The Tourist Communication of VISIT MS in the Covid-19 Pandemic Period

A comunicação turística do visit ms em período de pandemia do covid-19

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RESUMO

O presente trabalho tem como objetivo analisar a promoção do Turismo no estado de Mato Grosso do Sul, por meio do perfil, no *Instagram,* da campanha "VISIT MS" (@visitmsoficial), durante período específico da pandemia da COVID-19. Essa campanha foi promovida pela Fundação de Turismo de Mato Grosso do Sul (FUNDTUR-MS), responsável pelo turismo em escala estadual. Considerando a imagem como instrumento de comunicação do destino, foram analisadas publicações na rede social escolhida, dentro do período de início dos casos no Brasil, 11 de março a 29 de setembro de 2020, quando foi lançada a campanha de retomada da FUNDTUR-MS: "Vem, mas vem de máscara!". Foram levantadas 196 publicações, analisadas a partir de 13 itens: tipo de arquivo, *hashtag*, localização, número de curtidas, período de publicação, algoritmo do *Instagram*, dentre outros. Percebeu-se que a imagem de Mato Grosso do Sul foi tratada com uma identidade regionalizada, valorizando produtos típicos e reforçando tipos de público-alvo. O posicionamento vem da

identificação de *personas*: jovens, famílias, casais, terceira idade, LGBT, além de eventos e negócios, prática de pesca e *birdwatching* no pantanal. Com esse ambiente, a FUNDTUR-MS apostou nas imagens ao ar livre e no espaço que a natureza proporciona. Ademais, notou-se um cuidado ao tratar da retomada do turismo, considerando a gravidade da pandemia e adotando medidas restritivas e cautelares, para um retorno gradual, a fim de minimizar o agravamento dos casos da COVID-19.

Palavras-chave: FUNDTUR, *Instagram*, Turismo, Pandemia, Covid-19.

ABSTRACT

This paper aims to analyze the tourism promotion of the Mato Grosso do Sul state through the campaign VISIT MS Instagram profile (@visitmsoficial), during the COVID-19 pandemic specific period. The campaign was promoted by the Tourism Foundation of Mato Grosso do Sul (FUNDTUR-MS), responsible for the tourism in a state scale. Considering the image as a communication key element this travel destination, posts were analyzed on the chosen social network, within the beginning period of COVID-19 cases in Brazil, between March 11th, 2020 until September 29th, 2020 – when it was launched the FUNDTUR-MS resumption campaign: "Vem, mas vem de máscara!" ("Come but come with a mask!"). In total, 196 images were collected and analyzed based on 13 items, such as: different file types, hashtags, locations, numbers of likes, publication periods, Instagram algorithm, and others. It was noticed that the image of Mato Grosso do Sul was treated with a more regionalized identity, valuing typical products and reinforcing types of target audience. The positioning comes through the identification of personas: younger adults, families, couples, senior citizens, LGBT people, in addition to the events and business meetings, fishing and birdwatching in the Pantanal. With this environment, FUNDTUR bet on images in open air and other spaces that nature provides. Moreover, caution was noticed when dealing with the tourism resumption considering the serious pandemic, adopting precautionary and restrictive actions, attempting a gradual return, minimizing the aggravation of COVID-19 cases. Based on scientific

studies, it will only be effectively safe after the beginning of a mass vaccination campaign.

Keywords: FUNDTUR, *Instagram,* Tourism, Pandemic, Covid-19.

INTRODUCTION

It is understood that the use of *Instagram* is currently a strategy of tourism communication, being used both by companies as well as by the public power, as a form to aggregate value and repost information for tourists (Costa & Perinotto, 2017). For Cavalcanti (2020) the public power also needs to have a digital positioning. Obviously the types of posts are different, after all the public power leads to a positioning and directs traffic and its up to the tourism trade – private power – the commerce.

The COVID-19 pandemic affected directly the tourism chain. Nogueira (2021) states that from the moment that the World Health Organization (WHO) announced the pandemic state, the tourism campaigns started to remind that destinations would only be open after the end of COVID-19. At first, the tourism places shut their doors and started to elaborate bio-safety manuals in a way that everyone could re-establish to receive tourists once again in a safe and appropriate way.

In face of such scenario, the importance to analyze the way that the state organ of the state of Mato Grosso do Sul positioned virtually during this period was verified. For Marujo (2008) the information is decisive for the tourist and, in pandemic times, a correct information and in a proper way, certainly makes a difference for several tourism destinations.

In this sense, the present study has the purpose to analyze the official profile of the campaign VISIT MS promoted by the Tourism Foundation of Mato Grosso do Sul – FUNDTUR – during the specific COVID-19 pandemic period. Considering the importance of the image as instrument of communication of the destination (Gândara, 2008; Machado & Gosling, 2010; Carniello, Santaella, 2012; Cruz, Mota & Perinotto, 2012; Perinotto, 2013; Silva & Perinotto;

2016; Perinotto *et al.,* 2020; Silveira, Pereira, Limberger, 2021; Nogueira, 2021), 196 publications were analyzed, from the social media *Instagram*, within the period of the beginning of the Coronavirus cases in Brazil: March 11th., 2020 to September 29th., 2020 – data when the campaign of recovery from FUNDTUR-MS "Come, but come with a mask!" was launched. In a specific way, it was intended to verify which cities and tourism regions were the most disclosed; to raise what campaigns were directed to the pandemic; to identify the public-target, type of image used to portrait, engagement and repercussion of the posts in the social media *Instagram*.

Therefore, this study becomes relevant once some important evidences were identified in the analyzed campaign, such as the identification of the potential of the destination Mato Grosso do Sul through *personas* and their practices of tourism, as well as the positioning of part of the subjects directed to each specific public through comments and engagement in campaigns.

Therefore, from this study, it is aimed at demonstrating to the instances of the state tourism sector the importance that regional people feel represented in each publication posted on Instagram through the campaign VISIT MS, whether as tourist or as the sector entrepreneur. In addition, it is hoped that improvements in the accessibility in the communication are suggested, and also improvements and strengthening the partnerships between public and private.

THE IMAGE AS INSTRUMENT OF COMMUNICATION OF THE DESTINATION

For Machado & Gosling (2010), the registrations on the studies of the use of images from destinations initiated in the decade of 1970, in a more subtle way in the international literature, gaining, later, more notoriety in the studies of tourism marketing.

According to Perinotto (2013), the image of a tourism destination should be developed through photographs that represent the characteristics of the location, whether landscapes, natural, cultural, gastronomic, arts or folklore, in addition to history, habits and behavior of the population. They should be

attractive, but they need to reflect the real qualities that the location offers. For Junior & Santos (2007), the photograph may be used by the tourism professional in the following areas: a) Phototourism (urban, landscape, ecological); b) Educational Photography (data from the locations, exhibitions in schools, workshops); c) Photograph as Art (art manifestation, cultural valuation, museums, galleries); d) Photograph as Field Research (collections for theories and assertive, gathered data); e) Photograph as an historical registry (preservation of the memory modified by time, analogies from the past and present); f) Photograph as Planning (air photographs, scientific, technical, for infrastructure of something, organization and scenarios; g) Photograph for Tourism Managers (technical regulations, receipt of certifications and regulations, reports, technical reports, audit); h) Photograph as Marketing (publicity and commercial material. The contact of the tourism with the destination. Quality, colors and shapes that represent the location for the attraction).

Any image related with the destination is due to a type of communication. For Perinotto (2013, p. 107), they have the purpose of "informing the characteristics and attributes of natural and cultural tourism attractions, as well as tourism equipment [...] and "to pursued the tourist to travel up to the destination as well as also to sensitize him/her". According to Kotler's view, an effective image needs to have three functions:

> In first place, it needs to establish the product's personality and the proposal of value. In second, it must transmit such personality in a distinct way, so that it may not be mistaken with one of the competition. In third, it has to communicate an emotional power that goes beyond a simple mental picture. For the image to work, it should be transmitted by all vehicles of communication and image contact available. (Kotler, 2000, p. 318).

For the tourism destination to have a consolidated destination image, it can be measured in three forms: organic, induced or complex. The organic image is the one that has formation coming from non-commercial means, the

induced image is different by the construction with information acquired by the tourist through searching, and the complex is resulted posteriorly to the contact of the destination with the consumer (Chagas, Junior & Silva, 2016).

For Silva & Perinotto (2016), the projected image from a destination in the mind of the tourist before getting to know the location is related to a sum of information:

> Tourist, before traveling, makes predictions of the experiences he/she intends to have. These are essential in the emotions that the destination evokes on his/her memory, by friends' comments, by the reading of brochures, publicity adds etc. His/her decision will be based on the image he/her values and hopes to find. This way, for the election of the destination such images should be favorable for the consumer to be reached and to go after the worked destination. In case such images are not so favorable as what expected, the search for the tourism consumption may not happen (Silva & Perinotto, ~~2015,~~ 2016, p. 419).

Tourism as an activity should be well thought and planned. Just as the image to be worked on for disclosure, attending the possibilities the territory offers, as the possibility to contribute to the identity, traditions, destination culture and all the tourism trade. In addition, it should promote the creating of jobs and be able to attract investments for the location, stimulating a chain of new complementary services for the local development (Mota, 2001).

TOURISM, COMMUNICATION AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Information has always been necessary for the exchange and communication within a society. Throughout several years those signs of communicating reflect the cultural identity of a population, period and available means. For Carvalho (2011), nowadays social media have appeared as a form of social organization in the digital world, on political, economy, cultural, educational, territorial and tourism principals, among others. The term "social media" may be defined as a tool or digital platforms to the exchange. Such platforms may vary according to the functionalities offered, the minimal

resources of the system and the degree of speed, formality and target public. They also should follow a defined format for the exchange of information, whether through text, image, videos, audios or a combination of them (Vermelho *et al.*, 2014).

Cruz, Mota & Perinotto (2012), observed that social media have gone through three periods until the year of 2012: The Networks 1.0 are the ones that needed a real time interaction between the actors (*ICQ, MSN*); Networks 2.0 are those for entertainment, *network*, social marketing (*Orkut, MySpace*); Networks 3.0 are the ones that work through mobile apps (*Facebook, Twitter*).

Nowadays, means of communication through apps still remain booming, but the market always changes or updates the versions with demands and market trends. Currently, the platform *Instagram* is reference in the issue of image and sharing, in addition to possessing easy to edit tools, color adjustment and filters to share everyday moments (Piza, 2012). The same author complements:

> The app *Instagram* appeared to the public on October 6th., 2010. It was developed by programming engineers Kevin Systrom and the Brazilian Krierg, whose intention, according to themselves, was to restore the nostalgia of the moment registered throughout the years by the classic *Polaroids*, photographic cameras which used film, which the photos were ready at the moment they were taken. *Instagram* was born from a simplification of another app, also developed by the two engineers, called Burbn, whose initial proposal was to be a social network that would group several functions, in which the users would be able to share their location, images, plans for the weekend, etc. However, the development of such app had become complex, motivating Kevin and Mike to choose one of the functions they considered most attractive: photography (Piza, 2012, p.3).

Social media have been working to create tools that have more visual impact with the use of images, universal icons such as pictograms and little writing. In tourism, medias are currently source of strategic information (Thomaz et al., 2016) and assume a decisive role both for the tourist (in the choice of the

destination), for the trade (during the sell) as well as in the consolidation of public policies (Silveira, Pereira & Limberger, 2021).

Ten years past its launch, *Instagram* is highlighted by achieving the mark of 1 billion active users per month. This is one of the few data disclosed officially by the network, which makes Instagram to be the 5th most popular social media in all world. Classified only behind *Facebook* (2.6 billion users), *YouTube* (2 billion), *WhatsApp* (2 billion) and *WeChat* (1.2 bilion) (G1, 2020).

For Ferrari & Gândara (2015), *Instagram* grows each day more and it is highlighted with the differential of the possibilities it offers both for the ordinary user, as well as what it produces for the internet, disclosing products, services and experiences. This big window of images formatted into metrics, *hashtags – combination of keywords or even a single word proceeded by the symbol "#"-*, location, promotion of publication, videos and sounds, with the help of codes and algorithms to please the user to see and become interested in the subject, to be able to contribute directly to promotions and sharing of products and services.

Up to April 2019, Brazil had the second place in number of users in all world: around 66 million people used daily Instagram. Among the most highlighted content and categories were trip photos, athletes and celebrities (Agrela, 2019). Such junction of factors has become a decision factor and influence to choose the next trip, sharing which collaborates to construct the image of the tourism destination (Perinotto *et al.;* 2020; Perinotto, 2013).

Considering the intangibility of the tourism activity to work desires, satisfactions and expectations, it is something decisive for the tourist's choice. Within this sense, Instagram through photographs which are shared has become an essential mechanism for such choice as well as for the promotion and disclosure of tourism destinations (Perinotto et al., 2020; Alves, Costa e Perinotto, 2017). Which means, internet provides someway the tangibilization of destinations (Perinotto *et al,* 2020) meanwhile photographs in addition to influencing the choice, allow someway spaces to be "tried on" (Alves, Costa e

Perinotto, 2017) and allow tourists to have a connection with what one may live.

METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES

With the purpose of reaching the purposed goals, different steps were performed. Initially, a review of literature was performed regarding the themes tourism communication, image, Instagram and photography. The following step was developed through the netnographic method, which is currently a methodological alternative for scientific studies considering that many objects of studies are located each day more on the internet (Manosso & Gândara, 2016). For Braga (2007), netnography is related to the research and the data selection and the available information on the internet.

Just as the study of Cruz et al. (2012), the current study is empric for being dedicated to phases of observation of the investigated phenomena and the posts. As example of the pre-elaborated steps of the upper mentioned authors, the following were used: the definition of social media, which would be raised; the proximity and the familiarization with the defined social media; the structure of a script for the data gathering (Figure 1); the gathering of data and of information; analysis and discussion of the obtained information.

Instagram was chosen, considering that it is one of the most growing social media in current days, through the official profile that the Mato Grosso do Sul Tourism Foundation uses to promote and share the destination Mato Grosso do Sul, which is @*visitmsoficial*.
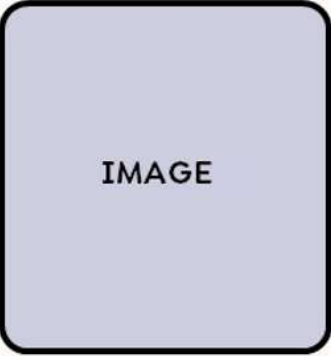
Considering the current scenario of COVID-19 Pandemic and the purposed goal for this research, the period of analysis was coincident with the date that FUNDTUR used for the beginning of the Pandemic. Therefore, posts were analyzed during the period of March 11th., 2020 to September 29th., 2020 – date in which the recovery campaign of FUNDTUR-MS was launched: "Come, but come with a mask! ".

This way, a file in a cloud (*Google Drive*) was created to catalog and to organize the raise of such posts from the profile's feed; for the download of all

images an extension of the navigator was used (*Downloader for Instagram*). For the organization of the gathered data, a form was created (*Google Forms*) to insert the data one by one, with all the available information to the account follower. This organization has generated an Excel table and graphics, which will be analyzed and discussed in this study.

Figure 1 – Data gathered from *Instagram*.

Source: Arthur Monteiro, 2020.

A total of 196 publications were analyzed, being for the raise of initial information **(Figure 1)** the following information were gathered: :

i) File (fotograph, announcement, video)

ii) Link (URL address of each image);

iii) Type of file (landscape, video, publicity or gallery);

iv) Description (complementary text to the post);

v) Hashtags (keywords preceded by # which enables to find other images of the same segment, campaign);

vi) Location (geolocation provided by the manager);

vii) Number of likes and comments;

viii) Number of visualization of videos;

ix) Comments (published by followers);

x) Date of the publication;

xi) Period of publication (morning, afternoon, evening);

xii) *Instagram* code(AI- Artificial Intelligence for the classification of each post);

xiii) Comments (observations by the researcher, when applicable).

It is important to mention that the item "Instagram Code" was inserted in the analysis since this is the algorithm produced by the Artificial Intelligence of the social media to classify and to determine what types of content the posted image has. The extraction of such code was done manually, of each image, one by one. To obtain such type of information, it is necessary to open the image's link, through the desktop version of the website, clicking with the right mouse button and choosing the option "To inspect". All the page with algorithms and codes will be exhibited. Next, it is necessary to locate the excerpt that says "may have" and what will be next is what the Artificial Intelligence determines for each image. For example: "This image may have: nature, water, plants, cloud".

Another important observation is that despite the official hashtag of the state being #ThisIsMatoGrossoDoSul, all hashtags used during the period were raised and, posteriorly, analyzed.

Throughout the data gathering other tables were created and some graphics were generated so that it would be easier to visualize the reached information. Posteriorly, the analysis and the crossing of the information with external and complementary data was performed, so the discussion of the results could be developed.

PRESENTATION AND EVALUATION OF THE RESULTS

As mentioned in the previous item, a total of 196 images were analyzed, from the period of March 20th. to September 29th., 2020. To make the campaigns and the engagement in the social media easier, hashtags were used. For the promotion of the state, the official profile used the following: #visitms, #visitmsoficial and #thisismatogrossodosul (**Figure 2**). Hashtags help users to find a certain theme. They may be considered a shortcut to what is wanted to be found (Costa & Perinotto, 2017).

Figure 2 – Official Instagram Profile of VISITMS.

Source: Instagram Reproduction.

Based on the official hashtags, which appear highlighted in the description of the official page, the total number of their marks was counted since when they started being used by the profile and by the public for the promotion of the destination. Until the date of December 7th., 2020, the hashtags in Instagram presented a total of 68,060 results, being: a) #visitms – 60,264 publications; b) #visitmsoficial – 1,539 publications; c) #thisismatogrossodosul – 6,257 publications.

It is important to highlight that the hashtag #VISITMS has a very elevated number compared to the others, since the state of Mississippi – USA, promotes the same hashtag for the promotion of the state **(Figure 3)**. According to the Market and Events Manager of the FUNDTUR MS - Karla Cavalcanti[1], the accounts and hashtags are free. Which means, there is no way to guarantee that there will not be another one as the same.

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[1] Information obtained via *WhatsApp* on December 14th., 2020.

Figure 3 – Official profile of the state of Mississippi – USA.

Source: Instagram Reproduction

To analyze the official profile of tourism of Mato Grosso do Sul, a total of 280 hashtags were found, which vary in repetitions of use, according to the image and subject. Observing al the descriptions of the images, in the ranking **(Figure 4)** of the ten more used by the official account are: #thisismatogrossodosul (186), #visitms (174); #mtur (162); #visitmsofficial (143); #ecotourism (142); #matogrossodosul (131); #Brazil (109); #Ilovetotravel; #tourism (108) and #vacation (100). In the result of the data gathering via *Google Forms*, the involvement by part of the followers adds to 267 comments, the files in video surpass 14,760 visualizations and overall, 55,506 likes.

Figure 4 – The 10 most used hashtags of @VISITMSOFICIAL in *Instagram*.

Source: Arthur Monteiro via *Infogram* (2021).

The two images with the highest number of likes from this period are photographs of birds, being the most liked Figure 5, which has greater involvement, receiving up to the moment of the data analysis 7,477 likes, which assumes that the public has interest in animals, mainly birds, which has favored the practice of bird observation, also known as *birdwatching*. According to Cavalcanti (2020), this is of the priority segments for FUNDTUR-MS. According to Moura & Feliciano (2020, p.54), "Despite the ecotourism being the main focus, the segments of fishing and birdwatching (bird observation) are also highlighted in the State". Statement which corroborates with the results found in this research.

For Mamede *et al.* (2019), *birdwatching* is a group of elements and actions for the practice of observing birds, whether from home or in its surroundings, appreciating birds by the way they sing, protection of species, mapping, cataloging images through photography

Figure 5 – Couple of Jaburu (*Jabiru Mycteria*), known as Tuiuiú.

Source: Instagram Reproduction @visitmsofficial. File: Bolivar, Porto.

To observe birds represent a way of leisure and entertainment that has as base the elements of nature, demonstrating the value of the Brazilian biodiversity. Such practice of birdwatching strengthens even more the destination for research proposal, ecotourism and nature tourism.

Figure 5 of the couple of Jaburu, also known as Tuiuiú and bird symbol from Pantanal, is one of the publications with more engagements within the profile. 42 comments were done, being the majority positive: *"beautiful species"*, *"wonderful"*, *"enchanting"*, *"very beautiful"*, *"is one of the most beautiful chants I have ever heard"*, *"Pantanal is beautiful"*, *"nature lives"*, *"beautiful land"*, *"our home"*, *"extraordinary place"*, *"our environment is magical"*, *"true heaven"*, *"love the sunset from Mato Grosso do Sul"*, *"Spectacle"*, *"beautiful broad-snouted Caiman"*, *"what a perfection"*, *"wonderful energy"*, *"enchanted city"*.

Pantanal – Mankind heritage – has an extension of 138.183 km² and occupies the areas of the states of Mato Grosso and Mato Grosso do Sul in Brazil, and a small part of the Bolivian and Paraguain territories. In the state of Mato Grosso do Sul, the cities of Aquidauana and Corumbá are highlighted – being the former considered the capital of Pantanal. It is territory that, in addition of having several types of animals, presents high potential for the tourism practice. For researcher Martins (2018), the complexity of Corumbá has not yet been discovered – historical, expressive and listed heritage, Rio Paraguai, Geopark (Bodoquena-Pantanal), the "pantanais" of Pantanal, such as the Serra do Amolar.

Being difficult to monitor and control all such biome, in 2020, a fire drastically affected part of the landscape of such territory. Until September 23rd., 2020, the data obtained by Prevfogo state that over 1 million hectares were destroyed (G1, 2020a). The subject was all over the main Brazilian and foreign news. The Institute Center of Life – ICL – also said that

> the consequences of the fire are enormous. They go from the impact for the biodiversity and the environmental balance up to economy loss, such as the compromise of the tourism potential of the region. Currently, volunteers work to rescue injured animals (G1, 2020a, p. 1).

Given the importance of the facts, it was noticed that the positioning of the FUNDTUR through its official Instagram profile came only through one publication, on August 19th to deal about the subject. However the image

used to talk about the situation did not reflect the real image that the media spread (**Table 1**).

Table 1 – Images published by the media.

@VISITMSOFFICIAL	DESCRIPTION
Photo: Rico	"Everyday we use our social media to show how amazing our tourism destinations are. Today our post is about a difficult situation around here. Our Pantanal has always been our pride and to present it to the world was always been a great pleasure. Our compassion goes to Pantanal, to the firefighters and to all professionals mobilized in such job. The Tourism Foundation monitors the work that the State Government performs with the support of the federal government and entities to fight the fire and to preserve this amazing biome.
08/11/2020	<www.instagram.com/p/CDwoGBNhMTE/>
ECODEBATE	**DESCRIPTION**
Photo: Chico Ribeiro	**"Fire in Pantanal – Only in the year of 2020, over 3.000 fire spots were registered.** The drought period in Pantanal also culminates with the period that this biome most suffers with fires, according to the National Institute of Space Researches (INPE), only in the year of 2020, over 3.000 spots of fire were registered, generating a considerable threat for the organisms which compose such biome."
11/08/2020	<www.ecodebate.com.br/2020/08/11/queimadas-no-pantanal-ameacam-a-biodiversidade/>

Elaborated by Arthur Monteiro, 2020.

Regarding such subject, Cavalcanti (2020) informed that a stronger positioned was published in the official FUNDTUR on *Facebook* – which was not the object of analysis of such study. It highlighted that there was care in dealing the subject in face of the gravity of it. In the occasion, FUNDTUR searched for

the management committee responsible for dealing with fires and make an article with reliable and updated information.

Pantanal's region encompasses a unique scenario, which is present in the literature, in the movies and soap operas; it is quoted in songs and in many other types of arts, making it a big differential compared to other states and regions. The fishing culture is highly predominant between the cities' population and districts from such region. In addition to being considered a leisure practice for some and income for others, the fish is also used for the own consumption.

The segment is one of the priorities of the state of Mato Grosso do Sul. Including worked on the perspective not only of the men, but also showing that families and youngsters may also fish (Cavalcanti, 2020). However, it was noticed that both the opinions as well as the practice of "fish and let go" diverge among the followers. In **Figure 6** we have an image posted by the profile @visitmsoficial on May 18th, 2020 regarding the campaign "FISH, LET GO AND COME BACK ALWAYS", but among the comments posted, there is *"Fish and Let Go is cruelty",* meanwhile another follower gets excited to return to practice in a post-pandemic moment *"I can't wait".*

Figure 6 - Image of the fish with the mark of the campaign "Fish. Let go. And come back always" .

Source: Reproduction *Instagram* @visitmsofficial.

The image published on May 18th., 2020, has the following subtitle *'Beautiful Golden fished by the Fisherman! Fish, Let Go and Come Back Always to fish in the rivers of Mato Grosso do Sul! Are you already planning your fishing for when all of this goes away"*. With the launch of the campaign "Fish. Let Go and come back always" by SEAGRO and promoted by FUNDTUR, images and divergent comments have become common.

From a repetition of comments with the same type of divergence on the matter, FUNDTUR goes through a change in the strategy in the publication of the images. It is perceived that the change is due to the fact that before the fish was exhibited as a 'trophy', now it is exhibited being returned to the river.

This corroborates what Cavalcanti (2020) highlights on the fact that the own social media shows what is interesting or not to the public and helps with the content that should be posted or not. For Carniello & Santaella (2012, p. 293) "...it is possible to work the image to avoid negative distortions and enables the attraction of economy, social and cultural benefits". According to what was previously presented, many comments were negative, and the tourism trade would answer that it was not like that. From such experience, at the end of all text with images on fishing was highlighted that the fish was returned to the nature since the activity is 'fish and let go'. Which means, they gave an extra information, showing what was, in fact, done. People want answers and in addition to answers, it is important to create a relationship. Gândara (2008) highlights the importance of the work of communication in the image's conformation.

Figure 7 – Fisher returns the fish to the river.

Source: Reproduction *Instagram* @visitmsoficial.

The subtitle also explains in a more detailed form about he law, fines and results of fishes being developed each day more. In addition, the image explores the persona of women who fish. This way, no negative comment was done and the amount of likes of the photo that shows a man with the fish up to the moment was of 23 likes, meanwhile the figure with the fisher-woman **(Figure 7)**, has 378 likes.

From the 196 analyzed images in this period, the landscape and activities in Pantanal were so meaningful that they represent a total of 44.4%, (18.4% landscape with forest, vegetation, waterlogged; the practice of *birdwatching* occupies 15.3% and fishing with 10.7%). All these numbers are related to the tourism practice of only one type of territory. According to Moretti, Bertoli & Zucco (2016) the photographs are essential tools for the elaboration and promotion of the image of tourism destinations.

Just as the Pantanal is considered World Mankind Heritage by UNESCO, the ancient constructions that posses historical architecture and/or are listed, are also disclosed on the social media, representing a total of 8.2% of all images disclosed in the period. Being considered a national heritage, Corumbá keeps precious historical and architectonic records with its beautiful houses and

townhouses in European style   (Institute of Historical and National Historical Heritage [IPHAN], 1993).

Such constructions and monuments in some cases currently hold museums and exhibitions. However, the state of conservation, security of objects and tradition with festive dates receive some questionings. In one of such cases, the follower refers to the building known as House of Baís **(Figure 8)**, located in Campo Grande, saying: *"It needs work. For Christmas, they did not put any lighting, which was already a tradition. The saddest was to see that the museum does not count with any system of surveillance and security. Visitors may withdrawn the artifacts easily. This is an enormous neglect with the artist's memory and with the culture of Mato Grosso do Sul. The impression is that the House of Baís is today only to have subterfuge for the bar and restaurant which work in the back. Let's continue watching with our mouths shut the degradation of such heritage?"*

Figure 8 – Front of the House of Baís.

Source: Reproduction *Instagram* @visitmsoficial.

The cultural heritage of Mato Grosso do Sul also goes through the culinary and has some products that are typical of the region, going from the tradition of the way of cooking and preparing. The use of the mate herb goes from generation to generation, mainly through the Tereré; the chipa, by influence of the border region with Paraguay; and the sobá, adapted with local products by the Japanese Colony. Such delights and food adaptations are common in fairs and restaurants.

Regarding now the strategies used by FUNDTUR, it is important to mention that to please all types of possible people, the destination bests on *"personas"*. According to Cavalcanti (2020) the *personas* **(Figure 9)** are related with the language to be used.

Figure 9 – Presentation of the personas focused on the promotion of FUNDTUR.
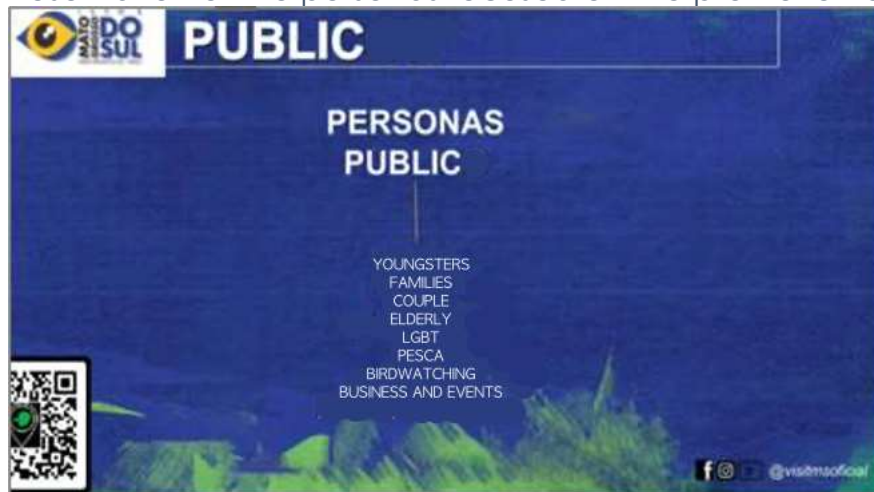
Source: Reproduction disclosed in the on-line event *Check-in* Minas, 2020.

The choice of FUNDTUR is based on the researches of the State Tourism Observatory, as well as trade information. For each persona, there is a different sell channel. In addition the segments may involve more than one type of persona, such as fishing involves families, youngsters and couples, as previously mentioned. In addition to models that represent race and gender.

Figure 10 – Presentation of the personas focus for the promotion of the recovery of Tourism, safely, in Mato Grosso do Sul, campaing "Come! But come with a mask!."

Source: Reproduction disclosed in the online event *Check-in* Minas.

Based on such data, it was possible to classify the destination based on the personas worked by FUNDTUR. According ot the analyzed images, youngsters appear in 9.7%, practicing outdoor activities, radical sports (Tyrolese, diving, activities in caves, walks through archaeological sites, among others).

Family activities appear in 5.6% (floater, bike rides, quadricycle, activities in waterfalls and rives, fishing activities and nature appreciation). In only 1 of those publications **(Figure 11)**, a family with a child that needs a ride and an accessible experience is represented. This type of publication shows that the destination is due to receive all types of people to practice activities in nature. Some companies from the sector also enjoy images with certain theme to offer their products, such as the case of the profile @turismoadaptado that says: "*Hello! You who care about tourism and accessibility, you need to get to know my profile, there is a lot of cool stuff! Give a look and follow me, I always put super interesting things. A big hug!* ✌☺".

Figure 11 – Disabled receiving instructions for the practice of diving

Source: Reproduction *Instagram* @visitmsogficial.

In addition to the accessibility for locomotion, it is necessary to think on how to be more inclusive with other types of deficiency, mainly in the form of communication in the social media and images and videos. Subtitles, sign language and description of the published image with specific hashtag such as the case of #ForEveryoneToRead and #ForBlindToSee, reinforcing that the destination cares in transmitting that the destination has to offer to everyone.

For a trip and couple experience, the post represent 10.2% of the total (it has outdoor activities practice, wedding rehearsals photographs, radical sports, among others). It is important to highlight that couples of all kinds of genders are exhibited.

Including the image with most engagement from this period has 46 comments. The post is related to LGBT Friendly hotels and bed-and-breakfasts, among them hosting establishments that aim at attending the sexually-oriented independent public and gender identity. It is important to highlight that from the 193 countries members of the United Nations Organization (UNO) - 70 countries consider a crime homosexuality (Matovani, 2019). Brazil is the country that most kills transgender (transvestite or transsexual) in the world and Mato Grosso do Sul stands in 20º place compared to other states (Barbosa, 2020).

In this search for friendly destinations and that respect the normality in being different, it is everyday more important that the destinations positioned themselves to receive with quality and safety the public. To celebrate the

month of the LGBTQIA+ pride in Brazil, the destination of Mato Grosso do Sul has created a brand to be exhibited on social media and on products. The choice of the brand was done through voting. In addition, it reinforces the image of the brand of Tourism of the state with adaptations to the colors of the LGBTQIA+ pride flag **(Figure 12)**. Such statement meets the positioning of FUNDTUR to everyday aggregate more to this tourism segment. Such action also resulted in the action which the attractions and tourism trade services of the state, which are LGBT Friendly, with this the version of the logo for exhibition is emitted to be exhibited in their attractions and businesses.

Figure 12 – Promotion of LGBT Friendly products and services in MS.

Source: Reproduction *Instagram* @visitmsofficial.

Also, around **40** of them have mobilized to comment the publication to show support for such segment. Companies such as Buraco das Araras has also showed to be thoughtful to attend well: "*Buraco das Araras, also supports the positioning of the State of Mato Grosso do Sul! Recently we started to better understand the LGBT public! This month we are with a campaign in our social medias to be positioned as LGBT Friendly, give a look! And we want everyone's help, send inbox inbox!* 🖋️🏳️."

Comments as this were noticed: "*Very good to see companies and people moving and positioning themselves, not only against the prejudice, but in favor of the love, regardless the sexual orientation. Just don't forget to train your employees too, since a good attendance makes people feel welcomed*

and respected, making all the difference! ♡🏳️ ". In addition to all this action, the page published events, images from the public and used *hashtags* for the promotion.

Despite all effort to involve different *personas* and the preoccupation with the LGBT Friendly public, it was still noticed the absence of the LGBT community seen as a whole, in addition to its representativity of black, Indian and quilombolas practicing any tourism activity and images that value their cultures.

Still regarding the aspects related to the functioning of *Instagram* as a booster of images from a certain location and movement, the classification of images in a virtual environment within the social media is allowed so that the own user may manually insert the location where it was registered, in case the digital photograph does not have GPS data. For the analysis of the location data, we separated the mentioned cities in the locations from each image of the official profile. The count of the imges is performed next through the classification of the 8 tourism regions of the state, having 42 cities, according to FUNDTUR, in 2019:

1. Bonito – Serra da Bodoquena (Bela Vista, Bodoquena, Bonito, Jardim, Nioaque, Porto Murtinho);
2. Caminho dos Ipês (Campo Grande, Corguinho, Jaraguari, Nova Alvorada do Sul, Rochedo and Terenos);
3. Caminhos da Natureza - Cone Sul (Eldorado, Iguatemi, Itaquiraí, Japorã, Jutí, Mundo Novo and Naviraí);
4. Cerrado – Pantanal (Alcinópolis, Costa Rica, Paraíso das Águas, Rio Verde de Mato Grosso and Sonora);
5. Grande Dourados (Caarapó, Dourados, Fátima do Sul, Maracaju and Ponta Porã);
6. Integra Costa Leste – Vale do Aporé (Aparecida do Taboado, Cassilândia, Inocência, Paranaíba, Três Lagoas);
7. Pantanal (Aquidauana, Corumbá and Miranda);
8. Vale das Águas (Batayporã, Jateí. Nova Alvorada do Sul, Taquarussu).

From the 196 images, the Pantanal region was the most disclosed during the analyzed period **(Figure 13)**, with a total of 55 images, Bonito – Serra da Bodoquena is represented by 43 images, Caminho dos Ipês and Cerrado-Pantanal have 23 images each one. The city of Rio Verde is not located in any of such regions according to the Map of Tourism Regions of Mato Grosso do Sul, neither has classification in previous years, but it presents 3 images. Also, 36 posts do not have an exact location, having the name of the state in location. Meanwhile, 13 other publications do not have any location.

Figure 13 – Location of the posts according to the Tourism Regions of MS.
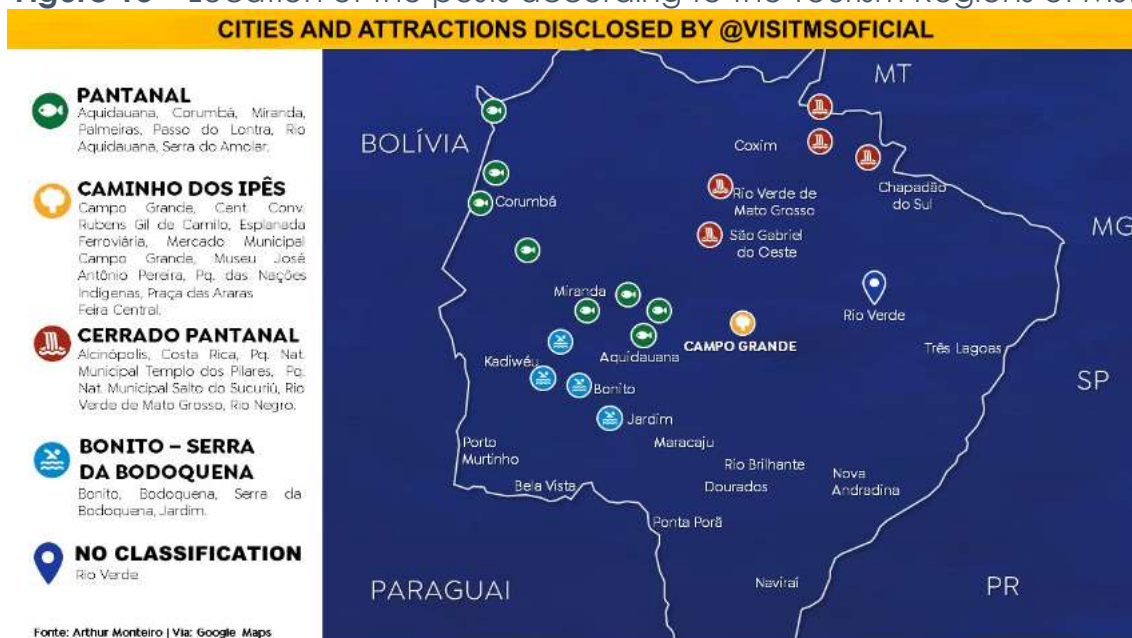
Source: Arthur Monteiro via *Google My Maps* (2021).

The result of the Tourism Classification of Cities of the State of Mato Grosso do Sul, is performed through evaluation criteria that the city should achieve. In the evaluation applied in 2017, the following criteria were aimed at: (FUNDTUR, 2017): Governance, City Public Management, City Sustainability, Tourism Infrastructure and Market.

To better understand such classification, FUNDTUR (2019) presents the detailed explanation of each one:

I – TO SOW: In this phase a small number of visitors is drawn to the destination on the account of its natural and/or historical/cultural heritage. The tourism offers, as well as the management of the activity, are not yet structured, there is little equipment and the community is still not involved in tourism. The actions that should be implemented are in the sense of stimulating the planning and the organization for the development of the city's tourism activity. Focus of the Action: Planning and organization of the basic infrastructure and sensitization of the local community.

II – TO BE BORN: In this phase, the destination is already searched for by a growing number of tourists and the offer starts to be structured to attend them. In this moment, it is important that the destination aims at searching for structure according to its calling, investing in qualification of the offer and labor, consolidating the decentralized management and integrating itself in the actions of the tourism region, getting to know and drawing conclusions form other more consolidated destinations. Focus of the Actions: Structure according to the calling of the destination, qualification and improvement of the tourism infrastructure.

III – TO FRUIT: In this phase, the tourism activity is already found as one of the economy activity of the destination. There are already management processes and the preoccupation with the increase and qualification of the offer. Scripts are organized according to the demand's profile aiming at a better experience, as well as the tourism and support equipment are more professional and search for innovation. The promotion and disclosure actions become more frequent. Focus of the Actions: Organization of the scripts, tourism products and disclosure.

IV – TO HARVEST: In this phase, the destination has already tourism as one of its main economy activities. It has reached significant number of tourists, it has offer of specialized equipment and the public management works in group with the trade in collegiate environments searching for guaranteeing the success of the activity in the destination. Focus of the Actions: Maintenance, promotion and commerce and innovation of the offer.

With this, the crossing of the data from the location of the 196 posted images was performed, within such analyzed period, with the Tourism Classification of the Cities of Mato Grosso do Sul **(Figure 14)**.

**Figure 14 –** Tourism Classification of Cities per post
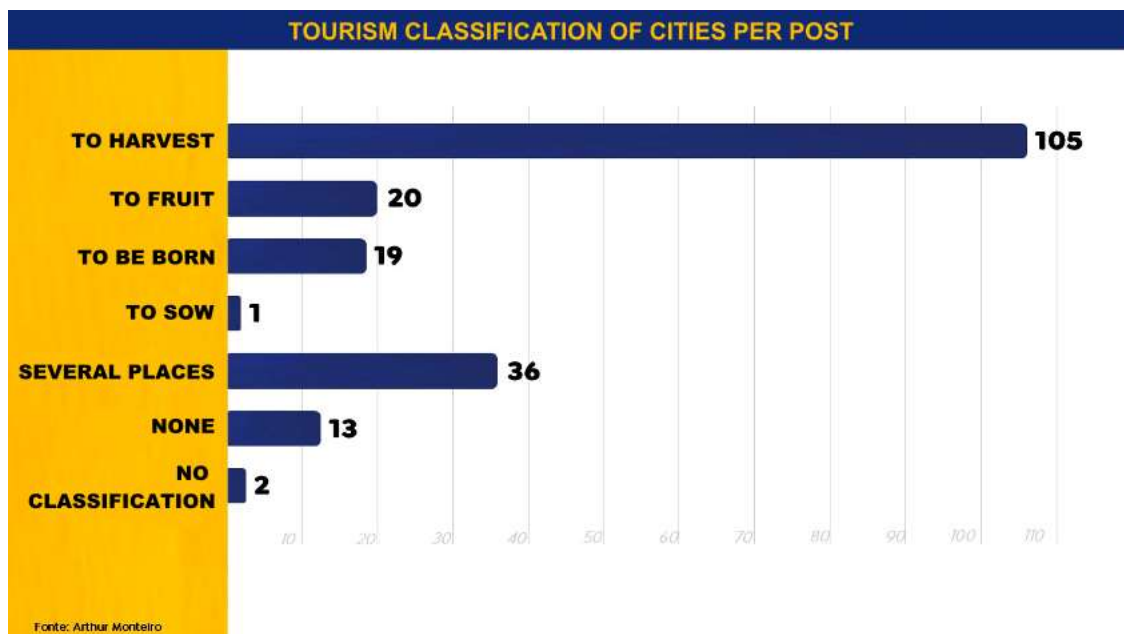
Source: Arthur Monteiro (2021).

This way, we arrived in the result of 105 images representing the cities that are in the phase of HARVESTING. The phase FRUCTIFYING appears with 20 publications, other 19 publications with TO BE BORN, which allows the group reflection of strategies to reach the other level. Meanwhile, one image is in TO SOW, but 2 do not have any classification of tourism cities. The other 36 posts used the name of the state as location, which makes it difficult for the follower (potential tourist) to find some attraction or experience and other 13 are in blank.

Within the social media *Instagram,* it is possible to exhibit images of several types and shapes: temporary (*stories*), fixed (*feed, reels* e highlights), with filters, *gifs*, survey, question boxes and soundtrack. Such types of publications are noticed in the analyzed profile in 70.41% of the posts, which are with only one image, 18.37 % are gallery (having 2 to 10 random images), which may not only be from the same location). The images having campaign, data, information, announcements, events, lectures, *workshops*, training, guides and *e-books* represent 7.65%. Meanwhile, videos represent 3.57% of the publications (**Figure 15**).

Figure 15 – Classification of the type of *post*.
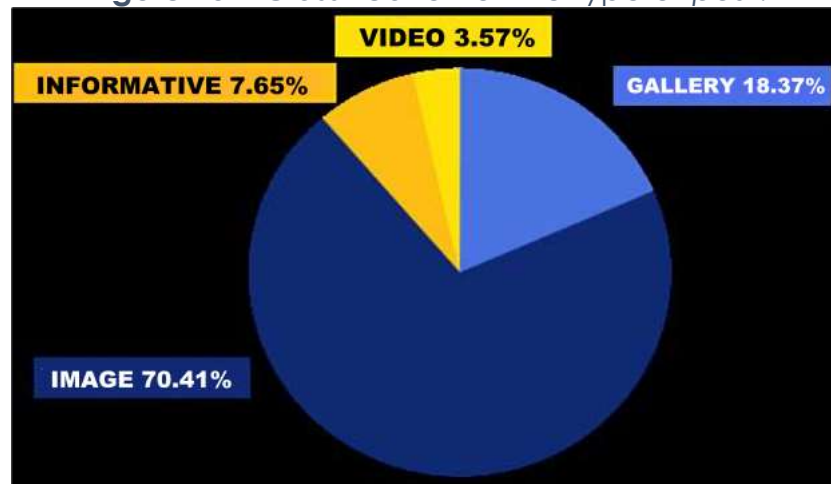
Source: Arthur Monteiro (2021).

It was noticed that the majority of the publications happened in the daily period at 11h30min. According to Cavalcanti (2020), FUNDTUR has a program for automation of publications.

From the published files, the Artificial Intelligence of *Instagram* identifies in its algorithm that 70.41% have images with water, outdoor activities, landscape people, internal areas, nature, sky, birds, cloud, plant, wedding, twilight, grass, mountain, food, bicycle, people eating, people swimming, horse and hat.

After such evaluation on the positioning of the image of Tourism in the state of Mato Grosso do Sul through its social media, it is possible to design an overview of the new Coronavirus. This historical moment was a great surprise for everyone and there a change in behavior at global scale. The first signs came from health authorities at multiple scales in an attempt to restrain the virus circulation.

The first measurements proposed were regarding the use of masks, disposable materials, constant cleaning with the use of alcohol and social distance. At global scale there was an echo asking everyone to stay at home. Consequently, the canceling procedures all over the tourism trade were inevitable. Until understanding and organizing what was happening, FUNDTUR silenced its daily practice of promotion posts of the destination through the

internet between days February 21st. and March 20th. In this period, it is important to remember the data in **Figure 16** from the info-graphic below:

Figure 16 – Important dates referring to the Covid-19 Pandemic.
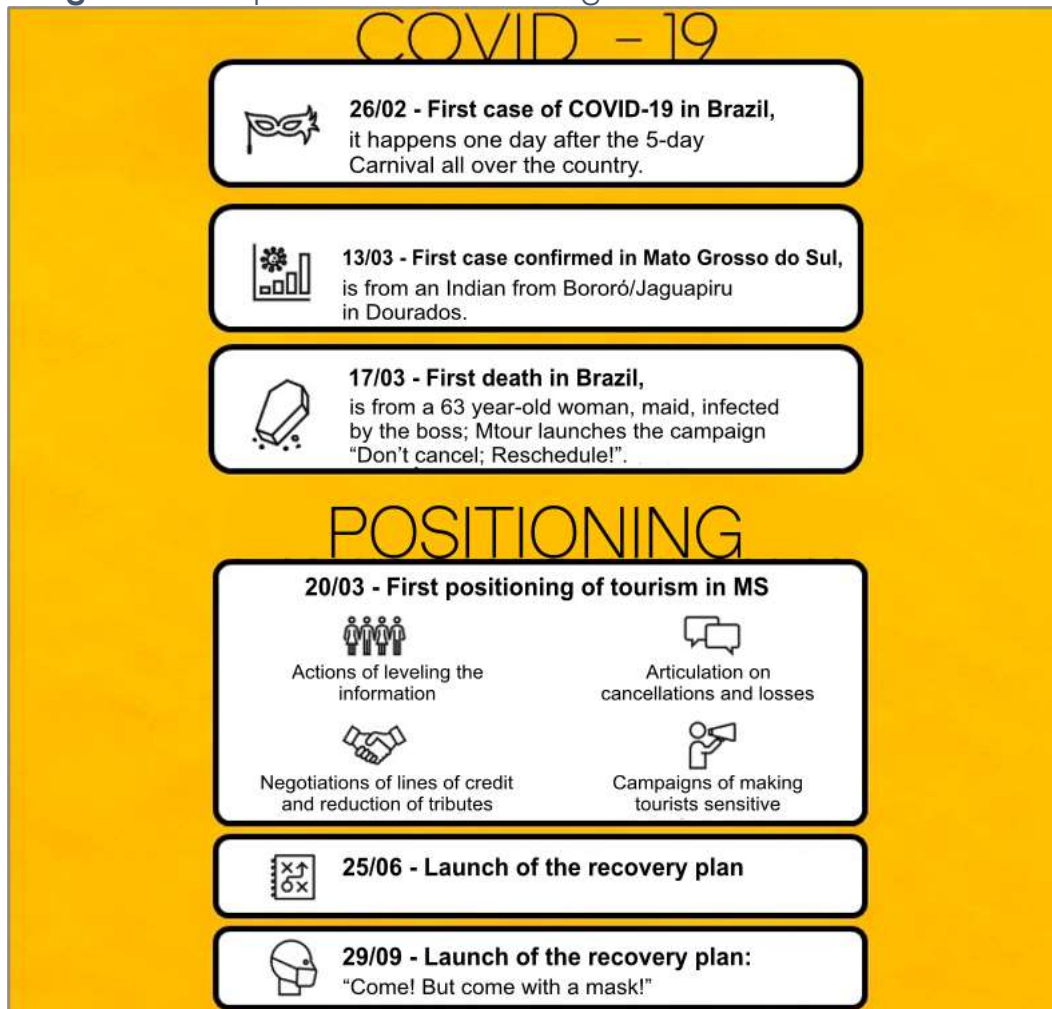
Source: Arthur Monteiro (2021).

Such happenings in the state, in Brazil and in the world have created a wave of actions and mobilizations with canceling of reservations, flights, among others. To strengthen the trade, the first action and positioning of the profile @visitmsoficial came through a video of the Director President of FUNDTUR – Bruno Wendling – on March 20th., 2020, in which he said that actions started from the leveling of daily information on how to proceed, information and practices to be followed by the sector and by tourists.

Bruno Wendling also stated that measurements and articulations were being performed to understand how the sector was dealing with losses and

canceling. At last, it was highlighted that negotiations would be performed on lines of credit for companies, reduction of tributes, campaigns of sentimentalization so that tourists would not cancel the trips, but reschedule them. Cavalcanti (2020)[2] details such process and the actions performed by FUNDTUR in face of the scenario imposed by Covid-19:

> In fist place, FUNDTUR focused on the solution of emergent issues such as support to canceling and on the construction of a plan of recovery. There are more information in this article *. https://www.turismo.ms.gov.br/fundtur-ms-lanca-plano-estrategico-para-a-retomada-do-turismo-em-reuniao-remota-do-cet/*. In such article, there is also a link of the Plan's document. At the beginning of the Plan, there is a rich of the pandemic scenario.
> Regarding the market, at firest, the institution was active and available to all vehicles that searched for information on the destination and also performed *lives* – which were a great emergent channel at the moment – in partnership with operators such as Agaxtur, *Schultz*, FRT, Ambiental, BWT, Orinter, among others, speaking of the offered tourism products, as well as offering updated information to their clients and partners. There was a great need of current information, alternations of the decree, the place that was open, close, with curfew, if there were flights available, access … It was live and diverse information since each destination had a reality. Lives were a great tool for being quickly available. In this moment, much was commented also about the trend to search for outdoors and nature destinations, then, our products were very well received. The posts on social media followed the programming, with addition of information highlighting that we would be an option when the moment to travel became appropriate. During punctual moments, specific information were added.

The Plan of Tourism Recovery of Mato Grosso do Sul is launched on June 25, 2020 (FUNDTUR, CET, 2020). A manual with strategies to be followed by the trade in recovery. From the 10 proposed strategies, 5 were directly related with the image and communication of the destination, which are:

- Strategy 2: Monitoring of the scenario and projection of recovery;

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2 Cavalcanti, K. Sobre o Visit MS. [mensagem pessoal]. Mensagem recebida por <martinspatriciacristina@gmail.com>, em 26 out. 2020.

- Strategy 5: Decentralization of resources for the execution of actions of promotion and disclosure of tourism destinations;
- Strategy 7: Creation of the Recovery Campaign;
- Strategy 8: Creation of the Campaign of Incentive to Regional Tourism;
- Strategy 9: Creation of the Campaign of Promotion of Mato Grosso do Sul to the national/international public.

From this moment, SEBRAE MS also joined to help companies with consultancies for the types of financing and it was announced that PROCON would offer support to the negotiations with the *trade*. Data on the impact caused by the Covid-19 on the state were also disclosed by the Tourism Observatory of Mato Grosso do Sul.

The movement of the Brazilian tourism sector on social media appeared through publications of the *hashtag* #DoNotCancelReschedule boosted by the MTur. FUNDTUR did not use the *hashtag* in any publication during this period, which shows that it was not aligned with the campaigns promoted by the Tourism Ministry. However, other similar hashtags were used, such as #assoonaseverythingpasses, #TogetherAgainstCorona, #TogetherForMSTourism #whenthispasses, #itwillpass and the most used #OVERCOMETHISTOURISM in 84 publications. From the 196 images only 14 publications describe the words Quarenteen, Covid and/or Coronavirus.

Other than the publications regarding images, there were surveys generated by the Tourism Observatory of Mato Grosso do Sul and disclosed by FUNDTUR, in which it pointed out a diminished revenue starting from the month of April, added to the difficulties of adaption to remote jobs. The segments which had more dismissals were with hosting means (36.7%), restaurants (14.9%), tourism operators/agencies (12.6%) and transportation (7.4%) (FUNDTUR, 2020).

According Bordin (2020) on September 29, 2020, the recovery campaign is launched untitled "Come! But come with a mask!". The director-president of FUNDTUR stated that:

> The Recovery Plan of Tourism, which had emergency, structure and planned actions, this is the first promotion action of our destinations after the beginning of the pandemic. It was very well thought and before the launch a campaign like this, we hope that the tourism trade in MS would be organized with local biossafety protocols, that the emission companies of Mato Grosso do Sul would organize themselves and that the pandemic would be stable here in the State, which is already happening according to the data of the Health State Secretary. And, of course, that the own tourists would have the intention of traveling again (Wendling, 2020).

Up to the closing of this study, some countries had initiated tests at crescent scale with some time of vaccine against Covid-19. In Brazil, the Federal Government for several times discredit and minimized the impacts of deaths by the pandemic. Also, regarding the veracity and efficiency of some types of manufacturers, making some measurements of contention and circulation fo people political, into decisions of mayors and governors of all countries.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The image is the element of communication that occupies great part of the tourism's promotion, even in digital environment. Sharing has become even more accelerated through social media and it is the opportunity for destinations of all places to occupy the same place and opportunity for promotion. In this competitive environment among destinations, to become highlighted goes beyond producing an image.

The positioning based on the identified potential target public makes difference for the promotion within digital marketing. The studied object had as promotion basis the state of Mato Grosso do Sul in the social media *Instagram*, during a phase of pandemic caused by the novel Coronavirus. In

the middle of such chaos, fires that took big proportions of one of the most preserved regions of Pantanal, the most disclosed biome and promoted by FUNDTUR.

During the pandemic period, the whole world promoted in social medias the movement #StayAtHome, #yomequedoencasa, #visitlater, to restrain the advance of the disease (Nogueira, 2021). According to the main organizations and health specialists of the planet, in the post-pandemic or recovery moment, new habits would prevail, such as the use of masks in environment with people outside our social circle, hand and accessories sanitation. The potential of the state for recovery is given through outdoor activities, nature tourism, where there is a low concentration of people, possibilities of adventure tourism, contact with fauna, flora, gastronomy and local culinary. The destinations classified in the phase of "To fructify and to harvest" by the city classification of FUNDTUR are benefited.

The destination's image starts to have a more regional image, giving value to typical products and reinforcing types of personas. The positioning comes through the identification of potential personas, youngsters, families, couples, elderly , LGBTQIA+ community, events and businesses, in addition to practices of fishing and *birdwatching* in pantanal.

Within such environment, FUNDTUR, promoter of Tourism in state scale in Mato Grosso do Sul, bet on outdoor images and on the space which nature provides. Making substitutions of people by animals in their natural habitat. They also were the images that had more repercussion and public's engagement. Summed the public's will to witness the beauties close by once again.

The public (follower) of the content of the page @*visitmsoficial* also became perceptible with details of the images and of the campaigns. Such degree of the public's perception goes through since the preservation of historical and architectonic heritage, as well as campaigns of the practice of fishing. Resulting in a change of positioning of an image, as the case of fish and let go, have minimized the negative impacts on social media.

Through such analysis and observation of the authors, it was verified that, despite the profile having the name VISIT MS in the English language – with a bet of broad communication with the tourism market – in none of the publications the subtitle in English or Spanish was identified, since Spanish is the official language of border countries with the state, Paraguay and Bolivia.

Another observation made is the fact that there are no images that highlight black people, quilombolas or Indian people practicing any tourism activity or of value of their cultures – being the state with an estimated population of 63 thousand Indian, being such of the ethnicities Kaiowá, Guarani, Terena, Kadiwéu, Atikum, Guató, Kiniquinau and Ofaié (MUSEU DAS CULTURAS DOM BOSCO, 2009).

It is hoped that from the future campaigns, regional people should be valued and they should be represented in publicity campaigns and some type of promotion for the trade to encompass such people, both as tourists as well as entrepreneurs.

In addition, it would be interesting to work better accessibility, whether in the promotion videos subtitles, language for the death and/or description of the posted images in the feed, as the case of the publications with #ForEveryoneToRead or #ForBlindToSee.

As the positioning for a LGBT *Friendly* destination, the LGBTQIA+ community needs to be represented as a whole, not only giving benefits to the letters of the abbreviation, it is an opportunity to align the state, society and market. With this, it opens the possibility to be even more inclusive, whether in the employee's qualification for attendance, but also in some type of promotion for transgender people (transvestite or transsexual) to be able to be trained and to have the opportunity to work in the trade and diminish each day more the tourism sexual exploitation. In the surrounding of the activities, the potential comes through events, such as the LGBTQIA+ parades, wedding fairs, forums with themes, debates and, of course, to enjoy the beauties that the destination offers.

If we look at Mato Grosso do Sul as "State/Marketing", it becomes a power in the Brazilian tourism marketing, regarding value and the role of women in the fishing environment. To the LGBTQIA+ public, it starts to show signs that they want to make businessmen of the trade to make their attractions more inclusive every day. A mission each day more promising for the segment and a model to be followed by sexist and conservative places.

For the recovery, the participation in social media should be more active, in partnership with digital influencers for the promotion of the destination. Some destinations and attractions such as Foz do Iguaçu have created a *reality show* with *influencers* for the promotion directly and indirectly. It is highlighted that the pandemic is still not over, but the destination needs Responsible Tourists, so that it does not affect the life of local population.

In addition, it is necessary to create even bigger bonds for local and regional tourism, with the universities and mainly with Tourism courses for training and research. To bet on partnerships for the conservation and maintenance of public heritage with private sector, as the case of action through laws of incentive to culture. The promotion of the destination should continue through the beauties of nature, landscape, plants, flowers, animals, waterfalls, water life in harmony with people.

Regarding the process of development of such research, it is important to mention some limitations during the path, such as the moment of the pandemic making a closer contact with members of FUNDTUR harder for visits and internal data analysis of the official *Instagram* profile. Another obstacle found was the unavailability of a software to gather the information of analysis faster, for free and automatically.

This way, it is hope that other researches may be performed with the purpose of analyzing data and metrics in a consistent and deep manner, such as the analysis of social media of the tourism sector of the state of Mato Grosso do Sul after the pandemic ,with the purpose of comparing the improvements performed and other existing or caused by the COVID-19 period difficulties.

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