Prospecting internacional sales based on competitive advantage in the Airbnb in Porto de Galinhas-Pernambuco

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ABSTRACT

Technological transformations are influencing the way people communicate and consume. In tourism, there is a great impact on how social and economic practices are associated, with the emergence of a type of consumption called collaborative. The search for these shared services has generated discussions not in the market, but also in the academia. Thus, it becomes essential to understand the competitive advantages of companies to be sustainable over time in the market and use these advantages to prospect sales and attract, especially, foreign tourists through the announcement of the platform and thus make a reservation. This research aimed to know the competitive resources, based on the Resource based view model, which generate a competitive advantage of the Airbnb advertisements in Porto de Galinhas-PE and the sales prospecting of accommodations for international

tourists. The qualitative case study approach was used, which adopted as a data collection tool, the semi-structured interviews with the hosts and the analysis of the superhosts advertisements. The results show that organizational and human resources generate competitive advantage and physical resources are in competitive parity with their competitors. Furthermore, it was identified that there is no content marketing directed to international sales prospection.

Keywords: Competitive advantage, Sales prospecting, Resource Based View, Airbnb.

RESUMO

As transformações tecnológicas estão influenciando a maneira como as pessoas se comunicam e consomem. No turismo, percebe-se um grande impacto em como as práticas sociais e econômicas estão associadas, surgindo um tipo de consumo chamado de colaborativo. A busca por esses serviços compartilhados vem gerando discussões, não só no mundo do trabalho, mas, também, na academia. Sendo assim, torna-se essencial compreender as vantagens competitivas das empresas para que sejam sustentáveis, ao longo do tempo, no mercado e que essas vantagens permitam fazer a prospecção de venda e atrair, principalmente, os turistas estrangeiros, por meio do anúncio da plataforma, e, assim, concretizar uma reserva. Essa investigação se propôs a conhecer os recursos competitivos, a partir do modelo Visão baseada em recursos, que geram vantagem competitiva a partir dos anúncios do *Airbnb* em Porto de Galinhas-PE e da prospecção de vendas das acomodações para turistas internacionais. Foi utilizada a abordagem qualitativa de estudo de caso, que adotou como instrumento de coleta de dados a entrevista semiestruturada com os anfitriões e a análise dos anúncios dos *superhosts*. Os resultados apontaram que os recursos organizacionais e humanos geram vantagem competitiva e os recursos físicos estão em paridade competitiva com seus concorrentes. Outrossim, identificou-se que não há um marketing de conteúdo direcionado à prospecção de vendas internacionais.

Palavras-chave: Vantagem competitiva, Prospecção de vendas, Visão baseada em recursos, Airbnb.

INTRODUCTION

The idea of sharing goods and services has been gaining space in the global economy and in the tourism activity. The concept of shared economy is based on commercial actions that enable to access services and goods, whether having or not the exchange of a monetary value between the actors of such process, which helps in the reduction of the costs of the transactions (Botsman & Rogers, 2011). For Belk (2010), sharing is an act and a process of distribution of what a person is so that others may use. In tourism, such new way of consumption has becoming a world trend, mainly, in the area of housing, and has changed the industry of traveling (Tussyadiah & Pesornen, 2016).

For many travelers, the experience of domesticity may represent one of the main motivations for adopting such new modality of consumption (Sigala, 2015). Linked to this, information and communication technologies (ICTs) are essential for guests' capture in the virtual environment through the disclosure of their services and differentials (Perinotto et al., 2020). With the promise of domesticity attached to the use of ICTs to offer their housing options, there is *Airbnb*. For Alves, Brandão & Valdevino (2018), it is about a virtual platform, in which unoccupied spaces are announced, in part or in their totality, for tourists of anywhere in the world, who are searching for housing.

According to the *Airbnb* website – the biggest virtual platform of shared economy in the housing sector in the world – between the years of 2016 to 2017, there was a growth of 120% in the number of consumers who used such tool to plan their trips. In Brazil, with the partnership of the Brazilian Tourism Institute, in the year of 2016, *Airbnb* developed a strategy, in order to intensify the visit of foreigners. Through marketing actions, the tourist was invited to have experience and to live the city, chosen to visit, as a local resident, focusing on hospitality.

Notwithstanding the growth of advertisements of accommodations, it is also visible, in the country, that has been an increase from 3.5 thousand in 2012 to 180 thousand advertisements in 2018 (*Airbnb*, 2019). Within this

context, there has also been a growth in the advertisements of the tourism destination Porto de Galinhas, located in the state of Pernambuco, having over 180 available accommodations in the platform.

In general, regarding the international demands of tourists who visit the destination, 17% are foreigners. From these, 70% are Argentine, 22%, Uruguayan, 2%, Portuguese and 2% are American (DICS, 2018). However, there is neither disclosed data on the occupation rate of international tourists in the *Airbnb* accommodations, in such destination, nor how they are attracted to the accommodations once they base only on the visualized add in the platform. Therefore, it can be assumed that the strategies used by hosts may be an important tool to boost the sales of their accommodations.

The prospection is the first step in the process of sales, in which the potential client needs a product and has the capacity to buy it (Futrell, 2001), which is, in this case, the attraction of a visitor's profile who will accept the rules imposed by the advertisers. The consumers, in face of a big option of products, prices and providers, analyze the offer that will provide the best for them (Kotler & Keller, 2006). This way, being of major importance, to optimize the strategical resources to assure the finalization of the purchase. With the alignment of the competitive advantage and of the sales prospection, it is possible to attract foreign tourists to the destination and to contribute, on the other hand, to the local development.

Airbnb is a prospection tool and increases the development of the region, once according to a market study, performed by the Foundation Institute of Economy Researches (FIPE), disclosed in the newspaper, o Estado de São Paulo (2017), the tourists staying in *Airbnb* accommodations spend three times more, when compared to the ones who stay in traditional hotels.

Such situation comes from the fact of the higher number of foreign tourists hosted by *Airbnb*, around 32%, meanwhile, in traditional hotels, it is of only 6.5%, in 2016. This way, according to the research, over 788 million reais were injected in the economy by tourists who chose by the shared housing, in

the referred year. Therefore, it shows a preference of foreign tourists to such platform, generating competition with other hospitality means.

Therefore, in face of the high competition of *Airbnb* with traditional hotels, with the own hosts of the destination and also with competitor destinations, the key piece is the way that each host uses strategies. Such strategies are used to obtain a better sales performance in accommodations, through the available information in their ads, mainly, to capture international tourists.

This way, one of the more robust theoretical chains that aim at explaining the competitive advantage is the *Resource Based View* (RBV), vision based on resources. The RBV defends that the tangible and intangible resources that the company has may generate a sustainable competitive advantage (SCA) in face of the competitors (Wernerfelt,1984; Peteraf, 1993; Barney, 1991). And such resources should be rare, irreplaceable, hard to imitate and valuable (Barney, 1991).

Based on the exposed, the purpose of this research was to identify the strategical resources of available accommodations in the *Airbnb* platform in Porto de Galinhas – Pernambuco, to obtain competitive advantage and to prospect international sales.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

Competitive advantage and Vision based on resources

One of the more disturbing questions, in the world of business, is that some companies have more competitive advantage than others. In the scientific literature, one of the main theories, which has been gaining highlight to answer such question, is the RBV or Resource Based View. The RBV theory may be used to explain the mechanism of how a resource in an organization is used to be a competitive advantage (Widjaja & Yuga, 2020). The study of the theory aims at explaining how organizations may reach and continue a superior performance in face of their competitors. According to Fuzinatto & Santos Júnior (2020), resource may be understood as an either a weakness or

a strength of the organization, being knowledge, capacities, organizational processes, among other factors.

For Penrose (2006), there is not an ideal size for the company and their internal resources and they are essential to the company's growth. The authors defends that the company, throughout time, may alter its products. In addition, the company may be defined as a group of productive resources, in which there are several uses and, through time, the administration decisions are reached.

According to Wernerfelt (1984), resources may be structured in a way to be more programmed than in the competitor firms. Such major planning should be stated in the following proposals (Wernerfelt, 1984): the companies should be analyzed regarding their productive resources, should analyze resources that lead to high profits, the planning of such organizations should be focused on balance between the exploitation of current resources and the development of new resources, the acquisition, performed by the organizations, may be understood as the purchase of resources which allow high yields.

According to the RBV, the specific resources are relevant for the company to have superior competitive advantage compared to the competitors, being necessary to establish a strategy of value creation that is not used, at the same time, by any other competitor (Barney, 1991; Grant, 1991). In face of such reality, for the seminal authors (Wernerfelt, 1984; Barney, 1991; Peteraf, 1993), the companies are a group of tangible, intangible and heterogeneous resources. And such resources are not easily interchanged between the companies, in addition to being semi-permanently linked to the company (Wernefelt, 1984, p. 172), making it different when it comes to strategic options and, consequently, to their profits.. In Table 1, the classification of resources is shown, as presented below.

Table 1
Classification of resources

Division of Resources	Tangible	Intangible

Division of Resources	Tangible	Intangible
Physical (Barney, 1991;Grant, 1991; Pike; Roos; Marr, 2005)	Industrial plants, Equipment, furniture, points of the plant and of the company location, access to raw materials.	
Human (Barney, 1991;Grant, 1991; Pike; Roos; Marr, 2005)		Knowledge, trust, management ability, innovation capacity.
Management (Barney, 1991;Grant, 1991; Pike; Roos; Marr, 2005)	Formal structure of the company's communication and its formal systems of planning, control and coordination	Organizational culture, image, systems of communication, strategy.
Finantial (Grant, 1991; Pike; Roos; Marr, 2005).	Ability to raise funds, ability to generate funds internally.	
Technological (Grant, 1991) and Innovation (Hall, 1992).	Operational systems, technology supply such as patents, trade marks, author rights and commercial secrets.	Ideas, scientific ability, ability to innovate.
Reputation (Grant, 1991).		Reputation with the client: name of the brand, quality perception, durability and trust in the product; Reputation with the supplier: interaction and efficiency relations, support.
Relations (Pike; Roos; Marr, 2005)		Business partnerships with suppliers, centers of research or universities, as well as organs of regulations.

Note. Source: Recovered from "Acquisition and development of strategical resources from gastronomy restaurants: study of multi-cases in Latin America", from V. S. Salazar, 2015, p. 39.

Therefore, Dalfovo *et al.*, (2017) highlight that the main argument of this theoretical consolidation is that the companies have resources that separate them from competitors. In addition, these resources are the possible sources of sustainable competition (Hoffmann *et al.*, 2016). However, not all resources are capable of generating SCA, being necessary to classify it.

As highlighted by Wernerfelt (1984), resources may be tangible and intangible. As for the tangible resources, it is understood as those which are

more easily perceived and capable of being counted in the management results, such as physical and human resources. Meanwhile, intangible resources are understood as those which are abstract and capable of being boosted such as technological, organization and relationship resources.

In agreement with Barney & Hesterly (2011), RBV is based on two principles: the heterogeneity of resources, that different companies may have different resources, even being competitors in a same sectors, and the immobility of the resources, just as the abilities, may have very expensive costs to be performed.

It is understood that the "resources" in RBS are more than the tangible assets of a company, since it is extended to "all the assets", with the competences, knowledge and the attributes that allow the strategies to be inserted aiming at their efficiency and effectiveness in the market. Therefore, the companies start to be known as a collection of resources, stated in the perspective of tangible or intangible resources (Barney, 1991; Wernerfelt, 1984).

Another point that should be analyzed is whether the resource is strategic or not, based on the premises of the perspective of the resources based view -RBV. Barney & Hesterly (2011) stated the model VRIO, abbreviation characterized by the initials of the words value, rarity, imitability and organization. Table 2 suggests resources categories defined from the proposals of Barney & Hesterly (2011).

Table 2
Resource categories

Categories	Definition
Physical Resources	Includes all the physical technology used in a company. This embraces the plant and the company's equipment, its geographic location and access to its raw material.
Financial Resources	Include all the money, from any given sources, which the companies use to create and implement strategies.

Organizational resources	Include the formal structure of a company, their formal and informal systems of planning, communication, control and coordination, its culture and reputation, as well as informal relations between the groups, within the company and between the company and those in its environment.
Human Resources	Include training, experience, discernment, intelligence, relationships and individual vision of managers and a company's employees.

Note. Source: Adapted from "Strategical management and competitive advantage" by J. B. Barney & W. Hesterly, 2011.

Previously to the vast spread of the VRIO model, other authors had already highlighted that different realities have become an essential resource (Barney,1991; 2007; Peteraf, 1993; Hoffmann *et al.*, 2016; Dalfovo *et al.*, 2017; Fuzinatto & Santos, 2020). Idea also defended by Prahalad & Hamel (1990), who declared the concept of essential competences in companies, mainly the fundamental characteristic of non-immutability. For Peteraf (1993), companies are different (heterogeneous) in terms of their resources and internal capacities, making them difficult and rare to imitate by other from the same sector.

Managers and business owners should discover such capacities and resources, examining, within the company, those who are rare, valuable and imperfect immutable to obtain (Kahn, Talib & Kowang, 2020). In the context of literature on RBV, the VRIO model was considered to evaluate the resources found in Airbnb ads, identifying whether such ads are explored by the companies and provide any type of competitive advantage to prospect international sales.

Sales Prospect

Marketing is a strategy that many organizations have been using to drawn clients, in the perspective of strengthening the relationship, aiming at knowing them and satisfying their respective wishes and needs, in addition to what is more important, which is to establish a relationship of trust and fidelity. However, within the growing advance of technology, a new marketing model has appeared, untitled digital marketing, which enables the

online interaction between the organization and the consumers (Cruz & Silva, 2014).

Perinotto & Siqueira (2018) corroborate when affirm that the search of such relationship increases, according to what society alters in its form to relate itself, leading the companies to direct their efforts to the digital environment, once the majority of the interactions between the companies and the clients occur, nowadays, due to the celerity to which the information is disseminated.

Likewise, Gomes & Reis (2016) highlight the advantages and disadvantages of Digital Marketing, also known as *e-Marketing*. It can be highlighted the advantages of the interaction, of the internet providing a direct communication with the public in general, deepening the relationship Company/Client, not having boundaries of reach and return in real time. On the other hand, as disadvantage, there is the time for the strategy to be conceived, regarding the adaptation of the tools to the context Social Media, activity which can be pretty time demanding and demanded dedication of the marketing professional.

However, it is perceived that the advantages are more meaningful than teh disadvantages, making the Digital Marketing an important strategy for the organizations to boost their popularity and, therefore, to have higher profit (Gouveia, 2021). To achieve such effectiveness, it is necessary to always answer the comments, the questions, compliments and, even the criticism which may appear during the process (Gomes & Reis, 2016).

In such sense, for para Cintra (2010), the digital world has brought many opportunities and benefits for the small, medium and big companies. However, the digital marketing needs to be well-elaborated, being necessary to align the purposes and golas, to plan one wants to get and to know hot the disclosure well one's product.

According to Peçanha (2017), the digital marketing is a group of activities that an organization has with the purpose of attracting new businesses, create relationships and developing an identity of an online

brand. Among their main strategies, are the Inbound Marketing and Content Marketing.

Content Marketing is the use of content with quality and in enough quantity so that the consumer will recognize, be enchanted and start a relation with the brand, organization or product (Torres, 2009). For Borba, Menezes & Souza (2016), content Marketing is a work of structuring of the brand, which demands planning, effort, and time, which means, such tool does not only brings new clients, but conceives the strengthening of a brand.

Just as highlighted by Perinotto & Siqueira (2018), an interesting strategy that companies may adopt the Content Marketing, creating content which attract consumers. Still, according to the authors, a success case is from the company *Airbnb,* which is known by involving marketing campaigns, with pleasant content and comments of people who already used the platform's service. Throughout all its content channels, *Airbnb* always lines up its most interesting hosts, whose strategy has drawn the attention of the public and is characterized as a well-successful content marketing campaign.

The Content Marketing is obtaining highlights in the contemporary world. The organizations left aside, in their strategies, only the selling of their product, thus, starting to observe the benefits of taking relevant information to their clients (Cremades, 2009). Clients go through several steps until making a decision of purchasing something, process called sales funnel, which is understood as the steps crossed by a potential client, which starts at the first contact with the company up to the moment of the sales conclusion (Gambin & Dandolini, 2019). The sales funnel, also known as *pipeline* is a process of marketing of attraction, focused on the consumer, to measure the efficiency of the client's journey towards the buying of a service. With the model of E. St. Elmo Lewis, the sales funnel is used by the companies to understand the opportunities with the clients, since it represents the entire cycle which the clients go through during the purchase process.

As highlighted by the authors Oliveira, Gois & Goldstein (2018), the sales funnel is a client's journey, being all the process around the creation of

consciousness about the service, the client's education about its solution, the judgment and the approval. Initially, the funnel embraces an extensive public, thus, in the following steps the number of people diminish, up to the final moment, when only remain the interested clients. Therefore, it is understood that the funnel of sales aims at attracting clients that are willing to really acquire the company's service.

According to Hassan *et al.* (2015), Townsend, in 1924, combined the AIDA model with the concept of funnel, resulting in the first concept of sales funnel. The image of the funnel serves to explain how the steps of the selling process evolve: there are many consumers (*prospects and leads*), at first, and according to the steps of the selling process evolving, some give up on the purchase, resulting in a much smaller number during closing time.

According to Hassan *et al*. (2015), the model of Lewis, known as AIDA, means *awareness*, *interest*, *desire* and *action*, as described in the following steps:

• Awareness – the client is aware of the existence of a service;

• Interest – expresses actively interest in a group of products;

• Desire – wants a certain brand or product;

• Action – effectuating the purchase of the chosen product.

According to Gambin & Dandolini (2019), it is perceived that the main steps of the funnel, which initiate with the prospection, go from the attraction of people to the analysis of the steps after the sales. They may be classified as the top, middle and bottom of the funnel.

The content of the top of the funnel should be broad, since the potential client is still in a discovery of the problem and the solution phase, in the context of the research, in the *Airbnb* platform, the consumer has the need to travel and to search for a solution for the hosting.

In the middle of the funnel, Rez (2016) analyzes that the purpose is to convert visitors in *leads,* creating materials rich in content, in this case, with photos, title and description of the ad with the purpose of searching for more information for the hosts, through messages.

For the bottom of the funnel, the content should help the *lead* to choose between the several available ads, analyzing not only the content produced by the host, but also the guest's depositions, since they have already used the service. In addition to the quality of the communication from the host, quick in answering and clearing the doubts. In the following step, the host will try to conquer the future client until the booking is made. (Rez, 2016).

In the sales funnel, the quality content marketing may be used during all the steps, leading the consumer until the end of the process, which means, until the purchase. According to Rez (2016), content *marketing* should be right, for the right person and at the right time. However, for this, the client needs to consume the content of the step of the sales funnel in which one is in. Therefore, during the steps of the funnel, it is important to deliver content of value so that the *leads* recognize the steps of purchasing the sales until the one of trying to sell, directly, the final product (Moura & Constantini, 2019).

METHOD

To achieve the general goal of this research, the qualitative perspective was adopted. The approach used was the case study, since it has as goal a profound understanding of what is studied and its meaning (Creswell, 2010). The intention was to obtain a comprehension about the organizational phenomenon regarding the contemporary and complex objects of study (Yin, 2010), such as the case of *Airbnb*.

The criteria used in this research was defined by being extreme or unique (Yin, 2010). As first criteria, in the studied case, was selected: (1) the importance to the economy of the region and (2) the commitment of the researchers to the academic development in the area of hospitality. And the second criteria was the representativeness of Porto de Galinhas as a national destination, since it is listed as among the ten most searched destinations by tourists, in Brazil (Mtur, 2019).

In the investigation, two phases were adopted for the data gathering: the analysis of data from the virtual environment and interviews. Initially, the *Airbnb* platform was analyzed, where millions of hosts and travelers may choose to create a free account so that they may announce their space and/or reserve unique accommodations all over the world.(*Airbnb*, 2019). *Airbnb's* virtual environment, in Porto de Galinhas, has around 186 ads of accommodations, however, to this research were only analyzed the 63 advertisements of the *superhosts* (experience, who are an excellent example to other hosts, and offer extraordinary experiences to their guests).

The data gathering was performed in two steps. The first was the analysis of the ads in order to identify the provided information by hosts regarding the accommodations, referring to physical resources, as well as the characteristics of the accommodation itself: physical structure and services (location, number of bedrooms, furniture, equipment and available kitchen facilities, among others).

Organizational resources were also analyzed, such as the quality of the service and the agility in the communication of the host in addition to the human resources retreated in the experience and the ability of the host to solve problems. These two last resources were verified through the classification generated by the own *Airbnb* and by the analysis of the comments of guests.

The second step was composed by a structured interview, which is a form of obtaining data through the direct contact between two individuals, interviewer and respondent, with the purpose that the former may extract for the latter important information to the study (Cooper & Schinler, 2003). The script of the interviews was elaborated by the authors (Apendix), forward to analysis and validation from three doctorate professors of Tourism. After the suggested corrections, invitations were sent to participate in the research to the *superhosts* guests, through a mailbox in the platform.

In total, the invitation was sent to thirty individuals, since many of them have more than one accommodation announced in the platform, however,

only ten answered. The interviews were held *on-line*, in an asynchronous way, and answered by the platform's chat, which communicates the hosts with the supposing guest.

The purpose was to obtain information from the hosts on their perception of which available resources may attract a foreign domain, mastering other languages, quantitative of international demand, quality of the available ads on the platform and perspectives of improvement in the accommodation and advertisements. Both steps were performed in the month of November, 2020.

The data gathered were analyzed according the technique of analysis of content from Bardin (2011), which is organized around three chronological points. The first is the pre-analysis, to summarize and operationalize all initial ideas, constructing a plan of analysis. The second point is the exploitation of the material, using the code to transform raw data into units, allowing a precise description of the characteristics of the content. And, at last, the treatment of the results, inference and the interpretation.

For the analysis of data, the VRIO model was used, from the variable of the physical, organizational and human resources. In the physical resources, the following categories were analyzed: constructions, services, location and internal decoration. In the organizations, were reputation, communication and, at last, in the human resources, attendance, hospitality and differentiated service. Therefore, after the analysis of those resources, they were listed in which had competitive advantage in face of other accommodations.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The virtual hosting platform - *Airbnb* – is a *startup,* considered tha bigger hotel company in the world (Revista Época Negócios, 2019), with over 6 million ads, in over 100 thousand cities, being Brasil in the 11th. Place in the ranking of countries that receive international tourists (Airbnb, 2019). With growing numbers of accommodations in the platform, the tourism destination

Porto de Galinhas is situated in the city of Ipojuca, 66 kilometers from the capital of Pernambuco. It is known for having natural pools, warm water and crystal sea. It receives over 1.2 million tourists, by year being 20% of those foreign. Tourism is the main economy activity and the region is highlighted by its importance in the economy, being the 3rd. higher gross income rate of the state (IBGE, 2017).

In the Airbnb platform, there are different types of accommodations which are categorized as: whole place (the guest has the complete real state at his/her disposal); whole room (individual room, sharing other spaces of the real state) and shared room (the room may be shared with other people). In the tourism destination of Porto de Galinhas, from the 63 ads belonging to the superhosts, only one is a shared room in a household. The resources were analyzed according to the described information and available photographs in the ads.

Analysis of the resources

According to Barney & Hesterly (2011), the resources may be divided into 4 categories: physical, financial, organizational and human. However, in this research, the financial resources were not analyzed, since it would be necessary to have access to the origin of the resources used for the investment of the accommodations and such data were not made available by the hosts.

Each category was subdivided, identifying the resources that were verified in the document research and that were analyzed, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3
Categorized resources

Category of the Identified Resources	
Physical Resources	Physical structure and Services
Organizational Resources	Reputation and Communication
Human Resources	Experience and ability of the hosts

Physical resources

The physical resources encompasses several elements such as equipment, constructions, location, internal decoration, which as constituent to the tangible resources (Santos *et al.*, 2015), in this case, to the accommodation. This way, it is possible to verify, in Table 4, as the main characteristics of such resources in the accommodation.

Table 4
Physical resources

Constructions		Services		Location	
Pool	52	Internet	63	By the sea	21
1 bedroom	20	Cable TV	18	**Internal Decoration**	-------
2 bedrooms	17	Extremely clean	14	Stylish space	7
3 bedrooms	12	----------------------------	---------	------------------------	-------

It is perceived that in all accommodations, there are kitchens, provided with stove, fridge, table, chairs and household items. And also, all have air conditioning in the bedrooms, in at least one of the bedrooms.

Regarding the constructions, it is observed that over 80% of the real state have pool for the guests leisure and the majority of the ads is from one bedroom accommodation. Regarding the location, 21 ads relate being located by the sea. Analyzing the internal decoration, 7 ads have, in their comments, as being among the three first expressions listed in the platform as stylish space, which characterizes a space with attractive decoration.

When referring to services, all offer internet and 18 the availability of cable TV. Cleanness is characterized as principal in 14 ads.

In face of the exposed and with observance, in Table 4, it can be inferred that the physical structure is very good in all ads, being as similar, at most to the accommodation of a family household, since it has all the characteristics of a house or an apartment and it is not similar to a hotel. Such justification is given by the proposal in offering an independence to guests perform shopping in local establishments and prepare their own meal, using the available leisure area and enjoying the commodities of the internet and other services. With this, the characteristic proposal of selling in the analyzed

company is attended, which aims at making the tourist feel comfortable as in one's home and having the feeling of belonging as a local citizen.

In fact, it can be perceived that, from the physical resources presented, only the location, with the main characteristic "by the sea" has a sustainable competitive advantage. Such by the sea real states are located in strategic places, since, according to Massuga *et al*. (2019), a privileged location is a valuable and rare resource, since few companies have the opportunities to be built in locations where more demand is attracted to.

Therefore, it is about a valuable resource, since many tourists want a privileged view to the sea, being this a strong point for the accommodation. It is rare, since it is not a common resource in all ads, it is hard to imitate, since to have a by the sea real state is very expensive and, in addition, the hosts explore such resources to draw the attention in the titles of their ads.

This, other resources have competitive parity in face of other accommodations, as observed in Table 5 below.

Table 5
VRIO model – Physical Resources

Physical Resources	Valuable?	Rare?	Hard to imitate?	Explored with Organization?	Competitive implication
Location	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	**VCS**
Services	Yes	No	No	Yes	PC
Constructions	Yes	No	No	Yes	PC
Decoration	Yes	No	No	Yes	PC

For Barney (2002), such characteristics of the resources allow the organization to identify whether their resources are a strength or a weakness, therefore, the location represents a strength that enables that accommodation to be competitive in face of other announced in *Airbnb*. For Pasini, Dias & Castanha (2020), location generates a competitive advantage to an enterprise, in face of its competitors, since it is considered a valuable, rare and hard to imitate resource.

Therefore, as portrayed by the research of Callan & Bowman (2000), it is highlighted that one of the attributes which is more important to guests who

choose the housing mean for the first time, is location. And this also corroborates with the study of Wilke & Diettrich (2020), which indicates the resource of location of the housing mean as an element which pleases the guests. Fact confirmed in the study of Pessatto, Lisboa & Ferreira (2018), which proves that the location is one of the factors that motivates the traveler to choose an accommodation in *Airbnb*.

Regarding services, it was verified an investment from hosts in order to offer comfort to the guest, such as in a great amount of ads classified as extremely clean and having wi-fi service. Such services are considered a valuable resource, mainly, the internet access, since individuals have their lives, each day more connected to social media. This way, they may take this into account, the availability of such service, when choosing the housing. This agrees with the study of Massuga *et al.* (2019), which states that many companies have already noticed that the internet access availability is a need, constituting as a not rare resource that allows only competitive parity.

Competitive parity also occurs with the type of real state offered, in the case, the constructions. Since there is a high range of real state with the same aspect referring to the number of rooms and decoration. The choice among them will depend on the interest of the trip by each tourist. The same way that a stylish decoration may be imitated by another host who has interest in decorating the accommodation.

Organizational Resources

Reputation is considered a competitive differential, since the initiative, commitment, flexibility, and security are parts of the critical elements of an organization's strategy (Mintzberg *et al.*, 2006). In *Airbnb*, one of the forms of verifying the host's reputation is through the ad's score. All ads receive an evaluation score that classifies the quality of the service, including the structure, location and hospitality. The score of the analyzed accommodations, in a scale from zero to five, vary from 4.5 to 5 points. In face of this, the possible guest is able to verify the advertiser's reputation, the

critics and compliments, all those available for reading.   For the host, the classification score is important and for interviewed D, is enough: "I don't have to improve at anything, since I have already 5 stars" (Interviewed D).

Consumers tend to give greater credibility to opinions of users of the service, since they consider them more trustworthy and authentic, when compared to the publicity made by the company itself (Balaji, Khong, & Chong, 2016), in this case by the own host. This way, companies related to housing means are, probably, the most affected by electronic word-to-mouth, becoming a constant preoccupation of companies to maintain a good online reputation (Cantallops & Salvi, 2014).

In all cases, the reputation was built once the daily booking was performed and from the comments of the guests. In face of this, it was noticed that the hosts who have an excellent reputation are called superhosts, by the website. In average, the superhosts from the city of Porto de Galinhas, have 40 comments with the users' evaluations and the Airbnb automatic classification, as a consequence of those comments.

Such analysis, for an excellent reputation, includes the registries of cleaning of the real state, precision of the information of the ad, careful check-in by the host and hospitality, exact location with the description in the ad, compatible price with what is being offered and its benefits, and the host's communication with the guest before and after the permanence. Among those, it can be quoted the cost-benefit as one fo the most quoted criteria by hosts and one of the decisive factor in the choice of the ad. Silva, Barbosa & Farias (2019) confirmed in their studies that the listed factors considered motivational to choose the platform are mostly related to the provided cost-benefit.

Hence, as also related by Interviewed A: "the ambiance, organization and the cost-benefit are the factors which most attract the people to be hosted in my apartment. The come, almost all the time, in family or in group of friends and it is more advantageous to share the costs" (Interviewed A).

Another important factor is communication, which refers to the ability of the host to communicate in other languages and to quickly attend the questioning sent by messages, in addition to being available, during the stay, to solve any unusual situation which might appear and needs one's help.. One of the main characteristics listed by guests which hosts should have is the quick answer to questioning performed in the mailbox of the platform. What was also stated, in the research of Gunter & Onder (2018), reinforcing that the search for housing, in Airbnb, is influenced by the capacity of answer by the host, among other aspects. Despite this, 13 hosts have as main characteristic the quick answer to questions sent by the platform, verifying, still, that this is not a predominant characteristic to quickly attend possible guests. Interviewed B highlights the importance of readiness of the answers:

> I am always available and careful to the messages from Airbnb. Since, when the person is interested in my ad asks a question, she or he must want a quick answer before making the payment and perhaps needs to clear some doubt at the moment (Interviewed E).

Another important factor in the communication is the language. Most interviewed hosts related to believe having more security for international tourists, when they expose, in their ad, being fluent in one or more foreign languages, since, even having the help of the automatic translator, available in the platform, the tourist has the feeling of security when staying in a place where it is easy to communicate with the host personally.

Regarding the foreign language, only 45 of the 63 hosts announced that speak some foreign language. Of these, 22, the English language, 16, Spanish and 7 of them say they speak 3 languages (among them, French and German languages). From the interviewed, 2 declared not being fluent in any foreign language.

This way, it is verified that a sum of the hosts have the foreign language as a possible obstacle which can make the booking of a foreign tourist more difficult, since, most of the times, there is direct contact from the owner with the guest in the moment of the check-in. And, in such case, problems in the

communication may be a withdrawal factor by part of the international guest.

Nonetheless, Interviewed F does not seem worried by saying that "I don't have to speak the guest's language to be able to communicate with him/her, I believe that no foreign interested has left staying in my house because of that" (Interviewed F).

To have knowledge of another language is an essential characteristic to the host, since, as described by Moraes & Oliveira (2019), the branch of tourism has received, frequently, international tourists, who need fluency in foreign languages, in order to facilitate the communication among them and the ones providing their attendance.

Another factor that influences the decision of the consumer in performing the purchase is the ability of managing the answers to negative online comments, which may appear in the comments, in order to improve and maintain a good reputation. According to Gondim & Araújo (2020), the sector of housing depends on the management of the reputation in the virtual environment, since the enterprises have as main source of income the online sells.

In the case of the listed ads, it was verified that few problems were related in the comments and that, in all of them, the hosts answered alleging having solved the issue and apologizing for the inconvenience. What is proven by Liu, Schuckert & Law (2015), stating that such management of answers by the hosts may influence the future online evaluations and its reputation before potential consumers.

Cruz & Freitas (2021) also corroborate that the characteristics, behavior of hosts, pleasant or not situations, at the moment of hosting, are frequently disclosed by the guests in easy to access comments to everyone, establishing trust and contributing for the decision making process of an individual who has not established contact with the host yet.

In face of the exposed, it can be observed that both the reputation and the communication have competitive advantage, however, it is

temporary since its competitors may, throughout the time, improve their performance with management of the difficulties related to the reputation and the learning of a new language, imitating, therefore, such resources, according to what is observed, the classification of the organizational resources in Table 6.

Table 6
VRIO Model – Organizational Resources

Organizational Resources	Valuable?	Rare?	Difficult to imitate?	Explored with Organization?	Competitive Implication
Reputation	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	VCT
Communication	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	VCT

Table 6 corroborates with the studies of Martin (2016), defending that the online reputation and the communication establish trust in the Airbnb transactions. On the other hand, for Freitas, Fregadolli & Freitas (2020), the reputation and the information are key elements for the realization of the booking by the guests on *Airbnb*. The good online reputation, in such platform, generates trust in the guest and, therefore, grows the possibility of having a well-succeeded booking. All such finding confirm the sustainable competitive advantage of such strategic resources.

Human Resources

Among the three main items listed by the platforms, according to the comments, 17 hosts are highlighted with their main characteristic of having an excellent hospitality. For Barney (1991), such characteristics are part of the human resources, since they present elements such as abilities of the managers and by those part of the organization, experience and knowledge, being a source of competitive advantage. With such resources, it is possible to manage and combine other available resources, creating and managing the organization to use them in the best way possible and increase the sells.

In the comments, examples of hospitality are quoted, since treats as snacks at the arrival, quick attendance to the messages and willing to help during the stay. In face of this, the vision of the host is highlight, since it is generally the host who manages the real state and keeps contact with the guests. According to the interviewed, to keep a differentiated attendance generates higher satisfaction for the tourist, which leads to a sustainable competitive advantage. As it can be observed, in the relate of Interviewed I, when asked about what he thinks that leads the tourist to perform a booking in his accommodation.

> For sure, it is my relationship with them, I talk a lot, in addition to solving doubts, give hints of the region, talk about different locations that may know. Even if they do not stay in my apartment, I talk about everything in the region and end up creating a bond, even without knowing each other (Interviewed I).

Fact confirmed by Tucci & Costa (2020), who state that the *Airbnb* have a better attendance, when compared to other hosting of the traditional economy, since the guest asks a question and clear the doubt directly with the owner or with the real state responsible. Therefore, the hosts keep a differentiated attendance.

Also proven by King (1995), who confirm that the practice of hospitality may be a source of competitive advantage and a differential among their competitors, once the purpose is to improve the satisfaction of the guest. In fact, the resource is valuable, having a proximity between the client and the guest, is rare, in face of the fact of few accommodations present such quality; it is difficult to imitate since it is an intangible resource and the organization explores such resource, making its use the best way possible. Table 7 presents the characterization of the VRIO for human resources.

Table 7
VRIO Model – Human Resources

Human Resources	Valuable?	Rare?	Hard to imitate?	Explored with Organization?	Competitive implication
Hospitality and differentiated attendance	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	SCA

Other results, also, corroborate with those findings, such as the case of the study of Dalfovo *et al.* (2017), performed in franchises of several segments, stating that the human resource was 66% more important to reach the sustainable competitive advantage (SCA), with predominance in the quality of the service. The research of Alves, Silva & Salazar (2017) revealed that the human resources generate SCA in country tourism hotels, since they search for the quality of attendance and hospitality.

In addition to the studies, Collins (2020), who affirm that human resources are valuable and will always lead to higher performance and to competitive advantage of the organization. In face of this, even if the company has the valuable, rare and difficult to imitate resource, it is necessary to be precisely organized, in order to enjoy, explore and boost those resources to the fullest, generating competitive advantage   (Barney, 1991).

Analysis of the Prospection of Sales

In marketing, what first draws the attention of a future buyer is the title of the ad. In the analysis, 21 ads have in their titles the expressions "by the sea" or "feet on the sand" and the same amount exposes the name of the condo in which they are situated. The ads also involve the photos available and all of them have photos of the external and internal areas of the accommodations. In great part, it was possible to observe that the photos are professional, which is highlighted as differential in the ad.

This way, it is perceived that future buyers were attracted by the content marketing, used in the landing page of the destination, composed by photos, in its great majority, taken by professional photographers, whose marketing strategy is the location to attract the tourist to the inbound funnel, as pointed below by Interviewed D: "the guests have great interest in may apartment, since the condo is located by the sea, the photos that I put were from the pool and from the view of the sea. I believe that this draws a lot of attention to foreign tourists" (Interviewed D).

The researches by Kwok, Tang & Yu (2020) confirmed that the majority of the descriptions and attached photos to the Airbnb ads, reflect, in fact, what tourists have seen or have experienced personally. This way, the photos of the *superhosts* which portrait the view to the sea, attract more tourists and help in the decision-making process of the booking of the accommodation.

Unlike the products of traditional hotels, in which the evaluations of the brands are perceived as important information clues to the quality of the products, tourists who look for Airbnb trust the attributes of the accommodations showed in the ads, such as photos and descriptions for a purchase decision (Abrate & Viglia, 2017).

Another factor related to the content of the ad, in addition to the photos, is the description. They believe that the detailing of the description of household items, mainly, those in the kitchen, general equipment, services such as internet, having pool, in addition to other details that may generate commodities for the visitor, are a great attraction to increase the interest for a possible reservation, transforming the individual from only curious to become a lead, in a way that one begins searching fro more information or clearing some doubts, by the channel of direct contact with the host. As verified in the speech of Interviewed A.

> Many search for Airbnb since they come with family and kids and want to feel at home. And this requires more attention with the meals. Therefore, I think it is a differential, to have a full kitchen with household items used in everyday life, for the commodity of who is staying there (Interviewed A).

Such statement is confirmed by the findings of Cruz & Freitas (2021) who related that tourists, regularly, declared having a feeling that shows the feeling of being at home. As if having those domestic equipment help awaken the feeling of proximity to home, familiarity and welcome at the moment of the stay.

From the interviews, it was analyzed that all participating hosts related receiving constant messages from foreign tourists interested in the accommodations. Regarding the description of the content, and the fluency of another language, the opinion of the interviewed, who announced having

domain of at least one foreign language, was what influenced the decision of the tourists, attracting them to the sales funnel up to the booking moment. However, the ones who did not announce in their ad if they had fluency of another language, believe the fact that the host either having or not having fluency of another language does not influence in the prospection of sales. Interviewed B related the experience by stating "with 5-star comments, well-descriptive ad and photos, with the translator, I do not see the need of communicating with them in another language" (Interviewed B).

It is inferred that such experience of the host is due to the fact that, according to the interviewed, the Argentinean tourists were the ones who most bought daily packages, all of them have received at least on Argentinean in their accommodation. As follows, according to the interviewed hosts, comes the Uruguayan, the German, the Chilean, the Portuguese and the Spanish. Other quoted nationalities were The Czech Republic, England, France, Russia, Australia, United States and Norway.

The hosts related not having any type of difficulties during the check-in, neither during the stay of the visitors, even the ones with no domain of another language. It is observed that the predominance of tourists coming from South America, which may be due to economy reasons, location or by phonetics/phonological proximity of the languages Portuguese and Spanish. It is observed that, considering the majority of tourists received in the accommodations spoke Spanish, such factor may could have eased the communication due to the proximity in the understanding of the language.

When questioned on what could be improved in the ad, as content marketing strategy to attract such international public, 60% of the respondents stated that they do not know what to do.

On the other hand, Interviewed A stated "There is nothing to improve, I already have good evaluations" (Interviewed A). On the contrary, Interviewed C showed "being always updating the ads with new photo and information" (Interviewed C).

In the same way, Interviewed H also intends to perform improvements "I have the desire of customizing the decoration or implementing something in the accommodation, according to the culture of each guest, so that the guest feels at home, posting such differential in the ad" (Interviewed H).

Despite the effort showed by some of the hosts, it is noticed that the ads are created for the public in general, since they are limited to reach the domestic demand. It is verified that there is no training by the Airbnb regarding content marketing. Therefore, it becomes difficult for the host's possibilities to attract more foreign demand and to direct the ads to prospect international sales. There are, only, paid courses which offer qualification for hosts in the area of marketing, sales management, experience, among others.

In addition, the great majority of the respondents stated not making registry of their reservation, not having precision of the amount of reservations booked by international tourists, neither the profile of those tourists. This makes a more robust analysis and a directing of the marketing actions more difficult, since, according to Arcanjo *et al.* (2020), the success of the marketing of content demands a broad knowledge of the needs of the target-public.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

When analyzing the ads of the superhosts in Airbnb, Porto de Galinhas, it can be perceived that the physical resources in the offered accommodations generate only competitive parity, with the exception of the location. However, such location – by the sea – does not seem to be properly explored by the advertisers, since they only insert photos of the sea. It is suggested to use photos highlighting the view of the sea, from a balcony and/or from the rooms, and even a registry from a romantic or leisure moment, in the accommodation and, as a background, the landscape of the beach, which means, to focus the sales on the experiences which can be lived in the place.

Another aspect is that the organization resources may bring security to those who wish to book a reservation or may also lead to the withdrawal of the reservation. This shows that the host should be very careful, not only with the messages that arrive through the platform, and that a delay in the answer or lack of an answer may generate negative comments, but also in the management of those comments.

With this, to show interest in the negative criticism and to answer the complaint with the solution of the problem, brings a positive impression of responsibility and preoccupation of the host with the guests. In addition to the differential of human resources, committed with the hospitality and attendance, showing, therefore, a competitive advantage, to which influences the prospection of sales.

It is possible to verify the lack of orientation and prepare of advertisers to create and innovate their ads and, even the management of the registries of booking, provoking a business disorganization, since it is impossible to obtain complete data, without the number of daily bookings performed by period and the visitor's origin.

In addition to many of them having difficulties in being fluent in another language. With the training of basis resources of management, marketing, languages and management of conflicts for the hosts, many of those issues could be solved, being a business organizational character for advertisers and, consequently, increase in reservations.

In face of this, it is visible the necessity of establishing new strategies, in addition to the ones already quoted, which are attached to the cultural or regional personalization of guests, once the proposal of Airbnb is that the guest feels at home and have the feeling of belonging to the local community. Therefore, from this, to develop a more elaborated strategy of content marketing and, with those strategies, to prospect the sales for international tourists.

This research has contributed to a higher growth of knowledge from the VRIO model regarding the competitive advantage in the hospitality scope

and prospection of sale, from the ads of hosting disclosure. This way, it collaborates for the discussions in theory and in practice of the strategic management branch and hotel marketing.

In order to obtain a deeper study, it is suggested to investigate such phenomenon in the perspective of international tourist, who achieve the sale, to verify in fact, the attributes and essential resources for the decision-making process. In addition, the application of the analysis of the view based on resources and on the prospection of sales is indicated in destinations that have a different context rather than sun and beach. This proposal has the purpose of verifying which strategies may prospect sales for international tourists in Brazil and, consequently, improve booking of the accommodations.

As in every scientific research, some limitations were found and need to be quoted, however, they do not compromise the reach of the purposes of the study. The interviews with the superhosts were made remotely, not allowing a direct contact to obtain more information and the raise of the physical resources, as well as the characteristics of the accommodations were performed virtually.

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Appendix

Script of the Interviews

Dear participant, this interview is related to a research for the post-graduation course in Housing and Tourism from UFPE on the sales strategies of Airbnb accommodations in Porto for foreign tourists.

All raised information will be only used for academic purposes and will be kept private. From now, we already thank you for your participation!

1- Do you receive contact, by message, from foreign tourists interested in the accommodation?

2- Do you generally answer the messages in the tourist's language?

3- Are you fluent in any other language? Which?

4- In your ad, do you describe the languages you speak?

5- Do you use translation apps to answer the messages?

6- Were you able to achieve a reservation with a foreign tourist yet?

7- Which are the countries of origin from those tourists?

8- Do you face any difficulty in having contact with the foreign tourist through the platform?

9- In case you have received any tourist, what do you think led the tourist to choose your accommodation?

10- What do you think could be improved in your ad to attract such public

11- For how long have you had ads in Airbnb?

12- How many bookings have you received? (in case you do not want, you do not need to answer).

13- How many reservations have you received from foreign tourists?

CONTRIBUTION FROM THE AUTHORS

Karen Daniele Lira de França: definition of the problem of the research and purposes; development of the theoretical proposition; performing of the bibliographic review and theoretical foundation; choice of methodological procedures; data gathering; data analysis.

Amanda Viviani Vogas: development of the theoretical proposal; performing of the bibliographic review and theoretical foundation.

Anderson Gomes de Souza: choice of the methodological procedures, elaboration of tables, graphs and figures; writing of the manuscript; fitting the manuscript to the guidelines of Marketing & Tourism Review.

Viviane Santos Salazar: choice of the methodological procedures; analysis of data; elaboration of tables, graphs and figures; critical review of the manuscript; writing of the manuscript.