The influence of Instagram digital marketing on tourist destination image and visit intention

A influência do marketing digital via Instagram na imagem de um destino turístico e na intenção de visitação

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ABSTRACT

The social networks have been used as a tool for digital marketing. The companies found an opportunity to expand their relations with the public, sharing content, minimizing costs and still interacting with the client in real time. This study aims to analyze the influence of digital marketing carried out via Instagram on the tourist destination image and visit intention. This is a pre-experimental research, of pre-test / post-test type, developed with a single group, composed of 30 undergraduate students from a university in the city of São Luís, Maranhão/ Brazil. It was found an increase in destination image perceived by the respondents after the experiment. The results showed that the online experience in Instagram is a relevant factor to be considered in the management of the destination image. It is also concluded that, in relation to the visitation intention, the positive experience with Instagram is an influence factor over potential consumers surveyed in the choice of a tourist destination. Among the network's tools, hashtags stood out.

Keywords: Digital Marketing. Instagram. Online Experience. Tourist Destination Image. Visit Intention.

1 INTRODUCTION

The choice of visiting a tourism destination, the image that it is linked is determinant for tourists in their decision making process (Crouch, 2011; Chang et al. 2015; Kuhzady & Ghasemi, 2019). Such image is built by the interaction between the consumer's urges and the external environment (Hung et al., 2012). In many cases, such interaction occurs with a first contact of the consumer through the internet and such experience may exert influence on one's decision, and the possibility of forming a positive image of the destination, inducing the client the desire of knowing it (Carvalho et al., 2016).

This way, the content of the websites of tourism destinations is very meaningful due to the possibility of influencing the perception of image about it and enable a virtual experience to the consumer (Doolin et al., 2002). In such perspective, online tools to perform marketing of travel packages are explored, aiming at attracting the interest of tourists through posts on the destinations (Longhini & Poggi, 2006). Therefore, the analysis of websites related to tourism, whether in the public or private sector, as well as in social media and the content generated by the user (CGU) have been highlighted in the literature (Soares, Albuquerque & Mendes Filho, 2023; Soares, Albuquerque, Mendes Filho & Alexandre, 2022)

Such type of marketing is part of the digital marketing, which differs from the so-called traditional marketing due to the focus being on the use of marketing tools through the internet (Rowles, 2014). Each day more the companies aim at using such possibilities by developing marketing strategies in an online format, searching for inter-activeness with the final consumer, which provides a quicker and effective exchange of ideas regarding the traditional strategies (Veludo-De-Oliveira & Huertas, 2018). The digital content marketing has been gaining highlight mainly due to the traditional marketing not fulfilling its role as before (Souza, Mendes Filho & Marques Júnior, 2022).

In such scenario, the social media are highlighted, which have been tools used in digital marketing, mainly the social networks by being platforms that allow interaction between the individuals through the creation, sharing, discussion, modification of the content by them generated (Rowles, 2014). These are virtual environments where the users communicate themselves and interact with the publication of comments, videos and images (Leung et al., 2013).

There is considerable growth in such type of media, and the information arrives to the users quickly and varied. Over 5.35 billion people all over the world use the internet, which represents 66.2% of the world population, and 5.04 billion people use social media (Statista, 2024). In such context, the companies have found opportunities to broaden their relations with the public, sharing content, diminishing costs and still interacting with the client in real time. However, it is important to analyze the social media in a specific form, since each one has a variation of environment and even of public and forms of interaction.

Among them, in such work the social media Instagram is highlighted. This media has "over 300 million users losing only to Facebook in size, Brazil is among the countries with higher number of users, overall, there are 16 million Brazilians available to the ad" (Rodrigues & Brito, 2019, p.4), being a toll of major importance to the development of digital commerce.

In the field of tourism, the use of these social media is observed and it has increased working as a stimulation capable of motivating the formation of image and the intention of visit in the touristic potential (Azevedo & Silva, 2010). Zucco et al. (2018) highlighted that the publications of photos on social media corroborate with the formation of an image from the destinations. However, to better understand how the online experience may impact on the image and on the intention to visit a destination, considering the number of social media and its quick advance, there is still the need of studies regarding such subject

that add variables such as: online experience, image of the tourism destination and intention to visit.

In such sense, this article is founded on the use of Instagram for digital marketing purposes, taking into consideration the search for new destinations and online experience, with the following question: How does the digital marketing through Instagram influence the formation of an image of a tourism destination and the intention to visit?

The contribution of such study is given among other aspects by focusing on the pre-journey phase, which would be the impact of the exposure of the Instagram tool in the formation of the image and the intention, once many studies in social media focus on the consumer's behavior after finishing the journey (Lu et al., 2018) or focused on housing means such as the study of Fontgalland et al. (2022). In addition, studies such as the ones by Guerra et al. (2014); Rafael & Almeida (2017) and Souza & Machado (2017), Xiang & Gretzel (2009) even when approaching the influence of social media on the formation of the destination's image and mainly as sources of information in the planning of the trips, do not include the intention to visit in such core.

This way, the contributions of the study are both of academic nature by being a theme considered recent as pointed out by Shuqair & Cragg (2017), offering relevant results to the understanding of the touristic consumer's behavior, having at sight the extensive number and types of social media that appear and continue to chance throughout the time. They are also of management nature, once the findings may help the management of digital marketing of tourism destinations, mainly in the way that the organizations use such media in their strategies of client capture as well as public managers in the promotion of their destinations. To reach the proposed goal, a casual research was performed through a pre-experimental study of the pre-test/post-test type from a group of potential tourists (Malhotra, 2012) having as object of the study a Brazilian destination.

2 REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

2.1 Image of the tourism destination and intention to visit

In the context of tourism, the image of the destination has been considered one of the main variables of study by providing a booster effect in the preference, motivation and behavior of an individual regarding the products and the tourism destinations (Wahab & Cooper, 2015).

The concept of image of destination encompasses impressions, beliefs, ideas, expectations and feelings regarding a place from various sources of information and it is influenced by the social-demographic and psychological aspects (Iordanova, 2017). It is about an attitude construct that includes cognitive and affective aspects on a certain destination (Baloglu & Mccleary, 1999) and directly influences on the future behavior of the tourist (Prayag, 2009).

The image of the destination has a meaningful relation with the intention of traveling, once it positively affects the tourist's attitude (Jalilvand et al., 2012). It fills an essential role in the process of choosing a destination (Marchitiello & Carvalho, 2016).

Rodrigues & Brito (2019) have stated that even though have never visited a destination, it is possible to form an image about it, and it is fundamental for tourism that the regular monitoring of such vision of travelers should be performed. The upcoming interest in performing a trip is an affective motivation, which obligates the consumer to define a fit for such trip, based on personal perspectives and information that will be gathered, contributing to the formation of the image that impacts on the intention to visit.

Previous studies such as Kladou & Mavragani (2015), Költringer & Dickinger, 2015; Lodrà-Riera et al. (2015) analyzed how different types of online platform as official tourism websites, blogs, social media websites, content

communities have influenced the formation of the image of the destination. Hence, social media, in such matter, are tools that may influence their users in the pre-purchase, helping the choice of the destination and the development of the itinerary (Song & Yoo, 2016; Litvin et al., 2018; Di Pietro et al., 2012; Sotiriadis, 2017).

However, the formation of the image is still previous to the purchase decision. Therefore, the understanding of the influence of the digital marketing and the online experience in social media as with Instagram has become so important and not only in official tourism pages as in the study of Molinillo & Liébana-Cabanillas (2018), but in a broader navigation experience as proposed in the present study.

Shuqair & Cragg (2017) still reinforced that the researches regarding the formation of image of a destination have been focusing on the marketing activities from the managers of the tourism destinations, the so-called DMO's, highlighting the existence of seldom studies which approach the impact of the content of social media like Instagram on the change of the consumers' perceptions regarding the travel destinations, as the case of the present study.

In such scope, studies have highlighted such media regarding the image of the tourism destinations (Baumann, Lourenço & Lopes, 2017; Andrade & Medeiros, 2023, Perinotto et al., 2021). Some bring different cuts including variables such as co-marketing and competition, as Perinotto et al. (2021) do. However, there is still room for researches mainly regarding the user experience specifically with Instagram about the image formation and the intention of visitation.

2.2 The online experience on Instagram and the digital marketing in tourism

When one talks about digital marketing, online publicity, web marketing, internet publicity or any other creative compositions using such words, one is

referring to the effective use of the internet as a tool for marketing, encompassing publicity, advertisement, communication ad all other strategies and concepts of the marketing theory (Torres, 2014).

Each day more, the companies search for such use, developing marketing strategies through an online format, increasing the interactivity with the final consumer, which provides a faster and efficient exchange of ideas regarding the traditional formats (Veludo-De-Oliveira & Huertas, 2018).

In the tourism perspective, there are studies aiming the comprehension of the online experience on the consumer's behavior as the one from Carvalho et al. (2016). The literature has shown such influence, comprehending the online navigation on websites and the search for information on the internet as a powerful impact tool in the tourism consumer behavior (Song & Yoo, 2016; Litvin et al., 2018). For such demonstrated power, studies that detailed each day more the aspects from its use, the type of influence and the type of media have become relevant.

In case of Instagram, it is a social media with one of the greatest growths in all the world and among the active profiles, it is still worth mentioning that the commercial profiles represent nearly 20 million and 2.5 million advertisers in all the world (Rodrigues& Brito, 2019). The functions of interaction within this network are varied, in addition to like, to comment, to share publications and to send messages via direct, the media still has functions which enable grouping people by their common interests, for example, the use of hashtags, cataloging who user the number sign symbol "#" added to the word or phrase related to the theme of the publication, allowing everyone who searches or use the word/expression to visualize all the similar content; and the "explore" in which similar profiles and posts to the ones that the user follows appear (Aragão et al., 2016).

One of the characteristics noticed in such social media is the valuation given to the number of users who follow the profile, meaning that the more

elevated the number of users, the higher the prestige of such member (Lira & Araújo, 2015), which means, added to the strategies of marketing from the tourism companies and tourism managers, through the official profiles, the content generated by the user (CGU) has been each day more relevant as also as by influencers (Andrade & Medeiros, 2023). The study from Bolaños et al. (2012) with Portuguese consumers, for example, identified the importance of the CGU in the process of decision of a trip. The study from Silva et al. (2021), also reinforces the importance of the CGU for travel agencies, which encourage their clients to post it.

It is observed that it is a complex phenomenon that occurs in social media, once that daily users are bombed with information and content. As a result of this, the individual judgment has an open space to the collective judgment, being fomented and shared on the web. The search for products and shopping on the internet leads to before the acquisition, a search for opinions, which is impacted by influential factors of the behavior of online shopping as it can be seen in Table 1.

Table 01

Influential elements of the online behavior

Factors	Description
Functionality factors	Elements of usability and interactivity. Improve the online experience, presenting to the client the good functioning, ease of exploration of the website, speed and interactivity.
Psychological factors	Communicate integrity and credibility in order to pursue client to stop, explore the website and interact online.
Content factors	Creative elements and marketing mix of the company present on the website.

Source: Constantinides (2004)

It is important to highlight that the online experience allows the exploration of the destinations, recreating through digital platforms aspects of

the traditional tourism, informing and taking the traveler to the knowledge and to the eager to visit a certain location (Marchitiello & Carvalho, 2016; Rodrigues & Brito, 2019).

Shuqair & Cragg (2017) measured the immediate impact of the CGU in forms of images from the Instagram on the change of the perceptions of the spectator regarding a travel destination, finding positive relations between the online experiences from the users and the cognitive and affective image of the destination. Xia et al., (2018), also starting from an experimental study and subsequent t test on SPSS, on the perceptions of the visualizers of a destination (Lebanon) pre and post-exposition have shown that the posts from Instagram were effective on changing the perceptions from the viewers and influencing the behavioral intentions from viewers during the pre-visit phase. Also, the content generated by the user of Instagram was identified as well as random Google images as being more successful in improving the destination's image than other efforts from the DMOs (Fatanti & Suyadnya, 2015)

This way, it is observed that the social media have become an important method of communication to connect individuals and organizations in an effective manner, involving a shared experience from the users, visual content of the social media may be used to improve the destination's image (Fatanti & Suyadnya, 2015) which has generated the hypothesis:

H1: "The online experience on Instagram positively influences the image formation of a tourism destination".

The favoritism for a destination and the intention to visit is directly associated to the result of a positive relation with it. This way, the intention to visit a destination is generally part of satisfaction models (Burcio, et al., 2014). Still to the author, in a real world scenario, the image of the destination is not the only construct for investigation, but also the contextual factors, such as for

example the design of an app, which may influence the decision making process of a consumer of destinations.

Fatanti & Suyadnya (2015) highlighted that in the formation of the image from a brand of destination through the Instagram, there are some steps that should be performed as posting of photos and sharing of experiences, obtention of feedback from comments and discussions from the users. Hence, the Hypothesis 2 regards the tools from Instagram that the individual may use to access information on the destination, which means, factors of functionality according to Constantinides (2004):

H2: "The use of tools tags, accounts, locations from Instagram positively impact, but in a different way one from the others, in the perception of the image of the tourism destination".

Jalilvand et al., (2012), found results that highlight the positive influence of word of mouth (eWOM) on the destination's image, on the tourist's attitude and on the intention to travel. It is worth mentioning that the eWOM by happening in a virtual context is formed from an online experience of the user. Despite the sites from DMOs and social media moderate the image from a destination and the intention to visit, both the formation of the image as well as the intention to visit vary according to the platform used by traveler to access the information (Molinillo & Liébana-Cabanillas, 2018).

Corroborating with such finding, Jaafar et al. (2020) using as base the media Tripadvisor related that the satisfaction of tourists regarding the destination Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia as well as the future behavioral intention would be strongly related to the cognitive and affective images formed during the pre-journey phase. The effects of the dimensions of the experience of use of the platformed were examined, namely perceived utility, aesthetic, trust, interactivity and homophilia in the experience of co-creation of the platform.

The quality of the websites content, as well as the simplicity in the access and the navigability of the website were crucial to ensure that travelers would have a positive co-creation experience of online value on the platform (Jaafar et al, 2020). Added to this, the provided information through social media are seen as more reliable than the ones from ads (Chu & Kim, 2011). Therefore, the last hypothesis from this study was about the influence of the experience on Instagram on the intention, more specifically the intention to visit a researched destination:

H3: "The online experience on Instagram positively influences the intention to visit a destination".

3 METHODOLOGY

The performed research is characterized as casual with a pre-experimental study of the type pre-test/post-test of a group (Malhotra, 2012; Xia et al., 2018). The purpose was to verify the influence of the digital marketing through Instagram on the formation of an image from a tourism destination and on the intention to visit. For such an experience of users with this social media was performed.

The pre-experimental studies are different from the experimental once they neither encompass the random distribution of the individuals to the treatments, nor require the use of control groups (Carvalho et al., 2016). Being, according to Hernandez et al. (2014, p. 102), employed when the researcher does not have "control over the process of randomization and it is supposed that the researcher does not have full control over the exposition of the subjects to the manipulations of the independent variable". For such study, the

equation in two scenarios was used to measure the different of the image and the intention to visit:

Scenario 1: EG I1 X I2

EG represents the experimental group and I1 the image of the tourism destination prior of having an approximation with the stimulation. X is the treatment performed, which means, the navigation using all the tools available by Instagram (accounts, tags and locations); and I2 represents the image of the tourism destinations after the online experience with Instagram, which means, after the group had been exposed to the stimulation.

Figure 1

Experiment of Image Formation
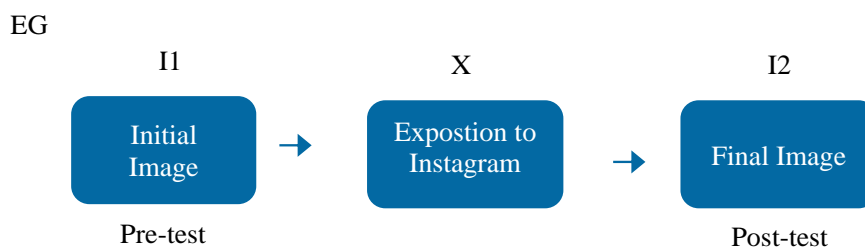

Scenario 2: EG   O1   X   O2

EG represents the experimental group and O1 the intention to visit the tourism destination prior having the approximation with the stimulation. X is the treatment performed, which means, the navigation using all the tools available by Instagram (accounts, tags and locations); and O2 represents the desire to visit the tourism destination after the formation of the image through the tool, which means, after the group being exposed to the stimulation.

Figure 2

Experiment of Intention to Visit

EG
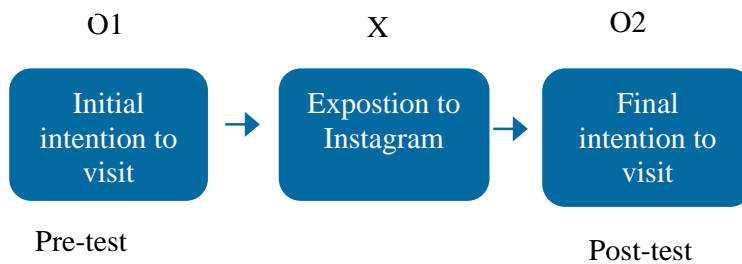
Due to the independent variable being the experience with the tools from Instagram, there is no way to precise exactly which accounts, tags and locations were visited by the subjects of the experimental group, justifying the adopted design. However, all the participants of the research were submitted at the same time to the 5 minutes exposition starting from the screen in figure 3.

Figure 3

Research tool on Instagram
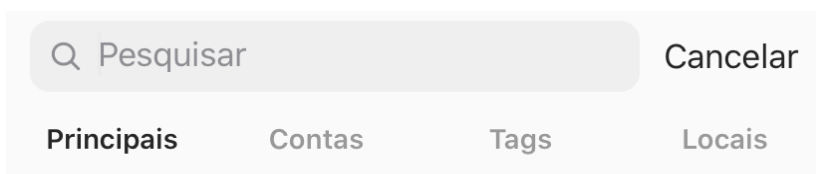
Source: Instagram

This way, a questionnaire was applied prior the experiment and another after the exposition of the subjects to Instagram. The first had closed and open questions (Hill & Hill, 2012), questions on the subject's profile, questions on the use of the tools from Instagram, on the image of the destination and specifically

on the chosen destination. Chapada dos Veadeiros - GO/ Brazil. It was still evaluated the intention of visiting the destination. The questionnaire was elaborated based on the studies developed by Knight & Kim (2007), Diallo (2012) and Carvalho et al. (2016) with issues disposed in Likert scales of seven points.

On the perception of the change of the image of the destination, it was aimed at verifying how much has it become less or more attractive using the concept of Cho (2008) that indicates that the attractiveness is related to the group of attributes that make a destination attractive to travelers. It is worth mentioning that the process of navigation during the experiment was intentionally performed freely, not being defined specific accounts for the subjects to navigate within the app for precisely evaluate at the end that all the tools which they had used inside the social media.

The second questionnaire, which was applied after the experience of the navigation in the social media by observance, was composed of three parts. In the first, it was aimed at evaluating the online experience, ease of navigation, visual attractiveness, and general evaluation of the experience of using Instagram, based on the scales of Gao & Bai (2014). The second part repeats the questionnaire for comparison purposes. As follows, a question of dissertation form, to also evaluate in a qualitative form whether had been change on the image that the participants had had from Chapada dos Veadeiros after the experience with Instagram.

To perform the experiment a non-probabilistic sample by convinience of 30 individuals, potential tourists, students from senior years of graduation from the State University of Maranhão, was considered, who did not know or had not visited the destination from the study. The size of the sample used in this study is justified by the words of Navidi (2012) who considers that the pre-experimental studies, by being more simple analysis may comprehend smaller samples, which is also corroborated by Akker et al. (2001). In addition, by not

having many variables of study there was not the need of a big sample, Hair et al. (2009) standardizes being 5 individuals by researched item.

The choice of the tourism destination Chapada dos Veadeiros occurred due to three factors: the first by being a destination that is not among the most researched of the country, according to research performed by the Ministry of Tourism (2019) during the period of the research. By being a not so known the influence of the navigation could be better evaluated, since according to Hakala et al. (2013) the influence of the social media on the image and the intention to visit a given destination may happen specially in situations when tourists do not have the knowledge or have limited knowledge on the destination in question. The second considered factor was that the location has tourism attractions related to natural aspects which is a high point for tourism in Brazil with the existence of waterfalls and trails. Important visual aspects; and, the third factors was the easy location of the images and information of such destination on Instagram.

After the gathering and tab, the data were organized in a way to establish a comparison, reaching the presentation of results and the reflections and the discussion. The analysis of the results was quantitative and qualitative. The descriptive statistics was performed and t test for comparison of averages through the software Spss 23 and the analysis of content of the open questions on the image based on Bardin (2011).

4 RESULTS

4.1 Profile of the participants

Table 2 shows the profile of the participants of the research according to gender and age range.

Table 2

Profile of the participants

		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Female	17	56.7%
	Male	12	40.0%
	Other	1	3.3%
Age range	18 to 20	3	10.0%
	21 to 25	14	46.7%
	26 to 30	7	23.3%
	31 to 35	4	13.3%
	Over 35	2	6.7%

The participants in the research answered a question regarding the image that they possessed of the Chapada dos Veadeiros as tourism destination, such question aimed at evaluating the prior knowledge about the location. The content was analyzed and, as follows, the categorization of the answers was performed (Bardin, 2011) according to table 03.

Table 3

Qualitative aspects of the image of the Chapada dos Veadeiros (GO) as tourism destination (pre-experiment)

Image	Frequency
No image	16
Beautiful place	5
Waterfalls and trails	4
Nature	3
Mountains and dears	2

The majority of the respondents reported not having an image of the object of study. The remaining presented little knowledge regarding the general particularities of the Chapada dos Veadeiros – GO attending the expected. Such profile attended the purpose of the research in order to verify

the perception of the image after the experiment. Overall because even without visitation it is possible to form an image of the destination (Rodrigues & Brito, 2019).

4.2 Online experience

Due to the hypothesis of the study being related a positive online experience with modifications in the form of perception of the mage and interest in visiting the tourism destination the first group of analysis aimed at evaluating the online experience of the participants subjects during the experiment.

Three categories were still used to evaluate the online experience according to what is predicted in the scale of Gao & Bai (2014), being them: content of the information, ease of access and general online experience, the results are in table 4.

Table 4

Evaluation of the online experience

Category	Assertive	Average	Standard Deviation
Content of the information	The information is precise	5.90	0.759
	The information is relevant	6.63	0.556
	The information is easily found	6.50	0.682
	I could not find the information regarding the destination	1.63	1.629
Ease of use	I have found the information that I have searched easily during the navigation	6.63	0.615
	The navigation is hard, the app is complex	1.33	0.994

Online general experience	The online experience has generated the wish to visit the Chapada dos Veadeiros – GO	6.87	0.346
	The online experience has generated a positive image regarding the Chapada dos Veadeiros – GO	6.80	0.407

In the category content of the information the importance of the obtained information was highlighted with an average of 6.63, as for the precision of the information during the navigation presented the lower average 5.90. Still in such category, the negative "I could not find information regarding the destination" presented average of 1.63 showing that it is not hard to find information on the destination on Instagram.

As for the ease of use, the averages 6.63 for the affirmation "I have found the information I have searched easily during the navigation", and 1.33 for the negative "The navigation is hard, the app is complex" ensure that the use of the app is easy. At last, the general online experience had the higher averages in their items, leading to the perception that the experience was positive by the subjects of the study.

Considering that the scale of measurement had 7 points, being 4 the point of indifference, notices that the remaining items had averages above 4. Such facts were allied to the one previously exposed, enables the understanding that the general experience with Instagram was considered positive by the participants subjects of the study. Such positive perception may also be associated to this social media being a tool of powerful impact in the behavior of the tourism consumer, according to Song & Yoo (2016) and Litvin et al. (2018).

The results meet what is highlighted in the literature by Souza & Machado (2017), who propose measuring the use and the influence of the social media during the process of planning touristic trips, as well as the level of confidence attributed to tourists to such online tools and, such answers appeared only from

the online experience. From such experience will either occur or not the positive or negative impact of the image. It also corroborates with the findings of Chu & Kim (2011) on the reliability of the information on social media.

4.3 Online experience related to the image of the tourism destination

From the online experience the verification of the hypothesis 1 was performed, evaluating the impact of such experience on Instagram on the formation of the destination's image. Measures were adopted before and after the exposure of the participants in the research regarding the image of the Chapada dos Veadeiros – GO, as described in the method. The comparative result from such indicator was described in table 5, which shows the test of the paired samples accomplished, the average, the standard deviation before and after the experiment performed.

Table 5

Attractiveness of the image of the Chapada dos Veadeiros (GO)

	T	Sign		Average	Standard Deviation
From 1 to 10, how attractive is the image of the Chapada dos Veadeiros as a tourism destination?	11.210	0.000	Before	6.27	3.062
	77.097	0.000	After	9.73	0.691

As it is possible to recognize through table 4, a change in the average of the perceived attractiveness of the image occurred from 6.27 before to 9.73 after the fulfillment of the experiment. This leads to the strengthening of the idea that the online experience influenced in a positive form the image of the destination, leading to the confirmation of the hypothesis 1. Such result resembles the ones obtained by Carvalho et al. (2016) with an addendum that

the authors searched websites and not social media, which leads to believe that the positive online experience in different media may positively impact the image of the tourism destination, emphasizing the importance of diverse marketing strategies.

The study developed by Chagas (2011) had also presented similar results from the ones of Carvalho et al. (2016) pointing out relevance of the online experience to the choice of the destination by the traveler, both on websites. In the same way that the study of Silva & Mendes-Filho (2023), the former focused on digital influencers. Despite the studies having different cuts, such findings indicate the multiplicity of media and tools which influence the image of the destination, among them, Instagram.

The results still reinforce the findings of Shuqair & Cragg (2017) who also performed an experimental study with Instagram, which means, even regarding a different destination it was verified that the impact of the use of the tool Instagram on the destination's image was positive. In such sense, the social media work as an essential tool for disclosure and attraction of new tourists, strengthening, therefore, the statement performed in the present research, which shows specifically the strength of the social media Instagram for the formation of the image.

4.4 Online experience and use of the tools of Instagram

With the purpose of identifying what types of tools from Instagram show greater impact on the perception of the destination's image, the subjects were exposed to questions on the pre-research to evaluate the use of such tools prior to the experiment. The results are shown in table 6.

Table 6

Use of Instagram to get to know destinations (pre-experiment)

		Frequency
Use of Instagram to get to know destinations	Yes	22
	No	8
Use of the tool "Accounts"	Yes	24
	No	6
Use of the tool "Tags"	Yes	18
	No	12
Use of the tool "Locations"	Yes	18
	No	12

As it can be observed in table 5, the majority of the subjects already used Instagram to get to know new destinations, which means, somehow, they already used the tools that the social media presents. However, before the experiment, the tool mentioned as the most used for research was "accounts", meanwhile "tags" and "locations" were the least accessed. After the experiment, such scenario changes according to what is presented in table 7, and the option "tags" was perceived as the one with greater influence for the perception of the image of the location. This way, the results on the ways to use the tools of Instagram bring an extra aspect when compared to other studies, such as the one from Shuqair & Cragg (2017).

Table 7

Use of Instagram to get to know destinations (post-experiment)

	Average	Standard Deviation
With the experience of research on Instagram, I intend to use Instagram to get to know tourism destinations and to plan trips	6.70	0.535
Level of influence of the tool "Accounts" on the perception of image	8.63	1.52
Level of influence of the tool "Tags" on the perception of image	9.57	0.774
Level of influence of the tool "Locations" on the perception of image	8.10	2.28

The tool "tags" presents all the post that were made quoting a specific word preceded by "#", in case #chapadadosveadeiros, which includes posts not only from the official accounts, but also from tourists who visited the location and published photos from it, this meets what it presented in the literature on the higher reliability of information put by ordinary people on social media and of the strength of the CGU (Bolaños et al., 2012; Chu & Kim, 2011; Silva et al., 2021) and or high credibility influencers (Silva & Mendes-Filho, 2023). Such result is interesting from the management point of view on the way of disclosure of the location on Instagram through the incentive of using tags on the posts.

Fatanti & Suyadnya (2015) highlight that, the forms of shared experience or of interaction among the users on Instagram, Twitter and Facebook are different, including interactions, as likes, comments or even including hashtags. They also highlight that the DMOs should question the value of their own marketing channels and social media, meanwhile other channels may be more effective to improve the destination's image. The results that indicate the differentiation of the use of the tools are very important in the process of image management, since they optimize such process. Such finding brings another contribution regarding the work of Shuqair & Cragg (2017) who did not specifically analyzed Instagram.

In the post-test the users analyzed the statement "with the experience of the research on Instagram, I intend to use it to get to kow tourism destinations and to plan trips" in a scale of agreement from 1 to 7. Just as they classified the level of influence of the type of post, the tools described in their perception on the image of the destination from 1 to 10.

By the findings, it is observed that (1) the online experience on Instagram has been positive with an average of 6.70; (2) The tool accounts has a lower average than expected after the experiment showing that there has been alteration in the subjects' opinion regarding the tools used during the

experiment; (3) The tags was the tool which most influenced the perception of the image being the only to present average above 9; (4) The tool "location" was the least influential on the navigation for the perception of the image, presenting the lowest result.

Hence, the hypothesis 2 was reached once that the tools were perceived as positive influencers of the image of the researched destination, but in a different way one from the others. The results ratify the importance of Instagram on the formation of image, specifying that the tool tag had the higher average of usage in the free navigation during the experiment.

4.5 Online experience and the intention to visit the tourism destination

The verification of the Hypothesis 3, encompassed the online experience on Instagram regarding the intention to visit a destination. The variables adopted were analyzed before and after the exposure of the individuals to the referred social media. The results obtained with the test of paired samples are found described in Table 8, as well as the average and the standard deviation before and after the experience of navigation on Instagram.

Table 8

Influence of the online experience on the intention to visit the Chapada dos Veadeiros (GO)

	t	Sign		Average	Standard Deviation
I would consider to go to the Chapada dos Veadeiros on my next trip	9.415	0.000	Before	3.60	2.094
	50.574	0.000	After	6.63	0.718
There is a strong possibility to go to the Chapada dos Veadeiros	9.961	0.000	Before	3.43	1.888
	55.251	0.000	After	6.67	0.661
	10.471	0.000	Before	3.90	2.040

I will visit the Chapada dos Veadeiros in the future	54.591	0.000	After	6.77	0.679
I do not wish to visit the Chapada dos Veadeiros	7.978	0.000	Before	3.27	2.243
	5.582	0.000	After	1.43	1.406

It is understood based on the table that the three variables presented significant elevation in their averages, proving what was proposed by hypothesis 3 that the intention of visitation of the researched destination was positively influenced by the online experience on Instagram. Dias (2016) in such conjunction exposes that the online experience directly impacts the tourist's opinion, making the tourist want or not to visit a certain location. Through the social media, the traveler may interact with the location and the culture that wishes to get to know, constructing images, and the experiences that may or may not wish to live in practice depending on the online expression that one has of the destination.

The confirmation of the hypothesis from this study leads to the perception of the influence of social media on the image and on the intention to visit a certain destination (Fatanti & Suyadnya, 2015; Lam et al., 2020; Shuqair & Cragg, 2017). Considering that the literature of the image of the destination emphasizes that the image in an important aspect of the decision to visit, the experiment has shown that the online experience has generated a positive image, just as a positive intention.

The qualitative analyzed elements have also corroborated with the quantitative findings, once the participants were questioned in a subjective form on the modification referring to the researched image of the destination from the experience of navigation on Instagram. The results were positive according to some highlighted parts below, accompanied by other findings such as the ones by Molinillo & Liébana-Cabanillas (2018), Fatanti & Suyadnya (2015), Lam et al. (2020) and Shuqair & Cragg. (2017):

- "A place of extreme contact with the nature exhales calmness, full of waterfalls, rocks and trails."
- "A true paradise. It should be on the best destinations in Brazil."
- "A place filled with natural beauties and that deserves to be known."
- "A place of piece, relaxing, with beautiful landscapes, which bring lots of reflections. The wish to go is 1000%."

The same way the parts below corroborate with the idea that the navigation has contributed to show the respondents the utility of Instagram to get to know destinations.

- "The experience was worthwhile from now on I will use Instagram always to research tourism destinations."
- "After the research on Instagram, I could realize that Chapada dos Veadeiros is one of the most fascinating destinations in Brazil, which great part of the population does not have knowledge… now I will include this path in my next trips and I will use Instagram to research trips."

The qualitative aspects adjourned in the questionnaire by the open questions, confirmed the information referring to the destination contribute positively to the formation of the image that those who do not know the location with highlight to the category nature being the most related to the image of the destination in question. It was verified that the online experience on Instagram was positive and had positive impact both on the pre-existing image from the participants as well as on the intention to visit.

5 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The results obtained in the present study show that the positive experience from the potential consumers submitted to the experiment with Instagram was a factor that influenced on the formation of the image and consequently intention to visit regarding the researched tourism destination. Once that the research resulted from an experimental study it was concluded that such influence was due to a greater knowledge of the tourism attractions that the destination offers and due to the offered possibilities of leisure disclosed organically and intentionally on the researched social media, once that the experience of navigation was free.

It has became evident that the show texts and the photos are able to produce mental associations responsible for the formation of the image of the researched tourism destination, emphasizing that a well-developed digital strategy is an important marketing tool. Therefore, the obtained results in the performance of this research point out to the use of the social media Instagram in the planning and organization of trips, and the importance of a pleasant online experience be created.

The developed pre-experimental study is different from previous studies already performed regarding such theme, for example, the ones developed by authors such as Dias (2016); Rafael & Almeida (2017); Shuqair & Cragg (2017), Rodrigues & Brito (2019), once it is not limited to evaluate the influence of social media on planning of trips, extending itself to the formation of the image of tourism destinations, the online experience of the consumers, observing tools used in the navigation and also in the intention to visit.

Under a management aspect, by dealing with the perception of the users regarding the online experience, this study consists on an important tool for data formation, able to contribute to professionals in the area, regarding the use of Instagram to promote a destination. The use of hashtags for example, is an important aspect about tourism destinations in such media. The analysis of the most used tools and that have impact on the formation of the image by

the participants of the experiment brings important contribution in the sense of promotional efforts focused on the use of such tools for generating content by the user.

In addition, the knowledge of the destination and the improvement from the experience with the destination by the use of Instagram through free navigation, which means, not a navigation that did not include a specific account shows the importance of monitoring of this social media by managers of destinations in a broad form and not only through the official accounts.

It was verified that, an online experience has the ability to become a more tangible tourism destination to people and to improve the image that the consumers have regarding it. In face of this, it is inferred that the problem and the purpose of this study have been reached, since it was possible to notice the influence of the digital marketing through Instagram on the formation of an image of a tourism destination and on the intention to visit.

It is pointed out as limitation to its development the composition of the sample only the graduation students which leads to a similar profile of the interviewed. The reduced size of the sample is also a limiting factor, making the findings specific for the researched sample. Another limitatino regards the control of the experiment, being a pre-experimental study there is no use of randomization to control extrinsic factors. Research restricted to a social media may also present a limitation, once there are others that should be researched. Therefore, it is suggested the performance of future studies with bigger and more diverse samples regarding the reached public reaching just as the image relations with the digital media with other factors few studied in such scope as for example the hospitality.

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