

The paradoxes between the perception and behavior of managers of traditional hosting in Diamantina/MG in relation to Airbnb

Os paradoxos entre a percepção e o comportamento dos gestores dos meios de hospedagem tradicionais de Diamantina/MG em relação ao Airbnb



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RESUMO

A atividade turística global tem se modificado em decorrência dos avanços das Tecnologias da Informação e Comunicação (TICs) e dos novos modelos de negócios baseados na economia colaborativa. Seguindo essas tendências, o Airbnb surgiu e logo impactou drasticamente o mercado hoteleiro tradicional, com uma oferta mais adequada ao novo perfil do viajante, agora mais bem informado, independente e, cada vez mais, em busca por experiências exclusivas. Os gestores hoteleiros estão sendo obrigados a repensar suas estratégias para manterem seus negócios competitivos no mercado. Diante disso, o presente trabalho teve por objetivo analisar a percepção e o comportamento dos gestores dos meios de hospedagem tradicionais de Diamantina, Minas Gerais, em relação ao Airbnb. A metodologia utilizada pautou-se em uma pesquisa de natureza exploratória e descritiva. Os dados foram obtidos através de entrevistas com os gestores utilizando um roteiro semiestruturado e da análise dos anúncios de hospedagem em Diamantina disponível na plataforma do Airbnb. Os dados foram organizados em uma planilha do Microsoft Excel e, em seguida, submetido a uma análise descritiva simples. Os resultados demonstram que a

capacidade de acomodação dos empreendimentos hoteleiros tradicionais de Diamantina ainda é bastante superior em relação à oferta disponível na plataforma do Airbnb. Quanto a percepção dos gestores, constatou-se que a maioria acredita que o Airbnb afetou de algum modo a rede hoteleira local. Entretanto, os gestores mantêm-se apáticos em relação a isso. As poucas medidas mitigatórias adotadas restringiram-se na redução das tarifas das diárias e no oferecimento de descontos. Entende-se, então, que os gestores optaram por competir com o Airbnb alterando o preço da sua oferta, ao invés de buscar aumentar o valor percebido de seus serviços. Essa constatação serve de alerta, pois demonstra que os gestores ainda não perceberam ou não acreditam no potencial do Airbnb e nas mudanças causadas pelas TICs no mercado turístico, sobretudo no comportamento do viajante.

Palavras-chave: Turismo, Airbnb, Tecnologias da Informação e Comunicação, Economia colaborativa.

ABSTRACT

Global tourism activity has changed as a result of advances in Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and new business models based on collaborative economy. Following these trends, Airbnb emerged and soon drastically impacted the traditional hotel market, offering products better suited to the new profile of traveler, now better informed, independent and, increasingly, looking for exclusive experiences. Hotel managers are being forced to rethink their strategies to keep their businesses competitive in the market. Therefore, this study analyzes the perception and behavior of managers of traditional hosting in Diamantina, Minas Gerais, in relation to Airbnb. The methodology used is based on exploratory and descriptive research. Data were obtained through interviews with managers using a semi-structured script and analysis of accommodation advertisements in Diamantina available on the Airbnb platform. Data were organized in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet and then submitted to a simple descriptive analysis. The results show that the accommodation capacity of traditional hotel developments in Diamantina is still much higher than the offer available on the Airbnb platform. As for



the perception of managers, it was found that most believe that Airbnb somehow affected the local hotel chain. However, managers remain apathetic about that. The few mitigating measures adopted were restricted to reducing daily rates and offering discounts. It is understood, then, that managers chose to compete with Airbnb through price reduction, instead of seeking to increase the perceived value of their services. This finding serves as a warning, as it demonstrates that managers have not yet realized or do not believe in the potential of Airbnb and, mainly, in the effects of changes caused by ICTs in the tourist market and in traveler behavior.

Keywords: Tourism, Airbnb, Information and Communication Technologies, Collaborative economy.

INTRODUCTION

The world of business and society in general has been going through major changes due to the intense use of the internet and the evolution of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) (Buhalis, 2003). Kotler, Kartajaya & Setiawan (2017, p. 20) state that “today we live in a completely new world. The internet, which brought connectivity and transparent to our lives, has been the great responsible in part for such transformations”.

The advance registered in the ICTs has conducted to a major impact in the functioning, structure and strategy of the organizations all over the world, including those that are part of the tourism sector (Buhalis, 2003). The advent of the new ICTs has generated a series of changes in the dynamic and structure of production and tourism consumption at global level, becoming, each day more the decisive factor for the organizations' and tourism destinations competitiveness (Aluri, Slevitch, & Larzelere, 2015).

The tourism experiences based on ICTs allow the creation of value in all states of the trip, which means, whether before, during and after (Sigala, 2018). Therefore, the dominant trend in tourism are the different forms of *e-business*



(both *Business-to-consumer*, B2C, as well as *Business-to-business*, B2B) characterized by a growing personalization, interactivity, concentration of services and simplification of its use (Buhalis & Law, 2008).

Alert to the changes in the tourism market and to the potential that the ICTs offer, many companies have appeared in the last decades with proposals of new business models based on shared economy. Shared economy in tourism presents several possibilities to meet the needs of people for more authentic and unusual experiences and, at the same time, shared with other people (Dredge & Gyimóthy, 2015).

Shared economy has become a business strategy that goes against the standard hyper-consumption induced by traditional economies (Silveira, Petrini, & Santos, 2016). Business based on shared economy, generally, involve interactions among strangers and transcend a geographically defined community. The exchange is usually monetized and systematized in a shared business model and eased by the use of ICTs (Gössling & Hall, 2019).

Several digital platforms seen as shared already act on several segments of the tourism market, such as food, transportation and entertainment. However, the impact of shared economy on tourism is highly perceived, mainly, in the hosting service due to AirBnB.

Airbnb may be considered the main example of business model that unites the use of ICTs with the principles of shared economy (Chattopadhyay & Mitra, 2020). Is t is about a digital search platform and booking of housing that favors the contact and experience between guests and hosts, however outside the conventional pattern that occurs between the traditional business enterprises and their guests.

Since its beginning in 2007, up to March 2021, Airbnb had 5.6 million active advertisements of housing, 4 million hosts and had already generated over 150 billion dollars in profits for hosts. In terms of geographic distribution, in



September 2021, Airbnb had active advertisements in 100 thousand cities and was present in over 220 countries (Airbnb, s.d.-a).

In several countries, businessmen of the traditional hotel sector tried to restrain the growth of Airbnb questioning in Justice the lack of regulation, such as the nonexistence of tax collection in the way that their business are submitted. The most recurrent argument used by businessman is that the competition with is unfair and results in considerable loss in market participation of the traditional hotel enterprises, jeopardizing an important product for the Gross National Product of several countries and that generates thousands of formal jobs in the tourism destinations (Soares, Dias, & Filho, 2017).

In fact, the lack of regulation is one of the main bottlenecks of Airbnb, since it may affect the unordered growth of this informal sector of hosting, jeopardizing not only the businessmen of the traditional hotel market, but also the public sector that does not collect taxes and the own locals with the abusive rent of real state (Martins, 2017).

On the other hand the current moment is not to search the market's exclusivity anymore. Practically all consumers are connected and the competition of companies is no longer determined by their size, or their traditional advantage. The physical restrictions are no longer existing due to the option of online ticket in the market . This generates growth opportunities, but also represents significant competitive threats. In this sense, the companies should be worried in readequating their marketing strategies to satisfy the connected consumers (Kotler et al., 2017).

Brazil's is Airbnb biggest market in Latin America and the fourth around the world. Currently, practically every Brazilian tourist destination has offers of housing announced in the Airbnb platform (Perinotto, Simões, Sousa, & Braga, 2020).

This is the case of Diamantina, in Minas Gerais, one of the Brazilian cities recognized by the United Nation of Education, Science and Culture



Organization (UNESCO) as Cultural Inheritance of Humanity. Throughout 2019, during the informal monitoring of the Airbnb performed by the City Secretary of Culture, Tourism and Inheritance (SECTUR) of Diamantina, it was verified a constant increase in the number of housing advertisements in the city. In mid 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic peak, the number of ads did not raise as already expected. However, surprisingly, there has not been a relevant fall, maintaining the number of ads practically stable. This has shown the strength and potential of this new player in the tourism market of Diamantina.

In this sense, it is important to highlight that a significant part of the traditional hosting means in Diamantina are family enterprises, in most times, managed by the family members itself, regardless of their professional qualification. In face of this, this study had the purpose of analyzing the perception of these managers on the impacts provoked by Airbnb and the measurements that were adopted to avoid or mitigate such impacts.

The results obtained allowed to determine the existing paradoxes between the perception and the behavior of managers from the tradition housing means in Diamantina regarding Airbnb.

THEORETICAL FOUNDING

The impacts of the evolution of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in the behavior of the tourist

Throughout the years, the more disruptive changes in the tourism scope have been through the years have been provoked due to the advances in Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and in the *internet* (Buhalis, 2003). ICTs have provided a better communication, breaking barriers and expanding the flow of information to a higher number of people. This has caused profound changes in the decision making process of the new tourist, who searches for products and services using the new digital platforms (Aluri et al., 2015).



The ICTs have provoked changes in all areas of tourism, mainly in the way to plan and organized trips (Aluri et al., 2015). The tourism market has been modifying itself with the advent of ICTs, resulting in an increase in the offer of products and personalized services, shortening the distance between the travelers and their destination places, easing the communication and boosting the tourism informal market (Bilgihan, Barreda, Okumus, & Nusair, 2016).

The most important is to realize that each tourist is different and carries a unique combination of experiences, motivations and desires. Therefore, the ICTs are used to customize products and tourism services, since they allow that the agents of the sector locate relative important market clusters in different geographic locations (Sigala, 2018). the key for success is in the rapid identification of the customers' needs and to reach in potential clients with complete products and services, personalized and updated (Buhalis & Law, 2008).

One way to approach connected travelers is by observing the digital activities that they may perform regarding their trips, for example. To consult and to obtain the necessary information to plan their trips, which includes price comparison; To manage hired tourism services, such as hotel booking, airline tickets and leisure activities; To perform other related activities with the *in loco* needs, for example, to look for a restaurant, or other specific services when one is already at the destination; To make available tips and recommendations to other people after the trip has ended (Buhalis & Law, 2008)

This means that the *internet* and the evolution of ICTs have launched the figure of the "new tourist". The technology innovations and their improvements have been, in fact, completely transforming the tourism market since the way the offer is placed and the consumption of its products and services. The travelers now have a higher volume of information and search for differentiated values to invest their time and their money (Aluri et al., 2015).



Virtual communities, specifically, have become extremely influential in tourism once the consumers show higher trust in their peers than in the companies' marketing messages (Buhalis & Law, 2008). Nowadays, social media such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Pinest, Vine, Snapchat and Google+ have been generating collective consciousness and have become one of the main sources used by tourists to obtain the information used in the decision-making process and acquisition of products and services associated to traveling (Sigala, 2018).

As seen, the evolution of ICTs is causing several changes in the tourism market, mainly in the tourist's behavior. The new technologies enable the access to information and to certain goods and personalized services that, in most cases, end up being planned and acquired through digital platforms on the internet. On the other hand, despite the technology allow the customization of service, it is important to guarantee that the automation does not lead to a disconnection between the online and presential exchanges. One of the pointed solutions to such issue is in the propagation of the shared economy.

Innovation in tourism based on shared economy

The rise of shared economy, also known as shared consumption and peer-to-peer economy has been fed by a number of social, economy and technological factors (Zervas, Proserpio, & Byer, 2017). Shared economy refers to a "group of consumption behavior, in which the access is more important than the property of something" (Souza, Kastenholz, & Barbosa, 2016, p. 60).

In the 90's decade, the shared economy emerged with the creation of new business models based on sharing and exchanging goods and services among unknown people. On the other hand, in the early 19th century, an approximation of shared economy with ICTs transformed the business world (Maior-Cabanne, Luft, & Abreu, 2020). Internet and the new technologies have



created more trust among unknown people, who establish connections and a relationship of offer and consumption. This has allowed the propagation of shared economy, which brought within innovating businesses (Vera, 2018).

Shared economy is associated to the advance of technology, the modifications in the consumer's behavior and, even still, the climate changes and the scarcity of natural resources (Zervas et al., 2017). Shared economy is born from an economy system based on technology, where there has been changes in the scenery of negotiations due to the arrival of the internet. Changes as those that promote the sharing of goods and services and even money at never seen before speed (Maior-Cabanne et al., 2020)

The sharing of goods and services already occurs for some time, however, in a more restrict circle of people. The shared economy was able to expand itself in the last years due to the development of technological tools and of the internet which allow the interaction of people who meet in distant locations (Schor, 2015).

The current digital platforms have as core the sharing among unknown people and who do not have bonds of friendship among each other. Thus, the shared economy may be understood as exchanging activities, where the temporary access of underused physical assets are set, such as automobiles and houses that are presented as idle. Shared economy, in addition to being a tendency each day more used by people, in the last years, has been changing the way of consumption focused on practicality. (Vera, 2018).

The shared economy, however, has opened ruptures in several sectors in social life and economy and it has become a business strategy that counteract the hyper-consumption motivated by the traditional economies (Botsman & Rogers, 2010). Among the main attractions of shared economy are the prices which are, generally, lower than the ones by the traditional service providers, the flexibility in the negotiation, the contract via the internet directly with either



the responsible or owner and the speed for the conclusion of the transactions (Schor, 2015).

One of the most affected sectors by such transformations is precisely the tourism, in which the shared economy presents a constant growth. It is observed that several areas of the traditional tourism economy received the entry of organizations, or offers linked to the shared economy, among them, the housing means, food and drinks, transportation among them. In such segment, where it is common the presence of bed&breakfasts, hotels, travel agencies, shared tourism has reached users, which means, common people interested in sharing the use of their goods with tourists (households, cars, among others) and also there is the sharing of moments such as meals and tours (Dredge & Gymóthy, 2015).

Nowadays, any traveler has free access to several digital platforms, which offer services influenced by the shared economy, such as urban mobility apps (For example, Uber, 99, Buser, among others); apps which connects people offering services of pet sitter (Example: DogHero); apps that reunite the offer of local hosts willing to share gastronomic experiences and traditional cooking classes (Example: Eatwith); and apps which allow locals willing to present the travelers exclusive aspects of their local culture (Examples: Ren-A-Guide and ShowAround).

Such new tourism dynamic is the reflex of the transformation in the people's way of life and in the business environment around the world. In this sense, it is important to deepen the discussion on Airbnb, one of the main housing companies currently in the world and that does not have a single hotel enterprise.

Airbnb: the acceptance of an informal sector of housing

The Airbnb platform had its beginning with the idea of two friends, Brian Chesky and Joe Gebbia, in 2007, in San Francisco, in the United States. The



organization of a conference in the city left the hotel offer scarce in the city. In face of this, Brian and Joe had the idea of offering a housing service to the participants of this event, using an empty space they had in the house. It was offered only an air mattress to sleep and a simple breakfast. After the event, they saw that the idea had worked out and decided to improve the services. In this moment, the programmer Nathan Blecharczyk joined Brian and Joe and created the website Air bed & Breakfast. In March 2009, the name Air bed & Breakfast was altered to Airbnb and, in addition to rooms, the website started offering apartments, entire houses and locations by season. Since then, the Airbnb platform has already registered over a billion of arrivals of guests (Airbnb, s.d.-a).

Many studies have already approached the Airbnb thematic. Matos, Barbosa & Matos (2016), for example, investigated the Airbnb in the context of technological evolution that nowadays has been provoking changes in the interest of people for consumption and service offers. The authors highlighted the appearance of the "shared consumption" which encompasses the private, social and public sector.

Vera & Gosling (2019) investigated the motivations that lead people to adopt practices of shared consumption through Airbnb and concluded that involve the economy of costs, the expectation of constructing social bonds, the expectations of shared cultural experiences and the possibility to help. Corroborating with such result, Alves, Brandão & Valdevino (2018) state that this is different from traditional consumption since it does not aim at only profit, but also the creation of a value net.

Matos (2018) analyzed the impacts of Airbnb in Porto, Portugal, concluding that the platform is a threat for the traditional hotel system, since it can be considered a direct competitor. However, other studies indicate that the Airbnb platform may not be considered a direct competitor, based only in what happens in Austin, United States. The impact of Airbnb in Austin is not



uniform, being the hotels with the lower prices the most affected ones (Martins, 2017). In Toronto, Canada, the growth of Airbnb has a meaningful negative impact on middle-class hotels and a statistically insignificant impact on the luxury market (Chattopadhyay & Mitra, 2020).

In some cases, the impacts identified by the Airbnb towards the other housing means go beyond accommodations. The fact that the tourist chooses to rent an extra-hotel space, being capable of even cooking, impacts not only the traditional hotel market, but also the establishments that offer food and drink service, for example (Soares et al., 2017).

The several possibilities and facilities enabled by the Airbnb platform provoked a rapid growth of the company and the consolidation in the hosting market in Brazil and in the world (Martins, 2017). The high degree of satisfaction of users from the platform is a differential factor, which puts the traditional hotel market on the spot, mainly those enterprises that are not adapted to the new profile of the connected traveler and to the new tools from ICTs (Santos, Martins, Violin, & Moraña (2017).

In addition, the system of self-regulation and control of the Airbnb platform works efficiently, through the exchange of evaluations between hosts and guests (Cruz & Freitas, 2021). This is positive, once it inhibits bad experiences, since there is a history of evaluations in the profile of each one of the users in the platform. This way, this promotes strengthening in the trust relation. (Santos et al., 2017).

However, the Airbnb expansion in Brazil has generated several discussions regarding its regulation, since there is no specific regulation that deal with the business model of the platform, such as business license, firefighter's license, among other necessary measurements in the traditional hosting means. According to the businessmen of the sector, this makes the competition in the market unfair (Brasileiro & Lima, 2017).



Brasileiro & Lima (2017) identified impacts from the Airbnb's growth in the traditional hotels and living housing means. A point of discussion brought by the authors is regarding the Brazilian law system, which acts on the protection of living means. There is lack of regulation that may implicate in the unorganized growth in real state rent through Airbnb. On the other hand, the authors point out that the application of old regulations will not resolve such issue as well.

Anyway, all changes in the behavior of travelers coming from the internet and from the ICTs will certainly not back out, on the contrary, the tendency is that each day more the tourism products will be under planning, management and execution through the digital platforms (Buhalis & Law, 2008). The shared economy also puts itself as one of the main tendencies in the tourism sector, once the connected travelers are willing for exclusive experiences (Vera & Gosling, 2019).

In this case, the Airbnb platform is highlighted, since it offers different options of housing, numerous facilities and still the possibility of interaction from the guest with the host, promoting affective bonds and exchanges that are not common in tradition hotel enterprises (Alves et al., 2018)

In face of such statements, it becomes very intriguing to understand the actual influence of Airbnb in the tourism market of Diamantina, in addition to the perception and the behavior of managers from traditional housing means of such location regarding such tendencies.

METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES

The present study is characterized as a research of exploratory and descriptive nature, with a quali-quantitative approach. The investigation started with the bibliographic research through the reading of books, scientific articles and academic studies. Such step was important to deepen the



knowledge on the investigated themes and, at last, to help in the interpretation and discussion of the results.

To reach the purposes of such study it was necessary to perform, firstly, a characterization of the housing offer of Diamantina, considering the means of traditional hosting and the available accommodation in the Airbnb platform. For this, a raise in all housing advertisements in Diamantina present in the Airbnb website was performed. The raise was performed in the period from June 24 to June 30, 2021. The research considered only the ads located in the urban perimeter of Diamantina. The focus of analysis of each ad was to raise data referring to the type of housing, the number of available rooms, the number of beds and the individual rate value.

In addition to the Airbnb website, the site AirDNA was also consulted, which provided a group of data on the performance of the Airbnb advertisements in thousands of cities all over the world, including Diamantina. The available data provided by AirDNA also serve to better comprehend the evolution of Airbnb in Diamantina, the average rate value, the average rate of occupation, the average billing, as well as the most well evaluated items by the guests.

Regarding Diamantina's traditional housing means, the raise started from a list available by the City's Secretary of Culture, Tourism and Heritage of Diamantina. However, it was detected on the list that there were housing means that no longer existed in the city and others were opened in more recent times and those, were not on the list. Therefore, it was necessary to make an update of the list to be certain of the exact number of existing housing means currently present in Diamantina.

Next, a semi-structured script was elaborated to interview all managers from the traditional housing means in Diamantina. The purpose of the interview was to collect data to characterize the offer of the traditional housing in Diamantina and to analyze the perception the behavior of managers regarding Airbnb.



The script had the following open and closed questions: 1. Name of the respondent. 2. Housing mean that works. 3. Function which exerts in such housing mean. 4. Number of habitation units (HUs). 5. Number of beds: Couple's bed/ Single bed. 6. Value of the individual rate / Couple. 7. Has the arrival of Airbnb in Diamantina impacted the billing of the housing mean in which you work? Affected much / Affected little / It has not affected. 8. Was any measure adopted to annul or minimize the impact provoked by Airbnb on the housing mean in which you work? Yes/ No. If yes, which measures?

The interviews with the managers were performed presentially, through visits to the housing means, with previous booking. Before initiating the interviews, a pre-test with two managers from the housing means was performed, so that the issues could be improved and, therefore, to avoid mistakes or misplaced answers.

The data obtained through the interviews and the raise performed on the websites of Airbnb and AirDNA were organized in Microsoft Excel spreadsheets and submitted to a simple descriptive analysis. The descriptive statistical analysis, in summary, help to describe and to understand the characteristics of a specific group of data, providing brief summaries of the sample and the measurement of data (Barbetta, 2014).

At last, it was possible the construction of graphs and tables to help the comprehension and discussion of the current offer of housing in Diamantina, based on a predominantly quantitative analysis. On the other hand, the interpretation of the content of the shared information by the interviewed managers, from a quali-quantitative approached, enabled to interfere on the perception and the behavior of the interviewed regarding Airbnb.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

Characterization of the offer of housing in Diamantina: Airbnb x traditional housing means



With the raise of the housing offer in Diamantina present in the platform of Airbnb, it was verified that there are 149 active ads located in the urban area of the city. Regarding the traditional housing means, it was identified a total of 41 enterprises also located in the urban area of the city.

From the 41 traditional housing means identified in Diamantina, 26 (63%) participated in this research, 3 (7%) were not willing to contribute, 8 (20%) did not answer any attempt of contact and 4 (10%) were not working during the COVID-19 pandemic.

As presented in Figure 1, among the 26 traditional housing means in Diamantina which participated in the research, 9 (35%) were inaugurated before the year 2000, 4 (15%) between 2001 and 2005, 5 (19%) between 2006 and 2010, 1 (4%) between 2011 and 2015, and 7 (27%) between 2016 and 2021.

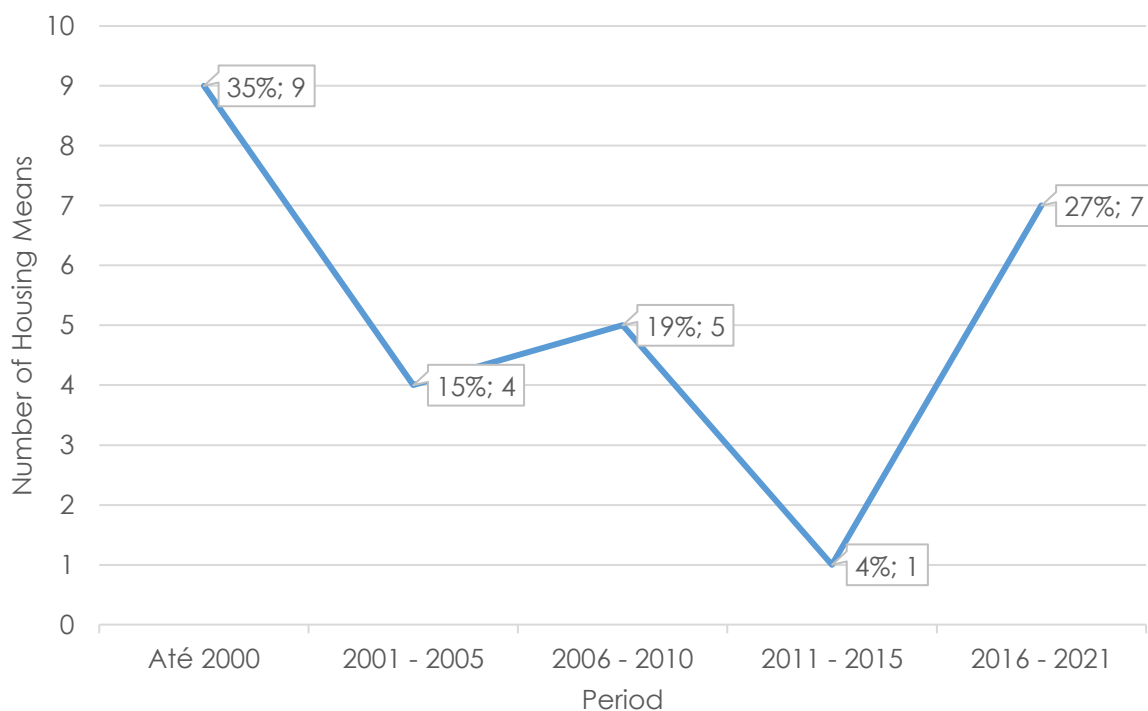


Figure 1. Period of inauguration of Diamantina's traditional housing means

According to Figure 2, the evolution in the number of Airbnb ads in Diamantina began in 2018 with 65 ads, its peak in the first four months of 2020



with 197 ads and, currently, it presents a diminishing to 149 ads, most probably due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

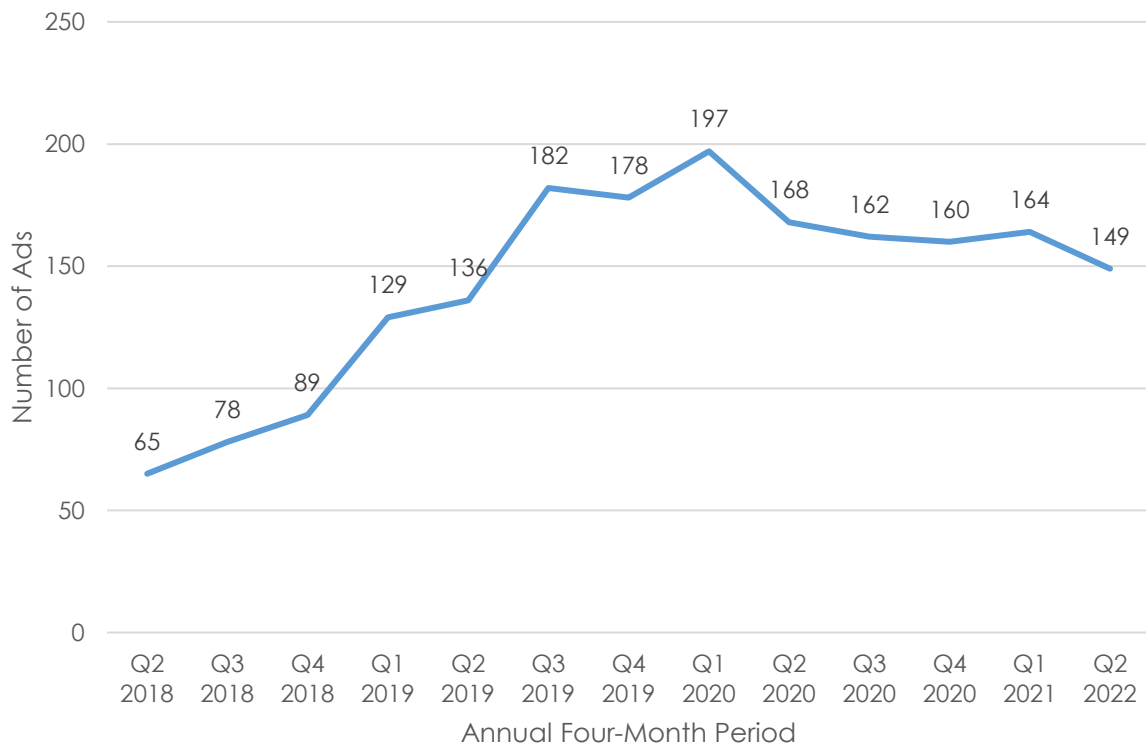


Figure 2. Evolution in the number of ads presents in the Airbnb platform in Diamantina.

Source: From AirDNA, 2021.

From the group analysis of Figure 1 and Figure 2, it is verified that the arrival of Airbnb in Diamantina has not prevented the launch of new traditional housing means in the city, once that the second percentage among the interviewed housing means, 27%, was opened in the period from 2016 to 2021, which means, when active Airbnb ads already existed.

The traditional housing means which participated in the research are divided into the following categories: 8 (31%) hotel, 15 (58%) bed and breakfast, 2 (8%) hostel, e 1 (4%) camping.. On the other hand, the main types of properties announced in Airbnb are: 69 (46%) entire spaces, 77 (52%) whole bedroom, 1 (1%) hotel room, and 2 (1%) shared room.



Table 1 presents the current capacity of hosting from the traditional housing means in Diamantina and from the ads present in the Airbnb platform. Regarding the number of habitational units (Hus), or simply rooms as they are identified in the Airbnb platform, traditional housing means have practically the double amount, 583, compared to the ads in Airbnb, 288. Regarding beds, traditional housing means have 550 couple's bed, which is equivalent to 3,4 times more than the amount present in the Airbnb ads, 162, and 593 single's bed, which corresponds to 2.2 times more than what is found available in Airbnb, 276.

This means that, despite the number of traditional housing means in the city 41, being almost four times smaller than the number of ads present in the Airbnb platform, 149, the ability of sheltering guests through the traditional housing means is still much higher.

Table 1
Capacity of accommodation in Diamantina from the ads in the Airbnb platform and from traditional housing means

Accommodations	Traditional housing means	Airbnb Ads	Total
Habitational Units	583	288	871
Couple's bed	550	162	712
Single's bed	593	276	869

On the other hand, it is also observed in Table 1 that Diamantina has currently 871 HUs, adding the offer from the 26 housing means to the 149 Airbnb ads. The sum of the number of couple's bed results in 712, and of single's bed in 869. Therefore, although the current capacity of accommodation of the city represents a significant value to attend the tourist's demand in regular periods of time, probably, without the offer of Airbnb, it would not be possible to attend to an increase in tourist's flow during some events that are performed, such as the Carnival and the Vesperata.



This is an indication that the Airbnb offer acts, in some moments, in a way to complement the traditional offer of accommodations in Diamantina and in case of nonexistence, it would compromise the performance of important events which mobilize the entire productive chain of local tourism.

Chattopadhyay & Mitra (2020) highlight that when considering the impact of Airbnb, it is important to remember that the clients are not necessarily preferring the traditional housing means. Sometimes, Airbnb is the only viable option for many clients.

As observed in Table 2, from the 26 traditional housing means in Diamantina which participated in the research, 7 (26.9%) have an individual daily rate between 0 and 50 reais, 9 (34.6%) between 51 and 100 reais, 5 (19.2%) between 101 and 150 reais and 5 (19.2%) between 151 and 200 reais. In the case of Airbnb, it is observed a higher price diversification in the individual daily rate, but, the majority of the offers, 46 (30.9%), are concentrated in the same price category of the daily rates of traditional housing means, between 51 and 100 reais.

Table 2

Price of the individual daily rate of the accommodations

Price (R\$)	Airbnb	%	Traditional housing means	%
0 to 50	11	7.4	7	26.9
51 to 100	46	30.9	9	34.6
101 to 151	34	22.8	5	19.2
151 to 200	15	10.1	5	19.2
201 to 251	12	8.1	0	0.0
251 to 300	5	3.4	0	0.0
301 to 351	6	4.0	0	0.0
351 to 400	8	5.4	0	0.0
401 to 451	4	2.7	0	0.0
451 to 500	3	2.0	0	0.0
Above 500	5	3.4	0	0.0
Total	149	100	26	100



Therefore, the majority of traditional housing means and the ads present in the Airbnb platform have an individual daily rate between 51 and 100 reais. In addition, 43 Airbnb ads, which is equivalent to 29% of the total, present the individual daily rate above all the traditional housing means. Such elevated price is justified by the fact that is referred to the rent of entire places, such as houses and apartments, which generally have room, bathroom, parking space, kitchen and, in some cases, area of leisure with swimming pool, sauna and barbecue place, among other facilities.

According to the website AirDNA the rate of occupation of Airbnb ads in Diamantina is of 24%. To reach such number, the website considers the number of days booked divided by the total number of days available to rent in the last 12 months. The ads that did not have reservations are excluded from this calculus. Therefore, such number of the occupation rate represents the median from the last 12 months from all Airbnb ads in Diamantina that had some booking (AirDNA, 2021).

As for the average revenue obtained by the owners of ads in Airbnb in Diamantina, according to the website AirDNA is of 1.080 reais. The calculus of the average monthly revenue considers the receiving of the daily rate price added to the cleaning fee in the last 12 months. Such value of revenue represents the median in the last 12 months and does not include taxes, service fees or additional guest fees (AirDNA, 2021).

Data referred to the occupation degree from housing means in Diamantina are not openly available by guests, which precludes the comparison with the results obtained by the hosts of Airbnb. In any way, it is believed that the presented data and discussed until this moment are enough for the comprehension of the general characteristics of the current offer of housing in Diamantina and, therefore, advance with the evaluation of the perception and of the behavior of managers regarding Airbnb.



Analysis of the perception and of the behavior of managers regarding Airbnb

Among the managers of the 26 traditional housing means in Diamantina who participated in the research, 12 (46%) alleged that the arrival of Airbnb in Diamantina has affected little the housing mean in which they act, 9 (35%) stated that it has affected much, and 5 (19%) said it has not affected. It is observed, therefore, that from the 26 housing means, 21 (81%) alleged having suffered some sort of impact due to the arrival of Airbnb in the city.

When asked to the 21 (81%) managers of the traditional housing means in Diamantina what the impact was that Airbnb provoked, the great majority answered diminishing in the number of bookings, and, consequently, diminishing in the revenue of the enterprise.

Such perception by the managers reinforces the positioning of Jereissati, Pereira Júnior & Bezerra (2020), who state that the Airbnb represents an unfair competition in face of traditional housing means which have fixed costs that need to be paid regardless the demand, such as: taxes, rent and employee's paychecks.

It is observed that 5 from the 9 housing means that affirmed that were very affected by Airbnb have as individual daily rate between 150 and 200 reais, which corresponds to the more elevated price category among all the 26 housing means interviewed. In a certain way, this is contrary to the result of the research of Martins (2017) who affirms that the lowest prices housing means are the most affected by Airbnb.

Santos & Botelho (2011) affirm that the higher the individual price of a given product, lower is the intention of buying it by the consumer. In such case, all Airbnb accommodations as well as the traditional hotel chain should be careful with such fact in order to avoid being empty for long periods of time.

Airbnb aspects considered of major relevance in the conception of who is in search of non-conventional accommodations refers to the freedom of assuming behaviors that in the traditional chain are not allowed, such as



cooking, receiving people, free time to come and go, among other factors (Bagatini, 2018).

On the other hand, many times it is questionable the security provided by Airbnb accommodations. There are relates of thefts, robberies and harassment which happen to people who choose this type of accommodation, being quite meaningful when compared to the traditional hotel chain (Marassi, 2017).

To try to diminish inconvenient like those, soon after the *checkout* the Airbnb platform automatically send a message by e-mail inviting the guests to give feedback about the stay. They evaluate the accommodations in the following categories: Experience in general (How was it?), Cleaning (Did the place follow standard procedures?), Precision (Was the accommodation precisely presented in the ad, with photos and updated information?), *Check-in* (Was it easily done), Communication (Did the host answer the questions quickly?), Location (Was the guest informed about security, transportation, points of interest and special considerations such as noise or other situations which could affect the stay?), Price (Was the price worth it?) Commodities (Was everything promised in the ad available and in good conditions of working?)(Airbnb, s.d.-b).

The result of the evaluation of the Airbnb users generates a grade for each evaluated item, which can be from 1 to 5. According to the site AirDNA, the two items that received the best grades by part of the Airbnb users who stayed in Diamantina were the communication, 4.9 and the check-in, 4.91. On the other hand, the lowest grade was given to price, 4.79 (AirDNA, 2021).

When asked to the 21 managers from the traditional housing means in Diamantina which measures were adopted to avoid or diminish the impacts provoked by Airbnb, the obtained result was surprising, once 18 (69%) affirmed that they did not make any initiative. In dealing, specifically, of the 9 managers



who stated that the Airbnb arrival in the city generated impact in their business a lot, 8 said that they did not make any action to fight those impacts.

Some managers justified the absence of measures adopted by stating in an imprecise way that their target-public is different from Airbnb's. Other managers excluded themselves from the responsibility by saying that is not up to them to fight the impacts of Airbnb, but the government's responsibility. Other showed inability of reaction, by stating that they did not know what measures should be taken to fight such situation.

In fact, throughout the interviews it was perceived that some managers had a very superficial comprehension of the way that the Airbnb platform works, showing inability to measure the real impacts that such digital platform has provoked in their own business. Such perception was ratified when informed that the mitigation measures adopted by some few managers were restricted to reducing the price of the daily rate, the performance of promotional campaigns without focus and offering discounts.

The idea of competing on the price, normally, seems like a natural way to follow, but, many times, may be the road to ruin. Companies should avoid making the price the main reason why the hope to be chosen by the consumers (Porter, 1999). the strategy of competing only for the price makes sense when the company has a considerable cost advantage over their competitor, which is not the case of traditional housing means regarding Airbnb. In face of this, the best is to compete aggregating value to services which are offered to increase the client's satisfaction.

It is important to highlight that the item price was precisely the one with the worst grade in the evaluation of Airbnb users that stayed in Diamantina. Which means, from what it all indicates, Airbnb users are not necessarily choosing this type of housing due to the lowest price. This reinforces that the focus of managers from traditional housing means should be in developing strategies of



valuation of their offers to become differentiated in the market, through innovations, better attendance, use of ICTs, among others.

Costa (2021), for example, states that the higher possibility of flexibility of the types of accommodations in Airbnb is something that is shown to be much relevant in the choice for the platform, to the detriment of traditional housing means. Such possibility of flexibilization allows users from the platform to choose for a place more adequate to their profile. Such fact is contrast with the traditional housing means that follows a strict pattern in their offer.

The fact that many housing means were inaugurated in the last five years is a sign that the hotel market in Diamantina is not saturated. On the contrary, as seen the capacity of housing in Diamantina still is very limited when considered only the offer of traditional housing means.

However, the results of this research shows the urgency for innovation of the hotel offer in Diamantina making use of the technologies that have been transforming the tourism market. In fact, in a highly technological world, people are eager each day more for custom-made products and services for them. (Kotler et al., 2017).

However, it is worth highlighting that such reality is not exclusive of the hotel business in Diamantina. Airbnb has shown to be capable of putting the traditional hotel market in vulnerability in several national and international tourism destinations (Belino Bonfin, Velasquez, & Leal, 2019). This study serves, therefore, as an alert to all housing means that are not able to invest in innovation and keep up with the technological changes, since they will be more severely impacted with the loss of competitiveness.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Therefore, as it occurs in several tourism destinations in Brazil and all over the world, the offer of informal housing through the Airbnb platform has become each day more common in Diamantina. From the results of this study,



it was observed that the amount of options of housing in Diamantina offered in Airbnb platform is already very meaningful when compared to the number of traditional housing means existing in the city. Even though, the traditional housing means in Diamantina still represents a capacity of accommodation much above than the Airbnb ads.

There are traces that the offer of housing ads in Airbnb competes directly with the offer of traditional housing in Diamantina in normal periods of visitors' flow. In this sense, the Airbnb and the hotel net behave themselves as substitute assets and the increase in the search of one directly affects the other.

On the other hand, when there is the performance of major events, both housing modalities modify their competitor character, becoming complementary since the offer of housing through the Airbnb ads becomes necessary to attend such demand of events, such as the Vesperata and the Carnival.

With the interviews performed with the managers from the traditional housing net in Diamantina, it was identified that the majority believes that have been affected by the Airbnb platform, however few are worried in adopting some kind of measure to avoid the possible impacts caused. The main mitigation measures adopted to fight the effects of Airbnb were: price adjustment, discounts and promotions. It is a concern the fact that no manager took any initiative with the purpose of updating or diversifying the offer of products and services to better attend the client, or try to fit one's enterprise to the current technological changes in the market.

The main limitations of the present study are justified by the insufficiency of available data, mainly regarding those of traditional housing means in Diamantina. The expectation was the all managers from the 41 housing means would participate in the research. In addition, information on the monthly occupation rate of the housing means are not available in a transparent form.



This occurs due to the distrust of managers of traditional housing means regarding the use of such type of information.

In terms of suggestions for new researches, it is emphasized that there is the need of a higher detailing of the capacity of housing in Diamantina and the characteristics of the offered accommodations, both in the present ads of Airbnb platform, as well as in traditional housing means. It is believed that such characteristics presented with more details may help understanding better the offer and the factors which influence the traveler's choice. In addition, it is important to investigate whether the lack of regulation of housing services provided by the Airbnb platform really provokes an unfair competition with traditional housing means. In this case, it can also be considered the fact that the city does not receives taxes which could add to the available resource in the Tourism City Fund to enable programs and projects to improve the development of tourism.

At last, it is believed that the present study has reached its goals and the obtained results enable the performance of adjustments that, possibly, will be necessary in the traditional hotel enterprises in Diamantina to keep competitive in the market. In addition, the current presentation of the Airbnb amplitude in Diamantina may help the public power in a more fit tourism planning with the reality of the city. Therefore, it is hoped that this study contributes somehow for the tourism development of the city.

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Contributions of each author

Author	Contribution
Nicolas Viegas Carmo	Definition of the research's purposes; Review of the literature; Gathering of primary and secondary data; Analysis and discussion of the results; Final considerations; Final formatting of the study.
Hugo Rodrigues Araujo	Helping in the definition of the research's goals; Indication of literary and documental references; Help in the elaboration of the methodology of the research; Helping in the analysis and discussion of the results, as well as in the elaboration of the final considerations; Orthographic correction of the text; Changes performed by the journal's evaluators.

