HOTEL INDUSTRY RELATIONSHIP MARKETING THROUGH INSTAGRAM SOCIAL NETWORK IN THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC CRISIS: Accor Brazil hotel chain case study

O MARKETING DE RELACIONAMENTO DA INDÚSTRIA HOTELEIRA ATRAVÉS DA REDE SOCIAL INSTAGRAM NA CRISE DA PANDEMIA COVID-19: Estudo de caso da rede de hotéis Accor Brasil

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ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic brought the production process to a halt in the tourist chain, directly impacting the economic sphere and marketing communication between organizations in the segment and their interested public. The present work aims to identify whether the communication through the Instagram posts of the multinational hotel chain Accor was adapted to the COVID-19 pandemic scenario between December 2019 and June 2020 and the followers' level of engagement in its digital profile. The more-than-human netnography proposed by Lugosi & Quinton (2018) was adopted as a methodological approach, having as object of analysis the posts of the profile @all_latam (Accor América Latina) on Instagram and the behavior of the followers. We

identified a follower appreciation regarding COVID-19 material. Therefore, hotel companies should produce crisis content related to increasing engagement on Social media posts.

Keywords: COVID-19, Relationship marketing. Engagement. Empathic Communication. Instagram.

Introduction

On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) outbreak as a pandemic, based on its proliferation in more than 140 countries worldwide (Gössling, Scott, & Hall, 2020), severely disrupting global tourism (Zhu, Grün, & Dolnicar, 2021), and affecting people physically and mentally (Yang, Zhang, & Wang, 2022).

In times of global crisis, such as the COVID-19 health crisis (Yuheng & Dolnicar, 2020; Bulchand-Gidumal, 2022), organizations need to position themselves and have empathy (Arief & Pangetsu, 2021), patience (Sonis et al., 2020), and focus on emergency needs (Della Corte et al., 2021) of its consumers, using their communication channels to guide them within appropriate measures and pertinent to its business model, thus providing followers with a perception of security (de Faria Nogueira, 2021; Fermenia-Serra, Gretzel, & Alzua-Sorzabal, 2022).

Given that the global hotel industry has been highly negatively impacted by the pandemic (Li, Yao, & Chen, 2021), it is imperative to understand the behavior and communication of hotel organizations with their consumers. In this context, the Accor Hotels group presents itself as an appropriate case study, as it has adopted an ambitious strategy based on an investment of 225 million euros in a 5-year plan to improve the digital experience of its consumers, partners, and employees (Damnjanović, Lončarić, & Dlačić, 2020)

Therefore, the present exploratory work proposes to apply 'more-than-human netnography' (Lugosi & Quinton, 2018) to analyze the relationship of the multinational Accor hotel chain during the pandemic between the period

December 2019 and June 2020 with their followers on the social network Instagram and whether this institutional communication had any impact on the number of views, likes, and engagement.

The present study considered the Instagram posts made before and during the pandemic to verify if there are differences between the level of engagement of the posts identified whether the communication through the posts on Accor's Instagram was adapted to the COVID-19 pandemic scenario and the level of followers engagement.

This work is justified as a possible instrument for several organizations (whether or not hotel companies have been directly affected by this crisis) understanding if empathic communication with their followers produces positive outcomes for the companies. Furthermore, this research can be a starting point for other studies interested in deepening the topic of Tourism and Pandemic and promoting health care for employees of various organizations and their users.

Theoretical section

The present work deals with communication between a marketing channel and its customers and consumers. Therefore, to understand better, a literature review was carried out on brand concepts, positioning, relationship marketing, digital marketing, and social networks.

Brand

Despite presenting themselves as a complex phenomenon (Maurya & Mishra, 2012), brands are essential assets (Henderson & Cote, 1998; Mizael, Castro, & Leme, 2021) and critical factors for the success of organizations (Keller & Machado, 2006; Oliveira & Luce, 2011). A brand can be understood as a product that adds dimensions that differentiate it from other products

developed to satisfy the same need (Heck et al., 2015; Kotler & Keller, 2006). These differences can be rational and tangible, such as the brand's product performance, or more symbolic, emotional, and intangible, i.e., related to what the brand wants to represent (Keller & Machado, 2006). Despite the perceptible character related to tangible aspects, the difficulty of physically measuring the brand is undeniable because, in addition to being a physical good, it also has a value that cannot be touched but felt by its users (Keller & Machado, 2006).

Brands can also have personal meaning for consumers (Anggraeni, 2015) and become an important part of their identity (Richardson & Jones, 2007). They can acquire skillful characteristics to establish relationships between companies and customers (Herbst & Merz, 2011). They can express who the consumers are or whom they would like to be. Brands can even take on human characteristics (Keller & Richey, 2006). This process develops through the consumers' identification with the organization, in which the use and support of the brand is an expression of their preferences and identity (Niada & Baptista, 2013; Tildesley & Coote, 2009). Brand relationships, like any relationship, are not cast in stone, and marketers must be sensitive to all words and actions that can strengthen or weaken consumer bonds (Kotler & Keller, 2016).

More integratively, Kotler (1999) refers to a brand as " name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of these, intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors." In this way, a brand signals to the consumer the product's origin and protects from competitors who offer identical products (Parente & Gomes, 2020, p. 97).

From this point of view, this article understands that the brand is more than a logo or image of a product, and it is perceived that the brand involves a whole context in the imagination of the public involved, thus being able to become a reference in the minds of consumers who identify a particular organization and associate them with a concept.

Positioning

Brand positioning is not a simple concept (Maggard, 1976). The most diverse concepts and definitions confuse their apprehension (Oliveira & Campomar, 2007). Positioning refers to "designing a company's offering and image to occupy a distinctive place in the minds of the target market" (Kotler & Keller, 2012, p. 298).

Concomitantly, Lamb, Hair, and McDaniel (2004, p. 281) argue that "position is the place a product, brand, or group of products occupies in consumers' minds relative to competing offerings.".

For a better market positioning, the company must create strategies to create a competitive advantage (Hooley, Saunders, & Piercy, 2005). The competitive reality and market pressures increase the importance of brand positioning (Aaker, 1996). In this sense, the advantage of resolving brand positioning enables the company to structure the marketing mix (Serralvo & Furrier, 2004).

That said, it is clear that through a communication objective focused on a perception of the value of a target market, the organization strives to build a well-defined image in the minds of its consumers, successfully or not, through its communication and user experiences.

Relationship Marketing

The concept of relationship marketing has been worked on for almost 40 years in the academic marketing literature (Steinhoff & Palmatier, 2021). Relationship marketing proves to be a valuable tool for organizations to build loyalty and strengthen ties with their customers, as it is a bond that goes beyond loyalty and includes building a partnership (Noronha, 2018). Moreover, there is a need

for empathic communication in times of crisis, such as COVID-19 (Arief & Pangetsu, 2021) to maintain this relationship.

Relationship marketing builds long-term, satisfying relationships for both parties, winning customers and maintaining the respective business (Kotler & Keller, 2016). For Kotler and Keller (2016), the importance of this partnership where both parties would have a counterpart and seek customer involvement with the brand's value proposition in a more stable and lasting way. The use of technological tools and platforms in a virtual environment such as Instagram, together with the need to get closer to consumers, are characteristics that are already rooted in the minds of marketing professionals (Altaf et al., 2019) and must be appropriated by managers of tourism, leisure and hospitality enterprises.

Even more, the pandemic scenario derived from COVID-19 made explicit the dilemma between acquiring resources for the subsistence of hotel organizations (Nan, 2020) and the need for communication that provides guidelines on how to behave in this environment of restrictions (Robina-Ramírez et al., 2021). Under this context of restrictions and interruptions of mobility and decrease in tourist demand (Coelho & Mayer, 2020; Fotiadis et al., 2021; Mayer & Coelho, 2021; Souza Neto & Marques, 2021), it is necessary to generate a healthy relationship in the long term between brand and consumer.

Digital marketing and Instagram

A social network refers to a group of people, organizations, or other relationships connected by a set of social relationships, such as friendships, working together, or a simple exchange of information (Las Casas, 2005). It should also be noted that users use social networks to express opinions and establish values and relationships with other users and organizations (Perinotto et al., 2021; Barbosa & Medaglia, 2020; Feitosa & Barbosa, 2021), and

companies need to use and explore this tool to analyze and communicate with customers (Sampaio & Tavares, 2017).

Social networks, such as Instagram allow brands to influence consumers (Kotler, Kartajaya, & Setiawan, 2016). Moreover, these networks' level of influence in shaping brand perception (Jin, 2012) and consumer decision-making (Stephen, 2016) is outstanding. For example, "the speed and global reach of Electronic Word-of-Mouth in Instagram, gives brands a way to leverage the power of communication with consumers and their relationship with [the] consumer" (Loureiro & Sarmento, 2019, p. 4)

According to Peres (2017), Instagram is the most popular application for sharing photos and videos in Brazil and, in the world, being part of the daily routine of most people (Silva & Mendes Filho, 2015). As a social network, Instagram allows users to add filters to their content generated and online publications. Conversely, in contrast to the olden era, social media such as Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and other collaborative tools helped increase participation and social connections. In his view, "by creating novel ways to connect supply with demand, new business innovations such as the sharing economy emerged to disrupt many industries " (Xiang, 2018, p. 148). He adds that information technologies seemed to have been built into all the fabrics of our socio-economic life, including travel and tourism (Xiang, 2018).

Over the last few decades, social networks have been consolidated as communication tools (Henche, 2018), thus "dramatically chang[ed] the way of traveling" (Li et al., 2018, p. 305). Additionally, digital media have parameters for measuring their effectiveness, such as likes (Paniagua & Sapena, 2014), engagement (Arman & Sidik, 2019), number of followers, number of shares, among others.

Finally, engagement is one of the most relevant elements, as it concentrates on the measurement of actions that involve interaction, influence, and relevance, such as shares, likes, comments, and mentions

(Gabriel, 2010). Considering that one of the main objectives of brands is to increase their value to the consumer, engagement has become an intrinsic metric of this process, as it can increasingly involve the consumer.

Methodology

In this work, more-than-human netnography was used as a methodological approach (Lugosi & Quinton, 2018). The method is an adaptation of netnography, treating as key social agents (Kozinets, Ferreira, & Chimenti, 2021) the Accor social network and its followers, through the Accor (Latin America) account on the Instagram social network. The research aimed to analyze the communicational modification of the hotel chain with a focus on an empathetic approach towards its target audience and identify the impact of the engagement of these followers through metrics of public access such as likes (likes) (Arora et al., 2019).

Netnography is a method for studying social media and other online or mobile app-based data in a way that maintains the cultural complexities of your interactors' experiences (Kozinets & Gretzel, 2022). The authors further add that as social media platforms emerged and transformed, netnographic research followed and adapted existing methods for hunting data, thus evolving and continuing to evolve about more significant technological developments (ibid). This results in a dynamic method for studying the constantly evolving ecosystem of online and mobile platforms and applications and the phenomena they relate to (Kozinets, 2020). Rocha and Montardo (2005) consider that this method opens space for the possibility of studying the virtual imaginary through observation, but considering the deterritorialized nature of cyberspace, which requires a participant observation at a distance.

Thus, posts on the national profile of @all_latam, Accor Latin America's institutional profile on Instagram (Figure 1), were used for the analysis, within the

period from December 2019 to June 11, 2020, to verify if there was any change in communication after the beginning of the pandemic. This period becomes relevant as it includes publications from a pre-COVID-19 period and the changes posted in the advancing time when the disease became endemic, epidemic, and, later, pandemic.

The Instagram platform presents itself as an excellent observational environment because, as it empowers companies to produce material (brand-generated content (Sánchez-Cobarro, Molina-Castillo, & Alcazar-Caceres, 2021), it also provides a basis for creating user-generated content (Fatanti & Suyadnya, 2015). Furthermore, from an operational point of view, it provides researchers with an environment of high interaction and easy data collection, which are publicly accessible, thus allowing them to work in real-time with the manager and researcher who analyzes the generated data.

Figure 1: Screenshot of Accor Latin America institutional profile.
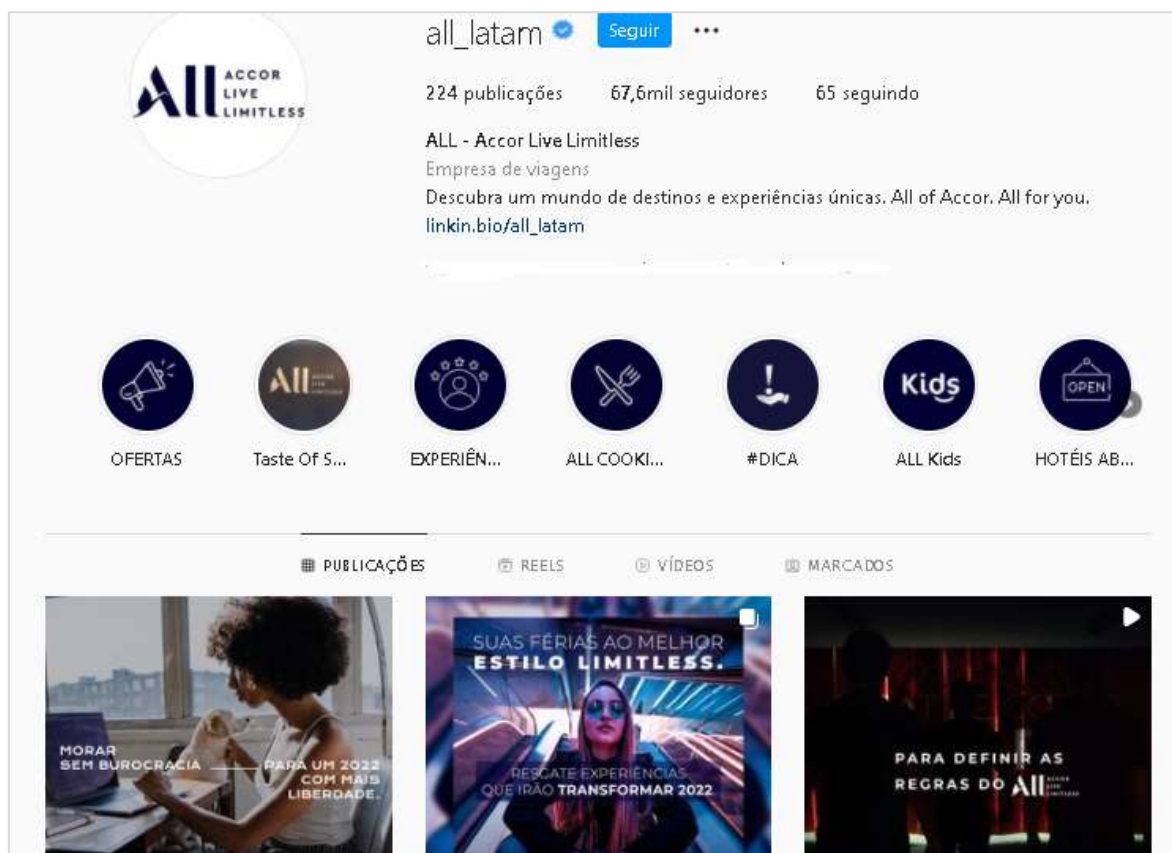
Source: @All_latam (Instagram).

On the importance of observation, Lakatos and Marconi (2003, p. 190) state that observation is a data collection technique to obtain information and uses the senses to get certain aspects of reality and also consists in examining facts or phenomena that one wishes to study.
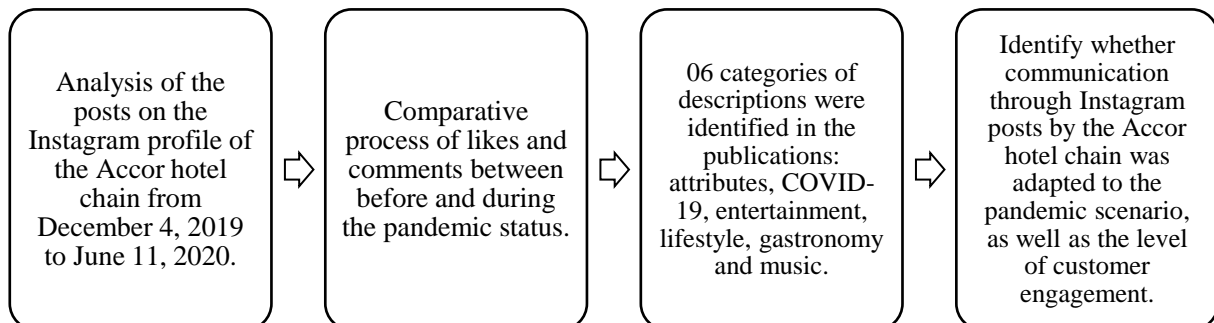
Carmona (2017) discusses ethnography as follows:

> "[…] ethnographic research […] is considered a research method useful in identifying, analyzing and solving multiple problems in different groups; traditionally this tool is used in areas of anthropology and sociology" (Carmona (2017, p. 137, free translation)

Additionally, netnography is frequently used in actions related to the marketing planning of large companies (Rocha & Montardo, 2005) and in the academic field primarily. We can observe a preoccupation regarding virtual ethnography application by English-speaking researchers (Rocha & Montardo, 2005). Moreover, research calls for a qualitative approach when investigating emotional aspects of tourism-related topics when the researcher wants greater depth of analysis and when the case is complex in its nature (Hosany et al., 2021), such as the relationships between company-consumer in a pandemic crisis,

Therefore, the present work was solidified in behavioral analysis of the Accor Network through its institutional communication on the social network Instagram in a comparative process between before and during so that one perceives the impact of its posts on its followers. This longitudinal approach provides a vivid illustration of the situation and the changes taking place over time (Malhotra, 2020). Moreover, analyzing user-generated content has been helpful in several contexts (e.g., Santos et al., 2016; Viana et al., 2019). The following figure (Figure 2) provides an overview of the research's process.

Figure 2: Research process.

| Analysis of the posts on the Instagram profile of the Accor hotel chain from December 4, 2019 to June 11, 2020. | ⇨ | Comparative process of likes and comments between before and during the pandemic status. | ⇨ | 06 categories of descriptions were identified in the publications: attributes, COVID-19, entertainment, lifestyle, gastronomy and music. | ⇨ | Identify whether communication through Instagram posts by the Accor hotel chain was adapted to the pandemic scenario, as well as the level of customer engagement. |

In this perspective, the publications of the Accor network's profile on Instagram were analyzed from the first post on the profile, on December 4, 2019, until June 11, 2020. It was considered the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. COVID-19 in Brazil occurred at the beginning of March, and on June 11, Brazil was still experiencing the problem. The profile had around 40,000 followers at the time of the survey. The study considered two important Instagram engagement tools: likes and comments. The higher the number of likes and comments on a post, the higher the level of engagement of your followers.

The publications were categorized according to the caption of the photographs, where 06 categories of descriptions were identified: attributes, COVID-19, entertainment, lifestyle, gastronomy, and music.

Results and discussion

The profile @all_latam started its activities on Instagram on December 4, 2019, with the campaign "ALL - Accor Live Limitless". The description of the initial post

reinforces that the network has more than 30 (thirty) brands and suggests that the customer lives a unique lifestyle with ALL - Accor Live Limitless. The slogan used for this campaign is *Everything from Accor, everything for you*! (free translation). Such a strategy can be optimized from a managerial point of view, given that consumers tend to choose different options when they are motivated to strengthen or affirm their uniqueness (Wan et al., 2014). The first post had more than 490 (four hundred and ninety) likes and more than 50 (fifty) comments, which corresponds to a low share of followers, but follows the trend of content creation by users (Van Dijck, 2009; Van Mierlo, 2014).

Figure 3: Image published on December 4, 2019, on the Accor network profile on Instagram
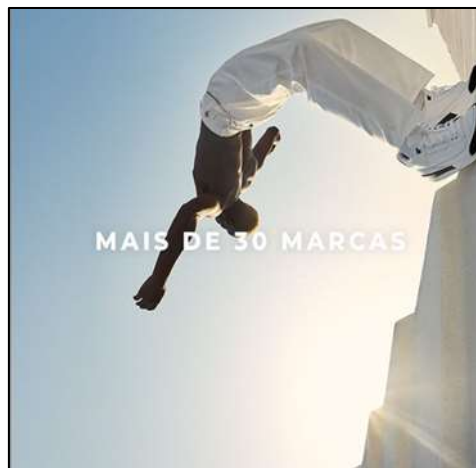
Source: @All_latam (Instagram).

From the first post, the profile began to praise the experiences that the customer could have in the hotels of the chain through adjectives that reflect brand attributes, as shown in Figure 3, the emphasis on price is a determinant of choice (Andersson, 2019), and the low price framework can activate price sensitivity (Wen et al., 2021) of potential guests. However, as shown in Kim et al. (2020), a particular emphasis related to price can impact the perception of hotel quality, in this way. It must be worked on carefully, based on an understanding of the company's market segmentation (Dolnicar, 2022).

Figures 4 to 9 – Publications of the Accor network profile on Instagram from January 17 to 23, 2020
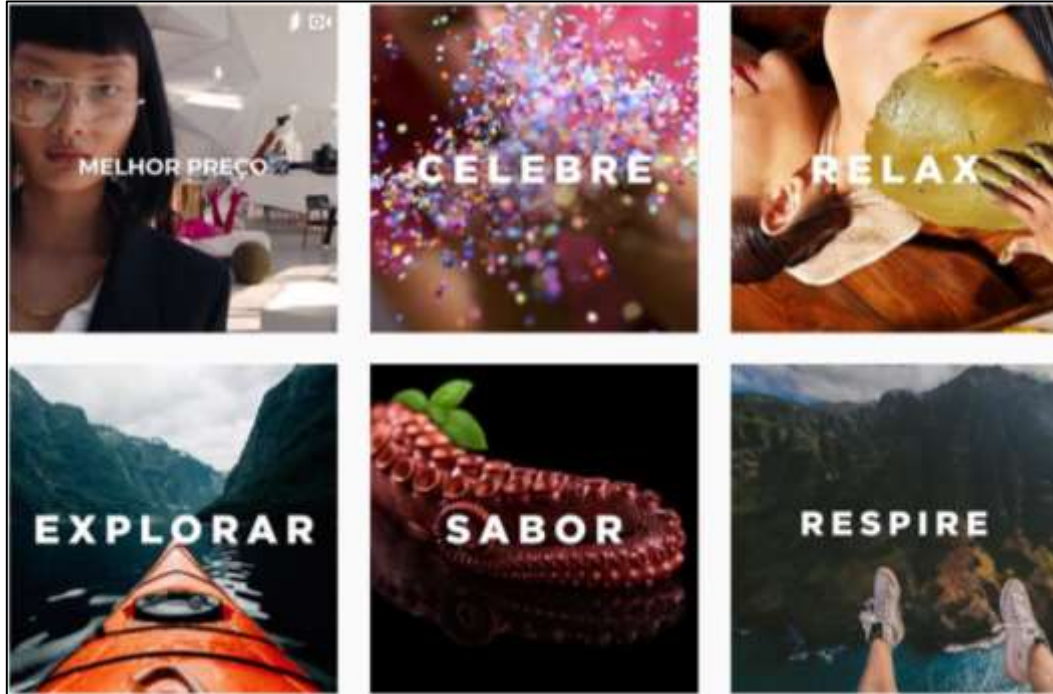
Source: @All_latam (Instagram).

It was noticed that the profile is focused on building the image of a service provider that provides different sets of experiences, thus strengthening the institutional image of the Accor network of "building iconic brands" (ACCOR, s.d). In fact, experiential appeals seem to affect the decision-making process of tourists in the hotel sector (Cozzio et al., 2020). The experiential agenda of activations of senses (Santos et al., 2017), emotions, and moods have been highlighted in the studies of behavioral changes in tourism and sustainability (Souza-Neto et al., 2022) and has been used by the conglomerate as a way of eliciting the desire for intention by activating feelings (Hunter, 2006).

The network's Instagram profile surpassed the 39,000-follower mark in June 2020, demonstrating an exponential increase in followers. An interesting

fact that can show good social media management by the South American branch is that the profile has more followers than the parent profile (@accor).

On March 27, 2020, the profile published the first post regarding the COVID-19 pandemic with more than 280 (two hundred and eighty) likes, that is, well above the average of likes of the posts that revolved around 170 likes. The publication advised people to stay at home and informed them that the network would offer a solidarity rate to those who needed a "second home." Despite the post, when contrasted with the memorable dates of the pandemic, it appears to be a certain delay or lack of proactivity on the part of managers. Since coronavirus disease 19 (COVID-19) was decreed by the World Health Organization as a worldwide pandemic on March 11, 2020 (WHO, 2020), and a state of calamity was declared in Brazil on March 20, 2020 (Brazil, 2020). A potential assumption is that hotel managers faced uncertainties about business survival in this health crisis environment (Japutra & Situmorang, 2021) and understood that it would be one of the sectors most negatively impacted by the pandemic (Anguera-Torrell et al., 2021), which caused them to have a delayed response to the situation.

Despite this delay, the posts show a concern for the health of their followers, encouraging them to stay at home and take the necessary protective measures. This strategy presents itself as a mechanism for generating trust in a scenario in which products and services, such as those proposed by the hotel industry, could be broadcast environments and, consequently, potentially develop fear on the part of consumers (Jian et al., 2020).

Figure 10 – Publication of the Accor network profile on Instagram on March 27, 2020.

Source: @All_latam (Instagram).

The data collection found that from the first post of the profile on December 4, 2019, until June 11, 2020, 31 (thirty-one) photographs and 10 (ten) videos were published, with 05 photographs referring to the pandemic as listed in Table 1. The overall average of likes per photo was 173, and comments were 11. As previously presented, the activation of emotions (Bastiaansen et al., 2022; Hosany et al., 2021) elicited by posts (Figure 10) can be a motivator for more significant numbers of likes and comments from Covid-19 posts can be due to the 'issue-attention cycle' (Hall & Valentin, 2005). Issue attention cycle is divided into five stages (i. pre-problem stage; ii. Alarmed discovery and euphoric enthusiasm; iii. realizing the cost of significant progress; iv. Gradual decline of intense public interest; and v. the post-problem stage), in which the analysis was conducted comparing the first and second stages.

Considering the general level of profile engagement as the average number of likes per post divided by the number of followers, as shown in Table

1, we reached the percentage of 0.4%. According to blog Bume (2020), engagement levels below 1% would be considered low.

Table 1: Research data summary

EVALUATED ITEM	RESULT
Profile monitoring days	190
Number of profile followers	39700
Number of publications	41
Publications related to the pandemic	5
Published photographs	31
Published videos	10
Number of photo likes	5373
Average photo likes	173
Number of comments	473
Daily average of comments	11
Number of video views	1751564
Average video views	175156

The publications were categorized according to the caption of the photographs, where 06 (six) categories of descriptions were identified: attributes, covid-19, entertainment, lifestyle, gastronomy, and music. The attributes category includes publications referring to attributes that the brand wants to communicate or strengthen.

In the digital age, companies would need to behave like people, passing the image of being accessible and kind and vulnerable, thus being less intimidating (Kotler, Kartajaya & Setiawan, 2016). In this way, brands would treat consumers as friends, becoming an integral part of their lifestyle. Furthermore, followers could also be attracted to brands that offer experiences and represent specific lifestyle movements. These brands would be perceived as "cool", aiming to sensitize consumers with great stories about their inspirational missions.

The authors also state that brands need to demonstrate human attributes capable of attracting consumers and developing person-to-person connections (Kotler et al., 2016). In this way, the study category "attributes" would include publications referring to the tangible and intangible attributes that the brand wants to communicate or strengthen.

It remains to be noted that the other categorizations (with the exception of the category "COVID-19") are inherent elements of the construction of a multi-experiential brand and that will provide passive and active hedonic experiences, generating subjective well-being and activating feelings such as happiness (Chen, Zou, & Ghao, 2020; Nawjin, 2011). The Covid-19 category is expressive enough to have its post category, as demonstrated by the interaction, engagement element, and potential organic growth towards the number of followers.

According to table 2, it was found that the five publications that dealt with the pandemic had 19% more likes within the analyzed period. This percentage was the same registered by the 13 (thirteen) publications on entertainment. The average number of likes of publications related to the pandemic was 202 (two hundred and two) per publication, the second-highest in the study. Lifestyle-related publications seem to have a strong appeal with the profile's followers, as it was observed that 12 (twelve) posts represented 50% of the likes, and each publication had an average of 224 (two hundred and twenty-four) likes.

The data presented corroborates that Accor followers on Instagram identified positively with posts referring to care in the pandemic crisis.

Table 2: Categories and amounts of post likes

Category	Posts	Likes	Views	% Posts	% Likes	% Views	Average likes	Average views
Entertainment	13	1001	7136	32%	19%	0,41%	77	549
Lifestyle	12	2682	0	29%	50%	0,00%	224	0
COVID-19	5	1008	0	12%	19%	0,00%	202	0
Music	5	522	0	12%	10%	0,00%	104	0
Attributes	3	160	2293	7%	3%	0,13%	53	764
Gastronomy	3	0	1741000	7%	0%	99,5%	0	580333
Total	**41**	**5373**	**1750429**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**131**	**42693**

Additionally, the description of the posts related to the pandemic was compiled, and the number of likes and comments in table 3. The posts published on March 23 and 27, 2020, communicated the opening of hotels for

people who cannot be in their homes and need social isolation had the highest number of likes and comments, that is, greater engagement. This initiative follows international trends (CNN, 2020; Forbes, 2020). The others remained in the average of likes.

Table 3: Description of publications related to the pandemic

Date	Post description	Likes	Comments
March 27 2020	Receiving, protecting, and helping people is the foundation of our business. During this moment we are facing, we open our hotels to welcome people who cannot be in their homes and need social isolation and those who are on the front line to protect us. Accor offers a solidarity rate for those who need a second home in hotels in operation. To learn more, call 0800 703 7000 or (11) 2755-6702	283	19
March 29, 2020	Right now, we want to become a sign of light and open our doors to those in need. Find out what we're doing in this video. #Accor #heart4all	381	26
April 23, 2020	Because passions go beyond confinement, we bring the ALL experience to you. Every week, we organize activities in collaboration with our partners and friends for you to enjoy at home. Stay tuned! #StayHome #ALLatHome #ALLTogether #ALLFood #ALLMusic #ALLSport	118	0
May 05 2020	Even far away, we are together and take care of each other. Every day, the thought is: it's going to be okay! #ALLTogether #ALLemCasa #accor	118	10
May 15 2020	Join @accorsolidarity and support COVID-19 prevention research by donating your ALL Rewards points! Each donation will be managed by @Accor and distributed entirely to @institutpasteur, which is committed to research against COVID-19 and its consequences. Check the link in the bio.	108	0

It was also observed that most of the comments were made on posts related to gastronomy and entertainment, as shown in Table 4. The posts about the pandemic had 55 (fifty-five) comments, and most of the positive comments made were through symbols or figures, and the negatives usually dealt with topics that had nothing to do with the post. However, it was possible to verify certain frustrations inherent to mobility restrictions and the provision of highly interactive services. Such as the fact of not being able to make contact with one of the franchise hotels for possible changes.

> "Could you help me? I have a reservation [...] for this month and I have been requesting contact and arrangements for more than 20 days, and so far, I have not had any response from the aforementioned hotel" (Follower x, 2020)

Adicionally, indignation due to omission or failure to comply with changes in the company's loyalty regulation, which remained without a public response from the company. In addition to the omission, there is a highly biased comment, potentially intended to catalyze an online boycott (Luo & Zhai, 2017):

> "I was faithful to your loyalty plan for 10 years (see my history), brazil, argentina, mexico...I must have stayed almost 1 of these 10 staying with you, now that I would use the points...ZERO my 11000 points? Are they idiots? I'm a businessman, I have 20 employees who travel all over Brazil, I always travel...can you imagine what they will lose in the next 10 years of daily rates? Not to mention that I will always be a poorly attended customer and will certainly have some problems for you on social networks!!! I'll go there now .. Simple, stop being suckers and pass me on to a manager who thinks outside the box... who realizes that you need to improve the loyalty plan... later 10 years old, no; and because I haven't stayed for 1 year, you should reset the account, without sending an email [...] Think of a dissatisfied customer. It's me" (Follower y, 2020)

Table 4: Number of comments per post category

| Category	Posts	Comments	% Comments	Average Comments
Entertainment	13	104	22%	8
Lifestyle	12	98	21%	8
COVID-19	5	55	12%	4
Music	5	13	3%	1
Attributes	3	20	4%	2
Gastronomy	3	183	39%	14
Total	**41**	**473**	**100%**	**6.2**

In the more-than-human netnographic survey, the Instagram stories section was also considered, where the profile can make publications that are available for up to 24 hours for the followers to view, and there is also the option to keep the posts fixed on the profile's homepage through of categories The Accor network created the ALLsafe and Covid-19 sections in the stories section of the @all_latam profile and highlighted them on the home page, as shown in figure 9.

It was found that in the ALLsafe section, the profile published information about measures that the network was taking to guarantee the safety of guests. The hygiene measures carried out at check-in, check-out, common areas, restaurants, food, cleaning, employees, and maintenance were addressed in the post. The ALLsafe seal was created, which, according to the publication, guarantees all care and attention to offer safety and well-being to guests.

Despite this complementary analysis, it should be noted that the number of views of the stories is not disclosed to Instagram users, additionally, the stories do not allow viewing interactions between the Institution and its customers. In this way, one can only assume greater attention on the part of institutions for the dissemination of information, which may serve as a potential nudge (Nunes & Dib, 2022; Souza-Neto et al., 2022), since the salience of information is identified in the literature of behavioral nudges as a catalyst for visualizations (Blom et al., 2021; Thaler & Sunstein, 2008).

Figure 9: All – Acoor Live Limitless.
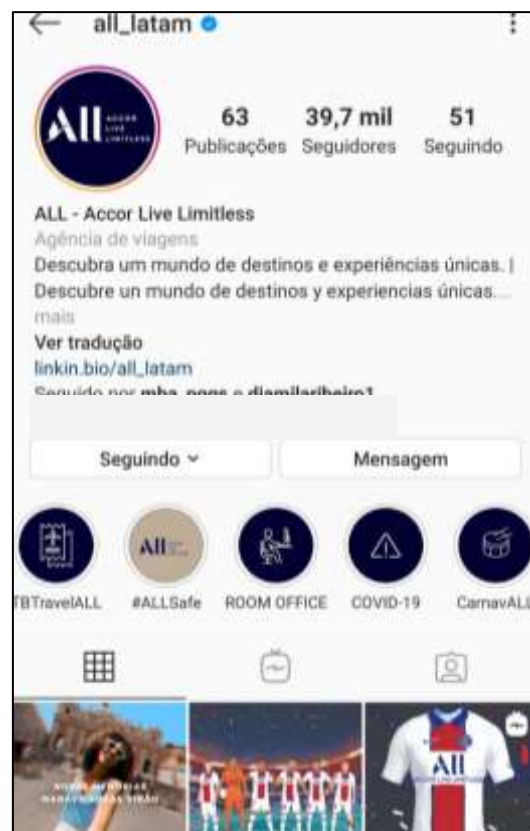
Source: @All_latam (Instagram).

In the section of stories called Covid-19, the profile brings together the collection of publications about the pandemic posted on the main page and some additional information such as:

- **Focus on security:** Implementation of security policies to offer greater flexibility to employees;
- **Safe environment for isolation**: The network made available the reservation of apartments for people who need social isolation and health professionals who are treating contaminated patients;
- **Appeal to price:** Publication of solidarity rates for those who need a "second home".

In general terms, it was noticed that the page continued to focus on the institutional positioning to reinforce attributes, and even during the pandemic period, the people who were photographed in the images did not use masks or any other protective equipment related to the contagion of the virus. Despite this contradictory element of the discourse with the visual aspects analyzed, a potential with inference is that the contents developed by the company were already the company's domain even before the pandemic. However, being a careless action for an enterprise that aimed to sell security and zeal on its social networks. This proves that advertising is not always a path of credibility, as Perinotto and Soares (2020) reported.

The analysis of the profile on Instagram contributed to support the idea that relationship marketing and empathy and reinforcement of elements related to the pandemic contributed as a dissemination tool, attraction of customers/followers, and a specific differentiation about other equipment of the same city branch.

Final considerations

Through a more than human netnography (Peter & Lugosi, 2018), the present study reached the proposed general objective and identified whether the

communication through the Instagram posts of the Accor hotel chain was adapted to the COVID-19 pandemic scenario as well as the level of customer engagement. The study contributes to the literature by demonstrating greater engagement and likes by followers of the Instagram page when the posts were related to the Covid-19 pandemic, which may be an indication that users of the platform esteem publications of the genre. Methodologically, researchers need to consider non-human action's effect on consumers (Kozinets, Scaraboto, & Parmentier, 2018). Thus, the present study presents the researcher in the area with a still under-explored methodology in Brazilian research.

In our analysis, it was possible to verify that the French multinational Accor used Instagram to build the image of its brands as a hotel chain. The profile used a communication strategy highlighting brand attributes focused on leisure, entertainment, and lifestyle. The profile had about 40,000 followers during the pandemic period with an average of 170 likes per publication, that is, there is an opportunity to considerably increase the level of engagement of the followers. It was possible to notice the replacement of part of the traditional communication by publications aimed at generating engagement in relation to care during the pandemic period.

After the beginning of the pandemic, some posts addressed what the network did to ensure the safety of employees and customers, and others reported on facilities aimed at those who needed accommodation during the pandemic. This can generate admiration from those who believe in the same things and fulfill the critical role of reinforcing the message for those who are still not convinced about the seriousness of the pandemic. However, quantitative approaches are needed to support such exploratory analysis. Future studies may take advantage of big data techniques (Mich, 2022), as Accor's Instagram profile users produced large amounts of data. Additionally, replicating such an analysis on other social networks, such as Facebook and Twitter, can be of great value. Since both networks have a high content of infodemics (i.e., the propagation of this disinformation) (Yang et al., 2021).

The Accor network profile alternated posts about the pandemic with institutional publications and consolidated more information about Covid-19 in the stories section. Only 12% of the publications in the researched period were related to the pandemic, that is, the profile had the opportunity to publish a greater amount of information about the pandemic since there was an engagement in publications related to the topic, but chose to focus on institutional communication. In addition, in the institutional images, the people in the photographs noticed that the models did not use masks or any equipment that referred to the care related to the pandemic.

In the case of businesses most affected by the pandemic, such as bars, restaurants, and hotels, one of the strategies may be to adapt their products and services to the new scenario. In the case of the Accor network, the initiative to offer special conditions for those who could not be at home because of the pandemic generated greater engagement in publications. The other publications related to the pandemic maintained the average of likes of institutional publications showing that the subject is relevant and interests the follower of the profile.

As managerial contributions, the results showed that managers and sectors responsible for the networks and social media of companies can make their followers more engaged to the profile. Similarly, posts in the Covid-19 category could merge elements in order not only to create engagement on the part of posts related to the pandemic, but also to reinforce the company's institutional image, visions and ambitions.

Although the present study used an in-depth analysis approach, it is essential to emphasize that analysis data is volatile, and only a portion of the population of followers produces user-generated content (Van Dijck, 2009). In addition to the analysis being subject to this publicly accessible data. A more direct approach to interviewing these guests and followers who interact with the multinational's profile could generate valuable insights for better decision-making.

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