement and joy… I was impressed by the organization and safety" (adapted from Portuguese)(Sambódromo 2016, collaborator level 6). "Everything is well adapted to the tourist's convenience" (adapted from Spanish) (Pão de Açúcar 2015, collaborator level 5).	"I am at the ALLEGRIA 2016 box, it is overcrowded, not enough bathrooms, food is getting over fast!!"(adapted from Portuguese) (Sambódromo 2016, collaborator level 3).
Tangibles	"We were impressed by the quality of the facilities, as well as the amazing visitations" (adapted from Spanish) (Pão de Açúcar 2016, collaborator level 4). "A beautiful and impressive stadium" (adapted from Spanish) (Maracanã 2015, collaborator level 3). "A very good structure for everyone" (adapted from Portuguese)(Corcovado 2016, collaborator level 5).	"Rio is a place that is either raining or very sunny. Covering the rest of the deck would be a good idea" (adapted from Portuguese)(Pão de Açúcar 2016, collaborator level 3).

(continues…)

Chart 3 – Continuation

Perceived Quality of the Services		
Perceived Quality of the Services	**Positive Comments**	**Negative comments**
Empathy	"The guide is a sweet, and she explains kindly all the details with patience and humor" (adapted from Portuguese)(Maracanã 2015, collaborator level 5). "Very caring employees" (adapted from Portuguese)(MAR 2015, collaborator level 5). "Small lines, everything was organized, kind staff" (adapted from Portuguese)(Pão de Açúcar 2016, collaborator level 4). "Smiling people attending us respectfully and caring!" (adapted from Portuguese)(Sambódromo 2016, collaborator level 6).	"The train employees do not solve the problems or take an action" (adapted from Portuguese) (Corcovado 2015, collaborator level 5). "The staff seemed to enjoy making us wait" (Pão de Açúcar 2016, collaborator level 5). "The guide gave us little information" (adapted from Portuguese)(Maracanã 2016, collaborator level 4).
Assurance in the performance of services	"Huge and very well organized, grade A safety" (adapted from Portuguese)(Maracanã 2015, collaborator level 3). "I felt completely safe during the cable car travel" (adapted from Portuguese)(Pão de Açúcar 2016, collaborator level 5).	"The vans are very dangerous because they go up and down very fast and make highly dangerous turns in a narrow path" (adapted from Spanish) (Corcovado 2015, collaborator level 6).
Access – transportation	"It's very easy to come by subway" adapted from Spanish) (Maracanã 2015, collaborator level 3). "Easy access, I went by public transportation" (adapted from Portuguese) (Pão de Açúcar 2016, collaborator level 2). "The vans were well equipped and the staff was very caring!" (adapted from Portuguese)(Corcovado 2015, collaborator level 1).	"The train had no air conditioning and we had to wait many hours (adapted from Spanish)" (Corcovado 2016, collaborator level 2). "There is no parking lot at the place!" (adapted from Portuguese) (MAR 2015, collaborator level 5). "Sambódromo, despite its high audience capacity and architectural beauty, falls short concerning the access" (adapted from Portuguese)(Sambódromo 2015, collaborator level 5).
Access – DP	"There are bathrooms on all floors, accessible to wheelchair users" (adapted from Portuguese)(MAR 2015, collaborator level 4). "I liked a lot, organized, clean bathrooms, easy access, ramps that make it easier for wheelchair users" (adapted from Portuguese) (Maracanã 2016, collaborator level 4).	"Sambódromo has no adaptation for people with special needs or people with reduced mobility" (adapted from Portuguese) (Sambódromo 2015, collaborator level 5).

Chart 3 – Continuation

Perceived Quality of the Services		
Perceived Quality of the Services	**Positive Comments**	**Negative comments**
Access – Lines	"I arrived early and didn't have to wait in lines" (adapted from Portuguese)(Pão de Açúcar 2015, collaborator level 3). "It was very interesting to visit the Museu de Arte do Rio (and I didn't have to wait 5-6 hours in line)" (adapted from Portuguese)(MAR 2016, collaborator level 5). "We were lucky during the tour and we didn't wait more than 10 minutes to get on the bus" (adapted from Portuguese)(Corcovado 2016, collaborator level 4).	"Everyone had the same idea, so the lines were long" (Pão de Açúcar 2016, collaborator level 6). "There is a huge line to get on the train" (Corcovado 2015, collaborator level 5). "Arrive at least an hour early to avoid huge lines" (adapted from Portuguese)(Maracanã 2015, collaborator level 4).
Access – Internet Shopping	"Try to make a reservation on-line, that helps to avoid crowds" (Corcovado 2016, collaborator level 5). "Now it's possible to buy the tickets on the internet, which allows you to organize your trip with more time and to have quicker access (adapted from Spanish)" (Pão de Açúcar 2015, collaborator level 4). "I found it very easy to buy the tickets and to access the bleachers" (adapted from Portuguese) (Sambódromo 2016, collaborator level 1).	"We bought the tickets on-line for the following day and couldn't get in because UOL was still processing the payment" **(**adapted from Portuguese)(Pão de Açúcar 2015, collaborator level 4). "The tickets should be sold on-line (computer), currently it is done by phone, sending the voucher by fax. They need to be modernized" (adapted from Portuguese) (Sambódromo 2015, collaborator level 6).
Load Capacity	"Two beautiful rocks are linked by a cable car that has a great capacity, it can take up to seventy people" (adapted from Spanish) (Pão de Açúcar 2015, collaborator level 6). "Huge as always, beautiful as it never was. All the places have chairs, the inside area has a flawless structure with cafeterias and very good bathrooms" (adapted from Portuguese)(Maracanã 2015, collaborator level 6). "The museum has four exhibition floors [...] on Tuesdays the entry is free, I had no problems to get the ticket, there were no lines" (adapted from Portuguese)(MAR 2015, collaborator level 4).	"A must and wonderful tour for whoever goes to Rio, although it is a bit expensive and crowded" (adapted from Portuguese)(Pão de Açúcar 2016, collaborator level 6). "It is a great experience, but, as I said in the comment's title: it is too crowded" (Corcovado 2015, collaborator level 5). "If you don't arrive early to get a spot at the sambódromo fence or upstairs, forget it, you won't see a thing but for the top of the floats. If you leave the spot you are to go eat, you lose it!"(adapted from Portuguese)(Sambódromo 2016, collaborator level 4).

Continuation

Perceived Quality of the Services		
Perceived Quality of the Services	Positive Comments	Negative comments
Touristic information	"I came back after 15 years and I liked what I saw! Better than before. Cleaner. More organized. Better signaling!" (adapted from Portuguese)(Sambódromo 2016, collaborator level 6). "Well signaled and well cared for, I hope it keeps this way" (adapted from Spanish) (Maracanã 2015, collaborator level 3).	"To whom is going to the parades by subway, you have to walk a lot through dirty, without signalization, and very dark streets, which is unacceptable given the size of the event" (adapted from Portuguese) (Sambódromo 2015, collaborator level 5). "I was surprised by the fact that website had information in English, but inside the museum, there is only information in Portuguese" (MAR 2016, collaborator level 5). "I liked visiting the stadium, but I would have liked even more if the guided tour was more complete and had more information, I found it poor" (adapted from Spanish) (Maracanã 2016, collaborator level 4).

Source – Elaborated by the authors, 2016

Perception of Prices and Values

Comments related to the evaluation of prices (Chart 4) were posted by 25 tourists in 2015 and 69 tourists in 2016, during the analyzed period. Of the total sample, 63 tourists (10.3%) considered the prices high, 22 (3.6%) considered it medium and nine (1.5%) considered the prices low. Most of the tourists who considered the prices high was from Latin-American countries, which had their currencies devalued in the relation to Real at the time. An example comment with perception of price is the one made by a tourist who visited Pão de Açúcar in 2016: "I thought the prices per person were too high and up there, there was also a store with prices too high". Despite the comment, the tourist evaluated the attraction giving it grade 5, thus, it is understood that the perception of the attraction's value was positive. A tourist who visited MAR in 2015 begins her comment telling about the low prices: "The entry is really cheap (on Tuesdays it is free). The environment is really good, having detailed information, very interesting exhibitions, air conditioning at the right temperature". It is possible to see that the lower price is a positive factor, as well as the perceived quality and the perception of value. The perception of the studied attractions' value, defined as the balance between the cost and benefits of an acquisition (Monroe, 2007) was mentioned in 221 comments (36%), being positive for 199 tourists

(33%). When comparing 2015 and 2016, the positive mentions related to the perception of value increased in the second year (27% in 2015; 36% in the following year).

Chart 4 – Perception of prices and value

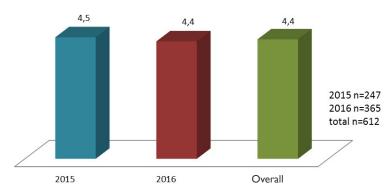|	Positive value	Negative value
Perception of Value	"We loved it, we only though the ticket was a bit expensive. But it's worth it" **(**adapted from Portuguese) (Maracanã 2016, collaborator level 3). "Despite the melting heat, waiting four hours in the line and the overpricing, I would go back a million times!"**(**adapted from Portuguese)(Pão de Açúcar 2015, collaborator level 6). "It is a must-do tour for who is in Rio, totally worth it" (adapted from Spanish)" (Corcovado 2015, collaborator level 3). "For sure it is worth to see at least once in a lifetime!" **(**adapted from Portuguese)(Sambódromo 2015, collaborator level 2).	"The view is very beautiful, but it is too expensive, not worth it" (adapted from Spanish) (Pão de Açúcar 2016, collaborator level 4). "R$40 for no guide and not being able to step on the grass, it looks like a robbery" (adapted from Spanish) (Maracanã 2016, collaborator level 2). "We spent more than 100 pounds (each) in the ticket for the worst area, we couldn't see a thing" (Sambódromo 2015, collaborator level 2).

Source – Elaborated by the authors, 2016

Tourists' Satisfaction

A very important tool for the TripAdvisor community is the rating of user satisfaction. The tourists indicate their satisfaction level with the attractions through a star rating system from 1 to 5, similar to a Likert scale (Costa & Silva Júnior, 2014), in which 5 = excellent, 4 = very good, 3 = acceptable, 2 = bad, and 1 = awful. Gathering this information allows the estimation of the average of tourists' satisfaction per attraction and the overall average of satisfaction per year studied. In the comparison between the overall satisfaction averages, there is no significant difference between 2015 (average 4.5) and 2016 (average 4.4), as shown in Figure 1.
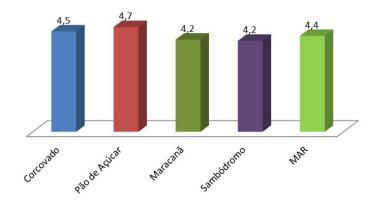
Comparing the averages of satisfaction per attraction (Figure 2), it is possible to note that Pão de Açúcar had the best rating, with an average of 4.7. MAR had an average of 4.4, while Corcovado had 4.5. The attractions Maracanã stadium and Sambódromo share the lowest rating, with an average of 4.2, but they still have a good overall evaluation level. The lowest grades given to Sambódromo and Maracanã are due, mainly, to the following aspects: high expectations in comparison to the experience and perceived quality, disappointment regarding the prices, lack of organization, lack of signalization, and dissatisfaction with the places' infrastructure.

Figure 1 – Overall tourist satisfaction

Source – Elaborated by the authors, 2016

Figure 2 – Tourist satisfaction (Average per attraction)

Source – Elaborated by the authors, 2016

A tourist who visited Maracanã in 2015 rated it 2 and made the following comment: "If you have already been to a stadium, do not loose your time and money going to this one, pass by the front of it, take a picture and that's it" (adapted from Portuguese). It is perceived that although Maracanã offers a guided tour, it does not seem enough to raise the interest and to generate high levels of satisfaction. About Sambódromo, the following comment, made by a tourist who visited it in 2016 and rated the attraction as 1, is highlighted: "A shame! For the biggest show on earth, the tourist needs to suffer to arrive there, without signals in other languages, lack of improvement around it, disregard to the community, old and dirty bathrooms, scarce food, everything was dirty..." The tourist reported many negative aspects of Sambódromo that have influenced negatively his level of satisfaction.

As for Pão de Açúcar, the attraction with the highest average, it was praised in many comments. The high level of satisfaction was not only a result of the place's wonder, but also of the organization, short period waiting, cleanness, good cost/ benefit relation, among other factors. This comment, made by a tourist who rated the attraction as a 5 in 2016 can represent the reasons for the high average:

Everything was good... well organized, clean, grade A bathrooms... Beautiful place, with many options for snacks of for lunch... Impressive and a wonderful experience... Perfect... I would go back for sure".

IMAGE PROJECTED BY THE TOURISTS

Lastly, to represent the image projected by the tourists who visited Rio de Janeiro in the period analyzed, in 2015 and 2016, a *wordcloud* was created, containing the titles of the published comments, which usually summarize the main content in the comment, reveal cognitive and emotional aspects of the touristic experience and have a great exposure among the community's users.

By analyzing the *wordcloud* of the image projected by tourists (Figure 3), the most highlighted words are the positive and esthetic ones, such as "*Vista*" (View), "*Lindo*" (Beautiful), "Views", and "*Hermoso*", which are the most mentioned ones. This indicates and reaffirms the great wonderment of tourists regarding the natural and architectural wonders of Rio de Janeiro's attractions.

An example of a comment's title with this characteristic is "Pão de Açúcar's beautiful view", made by a collaborator level 5 who rated the attraction as a 5. Some titles showed only a single word, without any complement, demonstrating clearly the tourist's opinion about the attraction, such as "*Excelente*" (Excellent), "*Imperdible*" (Unmissable), "*Maravilhoso*" (Wonderful), and "Great". As information and felling sharing is used as the construction of a destination's image (Bosque, Martín, Collado & Salmones, 2009), it is possible to conclude that the titles of TripAdvisor comments concerning the main touristic attractions of the city of Rio de Janeiro constitute the city's image – and that this image is mostly positive.

Figure 3 – *Wordcloud*

Source – Elaborated by the authors, 2016

CONCLUSION

This study's objective was to investigate the content of the opinions propagated by Brazilian and foreign tourists, aiming to understand the projected image of the city of Rio de Janeiro in the current biggest tourism social medium.

The results pointed out a high level of satisfaction in the tourists who visited the city's main attractions during carnival in 2015 and 2016. The analysis of the spontaneous reports posted on TripAdvisor showed that the experience was very positive for 92% of tourists. The esthetic domain is dominant in the discourse, followed by the "entertainment" domain, both having passive and contemplative participation. Few tourists reported educational experiences, even when the attraction visited was a museum. Escapism, the experience dimension related to the felling of leaving the self, of being another person, appeared in the comments of only two tourists who participated in the Samba schools parade in Sambódromo. These results show the importance of natural and architectural wonders in the composition of Rio de Janeiro's image, but they also point out that more and better opportunities for active participation could be offered to tourists, as well as involvement in immersive and knowledge absorption experiences. Without so, the experience remains in the esthetic superficiality, and the tourists do not go deep into the city's culture and history.

The tourists' comments also showed the good overall performance of services in the studied attractions.The dimensions of assurance in the service and "tangibles" were present in most of spontaneous mentions and positive ratings, expressing that tourists value the good appearance of facilities, equipment and employees – shortly, well performed services, without surprises. Employee empathy, good customer service, high quality transportation, internet shopping, access to disabled persons and safety were also enjoyed and highlighted by many tourists.

Despite the content analysis having showed, in the sample, only 16% of negative comments related to the services' quality, the aspects mentioned by the tourists should carefully considered by public and private administrators. The main complaints were related to the access dimension, with complaints about poor lines management and overcrowding (load capacity). Many of these complaints concerned Corcovado, which, after 2016 carnival, due to the preparation for the Olympic Games, changed its line management and ticket selling systems, which may have brought the improvements demanded by the sample's tourists. Another mentioned negative aspect was the lack of detailed touristic information, and information in other languages. The attraction with the highest critiques rate was Sambódromo: the complaints were about the facilities' cleanness, safety in the neighboring areas, access and seats localization, aspects that can affect the tourists' experiences during the parade.

Regarding the prices, the spontaneous mentions found in content analysis (17%) reported mostly expensive prices. Most complaints were about the Samba schools parade at Sambódromo. In other attractions, tourists from countries with unfavorable currency exchange also complained about the tickets' prices.

Despite the reports about long lines and high prices, a significant number of tourists pointed out that the price they payed or the period waiting in lines was worth it. Thus, the perceived value (the balance between sacrifices and benefits)

was positive in most of the mentions. What made the tourists dissatisfied was exactly the mismatch in value: waiting a lot to visit a museum with a poor collection; or paying for an expensive ticket and not being able to see the Samba schools properly.

Lastly, in agreement with the content analysis, which indicated positive experiences, good evaluation of services' quality and a good balance in the perceived balance, the tourists' overall satisfaction average was very good: 4.4 (5 being the highest score). Tourists' satisfaction with the experience is also reaffirmed by the *wordcloud*, which projects an image of beauty and joy regarding the visit to Rio de Janeiro.

This study showed the richness of information present in tourists' posts in social media. The analysis of spontaneous comments demonstratesaspects perceived and valued by the tourists in the experiences lived at a tourist destination, contributing to image monitoring. Within the research's limitations, it can be mentioned the sample that was restricted to Carnival and a small, although significant, group of attractions. Further research can widen this study by including more Rio de Janeiro attractions and a sample that represents the whole year. Besides that, other interpretation analysis methods can investigate the public imagery about the city of Rio de Janeiro and how it has been changing throughout time in social media. It is also recommended the use of this methodology for image analysis of other tourist destinations.

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