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Tourist Destination Image in the New Technological Environments: Dialogism under the Public Relations Gaze

Luísa Augusto[1*] **and Maria João Silveirinha**[2*]

Abstract

The dependence and influence of new media on social and organizational life have led to a new orientation of the communicational practices of organizations and to a research paradigm shift to a cocriational model within public relations theory. This model is based on dialogic rhetoric and dialogue that requires a joint production of content and meanings by organizations and publics, which have a central role in shaping image. The new social and communicational paradigms have also an impact on tourism research, implying the need to understand the role of new technologies, particularly websites, in image formation. The purpose of this study is to investigate the role of website in the formation of a tourist destination image (Portugal) through the understanding of the degree of adoption of dialogical principles on websites by official and unofficial tourist organizations and the identifying of denotative and connotative elements that are represented on published and shared photographs in these websites. The research corpus consisted of websites of entities and photographs published and shared on these websites. The methodology used is quantitative and qualitative, based on content analysis of data of websites and photographs. Results indicate that official tourist entities adopted the dialogic principles in a higher degree than unofficials. There is also a higher adoption of the principles related to technical dimension than dialogical dimension. Results confirm a relation between the adoption of dialogical link and an increased openness by entities to the possibility of photo sharing. The analysis of denotative and connotative elements of photography reflects a similarity in representations of entities and tourists. This study contributes to both theoretical perspectives, because it provides a conceptual scheme of destination image formation online and to a practical perspective, because it also suggests guidelines of dialogical practices to incorporate in websites of tourism entities.

Keywords

Website; Public relations; Dialogue; Photography; Destination image

*Corresponding author: Luísa Augusto, Adjunct, Professor Envited, Department of Communication and Art, Viseu, School of Education of Polytechnic Institute of Viseu, Portugal, Tel:+00351925894094; E-mail: Laugusto@Esev.Ipv.Pt

Maria JoãoSilveirinha, Associate Professor, Departmentof Philosophy, Communication and Information, Faculty of Letters, University of Coimbra, Portugal, Tel: +351232480500; E-mail: Mjsilveirinha@Sapo.Pt

Introduction

Image and the imaginative mobility are key elements in various sectors of activity, but in tourism these elements gain a crucial importance, due to the intangibility of the tourist experience. For several authors, the image is considered as important as reality [1]. Imaginary process provides the possibility of anticipation of experience and new media are the key agents. Crouch et al. [2], add that the representations of media interfere with the meaning of places, making them more or less important. It is, therefore, important to jointly study tourism and media [2]. It is also recognized that the production of meanings and image is the true essence of public relations [3], so, it is interesting to focus the attention on the understanding of the role of digital media, particularly of websites, to destination image formation under the public relations gaze. New media brings a new social reality, influencing the information search social trends which online media are the most selected. According to data of Statista [4], the total number of Internet users in the world (2000-2015) increased from 1.02 billion in 2000 to 3.17 billion in 2015. In Portugal, according to the results of the "Survey on the Use of Information and Communication Technologies by Families" [5], 63% of Portuguese families have internet connection at home. 65% of people aged between 16 and 74 years accessing the Internet and 57% of those contacted with official entities through internet for information search on the websites. Photographs are the type files more shared in internet (85%). According to the statistical data for the survey of satisfaction tourists conducted by Intercampus [6], the internet is the key driver to decide to holiday in Portugal (32%). The social and organizational communication trends justify the need of understanding new media. Thus, new media has sparked the interest of a considerable number of researchers of various areas of knowledge, giving rise to interdisciplinary research, on sociology, media, tourism, communication and public relations. Researches in public relations about the web environment are vast. It should here be noted the study about the use of websites of Hallahan [7], Kang and Norton [8] and the use of social media effectively of Capriotti and Moreno [9], Theaker [10], Howell [11], Sanders [12], Smith [13], Nowicka [14], Griffiths [15], McMichael [16], Wilson [17], Lacey [18], Appleby [19], Tyte [20], Waddington [21], Bruce [22], Brown [23], Goldsmith [24], Parker [25], Romo [26], Sheldrake [27], Bagnall [28], Bhurji [29], Bailey [30], Miller [31], Pack [32], Bruce [33] and Collister [34]. Within the framework of research about the analysis of the interaction and relationship, it can be highlighted the work of Jo and Kim [35], Bo-seob, Hyun-ji and Sang-pil [36], Yang and Lim [37], Lee and Park [38].

The development of new media brings deep consequences to communication practices of organizations and led to a paradigm shift within public relations domain for a cocriacional model that values the dialogic rhetoric and dialogue. The rhetoric aims to understand how organizations, through verbal and visual narratives, are expressed [39], build messages and influence the production of sense and meaning and consequently the formation of images [3]. Dialogue presupposes a symmetry and bidirectionality in communication. Kent and Taylor [40,41] have developed an important work to understand the dialogue on web. According the authors, dialogue involves five dialogical functions to create a mediated relationship

with publics and is a conditioner of the joint production of sense: usefulness of information, ease of interface, dialogic link, return visits and visitors conservation [40,41]. The study of dialogue and dialogical relations on web of Kent and Taylor [40] served as basis for developing a series of studies and dialogical research has gain a higher visibility and recognition in public relations domain in the last fifteen years [40,42-50]. It is worth highlighting the research on how the dialogue or the functions and dialogical principles can be used in websites by activist organizations [41,51-54], in websites by events organizations, like Congress [55], by educational institutions [56,57], by transitional economies [58], by public sector enterprises [59] and non-profit organizations [60].

This line of research linking the dialogic model of public relations to the online environment, that understand "publics as co-creators of meaning and emphasizes the building of relationship with all stakeholders" [61], is understood as one of the investigation lines more relevant [41] and the development of more research is important [40,43].

The tourism studies have known a change too, following new paths. It is recognized in tourism studies about the dominant characteristics of a new era, that it is an era of transformation of the principles of modernity, in the organization of places, tangible and intangible spaces, and especially of the image production through new technologies and, particularly, through internet. The destination image formation has been the subject of much research, although it is still the themes least studied in tourism research [62-67]. In research about tourist destination image is important to highlight the contributions of Font [68], Sternberg [69], Baloglu and McCleary [70], Pike [63], Gallarza, Saura and Garcia [1], Echtner and Ritchie [70], Beerli and Martin [65], Tasci and Kozak [71,72], Govers, Go and Kumar [67,73], Tasci and Gartner [74], Tasci, Gartner and Cavusgil [75], Stepchenkova, Kirilenko and Morrison [76]. Within studies about dimensions and perception of destinaton image it is relevant to highlight the work of Gartner [77], Selby and Morgan [78], Jenkins [62], Pike and Ryan [79], Prentice [80], Ryan and Cave [81], Ekinci and Hosany [82], Chen and Tsai [83], Lin and Huang [84], Kim, McKercher and Lee [85], Pan and Li [86], Jeong, Holland, Jun and Gibson [87]. In Portugal, some studies have been developed such as the work of Kastenholz [88], Santos [89] and Silva [90], which brings us an important contribution to the understanding of the complex concept of destination image. The development of media, the possibility of mediated experience and its meaning have gain relevance to tourists, influencing their behavior. For this reason, research about projected image through media has been developed. It must be referred the contributions of Mackay and Fesenmaier [91], Govers and Go [92-94], Hellemans and Govers [95], Mercille [96], Hashim, Murphy and Hashim [97], Choi, Lehto and Morrison [98], Stepchenkova and Eales [99], Hunter [100,101], Marine-Roig [102], Milman [103-104], Michaelidou, Siagmagka, Moraes and Micevski [105].

Understand destination image production can not be explained through a single discipline, but requires an interdisciplinary combination of theoretical axes. It's also important the development of research that combines public relations, image and tourism, which although it has already been the subject of some investigation, is still scarce, requiring deepening and widening [98,106,107], so our study is a contribution. In public relations research, it has been not identified any study about technological environment, dialogism, including the visual dimension, the photography, and destination image. These assumptions associated with research suggestions

proposed by several authors justify our research option. This article aimed to analyze the role of digital media, website, in the tourist destination image projection. This is an interdisciplinary study that links research in various areas of knowledge - communication, public relations, information technology and communication and sociology of tourism. Thus, image projection of destinations, based on the role of the new media, is understood, from the perspective of public relations, from the theoretical basis of the cocriacional paradigm, which includes the dialogical and rhetorical perspectives. This study proposes an online image formation scheme, with the aim of its empirical application. To better understand the role of websites and dialogism on the formation of a holistic destination image, is particularly important to understand the degree of adoption of dialogical principles on websites by organizations and to examine the dialogic production of destination image.

Literature Review

Medium theory and technological and social mediation tell that the media affect the access to information [108-112] and change the forms of integration and interaction [110,112]. In this post-modern era, new media bring deep changes to communication, because it allows new forms of interactivity, participation and dialogue between organizations and publics [40,113-115]. New media emerge as a place of representation, game, mediation of experience, but also as a place for meeting, sharing and dialogue, conditioning imaginary production. In this context, emerged a new mediated communication model that requires an openness to dialogue and the involvement of public and organizations in a joint production of meanings and images, through the narratives [116], the dissemination of texts and photographs and the ease of sharing messages and meanings. Rhetoric, considered the predominant approach to explain practices of public relations, associated to dialogism, serves the research of public relations on web. Dialogue marked the tendency of public relations research and rhetoric, giving it a more humanistic character, because it values the contribution of organization and publics in interaction [116]. In communication research, Pearson was one of the first authors to associate the dialog to public relations theory [42,43,55,56]. But, it must be highlighted the work of Kent and Taylor [40], developed since 1998, because it is a significant contribution to the conceptualization of a dialogical perspective. For them, it is important to develop the dialogical communication based on the adoption of five dialogical principles: usefulness of information, related to useful visual and verbal contents; ease of interface that involves intuitive navigation and ease download; dialogic link which presupposes feedback resources; return visits and visitors conservation, that are associated and dependent of the other principles [113,114]. Plus these characteristics, in 2001, Kent [114] adds some principles of dialogic rhetoric: the prevalence of multimedia capabilities, design and the visual dimension, the photography. The theoretical perspectives associated with sociology of tourism, that understand the tourist movement and the new cultural "post-modern" paradigm, led to know that the development of technological means, the internet, emerged as a strong booster of the current trends of tourism and "post-tourism". These trends are characterized by the hegemony of the visual dimension and more specifically by the mobility not only physical, but also virtual and imaginative [117,118], guiding the attention to imaginative mobility, especially to the destination image formation. The research on destination image is relatively recent, because only from the 70s and especially in the 90s, the problem began to arouse interest to academy and to the tourism industry itself, although the authors recognize the

need to a deeper research, given its complexity [1,70,74,75,119,120]. The process of destination image formation is complex, because it involves many aspects [67] and it is theoretically supported on a set of models that highlight the role of information sources and means of communication, as exemplified by the work of Gunn [65,113] Govers and Go, Gartner and Tasci. With the development of internet, the formation process of destination image takes new shapes and new dimensions, so, it is necessary to rethink the process and the role of this source of information, which justify a shift in the study of the image formation, highlighting the technological mean [93,98,106]. The new media, particularly internet, has intensified the mobility of textual and visual narratives, including photographs [121]. Within a semiotic and rhetorical perspective, photography represents a real existence and is full of denotative and connotative meanings [122], conveying always a message [123]. For this reason, the authors acknowledge that photography is closely linked to the representation of the tourism experience, to the way that entities want to represent this experience and to the tourist gaze and the way he observes and experiences the destination [117,118]. So, photography is a strong conditioner of destination image formation. The work of Jenkins [64] is relevant to explain the destination image formation process using photography. This author adopts the idea of the "hermeneutic circle" of John Urry [118,119] and speaks about "representation circle" closely related to the circulation and reproduction of photographs and meanings, not only of the organizations, but also of tourists. Photographs of tourists represent, in effect, his way of looking at destination, providing the tourist gaze [117], whose function is to inform the image of the destination and enhance the message created by tourism entities [124,125]. This perspective explains that photographs of tourists have gained strength in the destination image formation and that this model applies to the conceptual model of this study. The emphasis on research about photographic messages and destination image has been deepened in the last decade of the twentieth century and early twenty-first century. It can be highlighted studies of MacKay and Fesenmaier [91], Jenkins [64], Couldwell and Mackay [126], Choi [98], Dewar, Li and Davis [127], Hellemans and Govers [95], Goversand Go [93], Garrod [125], Govers and Go [94], Santillán [128], Hunter [101,102], Milman [104,105], Michaelidou, Siamagka, Moraes and Micevsi [106]. But this research is still relatively scarce, pointing to the need to develop more research [91,125]. The new lines of tourism studies are linked to media and communication research, involving new methods of research using the analysis of interactive features, interaction forms and visual and textual elements, in particular the photographs, on the web. Thus, this study reinforces the lines of interpretation of dialogic principles contained in dialogical theory as theoretical axis of public relations, as well as the "representation circle" inherent in the destination image formation process through photography. It provides, however, a different interpretation of the explanations developed in other studies about dialogical perspective, because, here, the objective is to study the medium theory, dialogism and image in new context: the tourist destination, gathering a set of interlinked dimensions: dialogue and dialogic rhetoric associated with visual element, particularly photography, which is the largest scientific implication of this study.

Conceptual Model

To answer the main question of this study - what is the role of digital media in the tourist destination image formation? - the analysis was based on the study of dialogical capacity, understood as the adoption of a set of dialogical principles proposed by Kent and

Taylor [40]. The understanding of dialogism involved the study of information dissemination and the dialogic interactions between organizations and publics, particularly, through the sharing of visual content, influencing the image of organizations and destination, which leads to propose the following assumption for this study:

The websites of destinations organizations, through the use of dialogic communication functions, can design a holistic destination image, because it establishes communicative horizons shared between senders and message receivers.

So, this study presents a conceptual scheme of the role of the website in a holistic destination image formation. It is important to know the propensity for the adoption of dialogical principles, particularly related to the dissemination and sharing of photographic messages by entities and tourists, that it is positively related with the formation of a holistic destination image. The model presented below aims to identify the variables under study and understand the relationship between them. According to this model, empirical research was intended to answer to five questions and four hypotheses. From the perspective of public relations, dialogue and dialogic rhetoric, boosters of bidirectionality and symmetry of communication and close relationship between the organization and publics, emerge as core elements for the joint production of meaning, which is the real essence of public relations [3] and it is also fundamental for the creation of a destination image. In this context, Kent and Taylor [40,41] propose five principles of a more ethical and dialogical communication between organizations and publics. So, it was important understand if the destination entities adopted these dialogic principles and whether there were differences between them with regard to the adoption of these principles.

Question 1: To what extent destination entities adopt the dialogical principles?

H1. There are differences in the degree of adoption of dialogical principles on websites between official and unofficial entities.

Most studies indicate that there are differences in the use of dialogical principles. In their works about the adoption of dialogical principles, Taylor, Kent and White [41,55], Reber and Kim [52], McAllister and Taylor [48], Ingenhoff and Koelling [60] and McAllister Spooner and Kent [49] concluded that there is a variation in the use of dialogic principles and the different entities studied do not use their full dialogic capacity, using more the dialogic principles related to technical dimension. So, the second question and hypotheses were:

Question 2: How dialogical principles are used on the websites of the entities?

H2. There is variation in its adoption.

The new rhetoric of web, also dialogic [41,114], confers an important role to multimedia elements, visual dimension and, in particular, photographs. Buhalis and Law [129] and Pettersson [130] add that photography plays a central role in attracting, creating interest and generating information. This is particularly important when the website offers the possibility of sharing photos and photographic messages by publics. It was relevant understand if the destination entities are open to the possibility of sharing photos and to see if there is a relationship between its dialogic capacity and sharing photos, which led to formulate a third question and hypothesis:

Question 3: What is the relationship between the adoption of dialogical principles and the possibility of sharing photographic tourist messages on the websites of the entities?

H3. Greater adoption of dialogic principles increases the opening of the entity to the possibility of photo sharing.

The study of dialogic production of shared meanings in websites can be done by analyzing the motifs and themes of photographs disseminated by entities and the photographs that are shared by tourists in these websites. It was defined the fourth question and hypothesis:

Question 4: What themes and motifs are represented on the one hand, on the photographs disseminated by entities on their websites and on the other hand, by tourists who put them on the same support?

H4: There are coincidence of themes and motifs depicted in the photographs.

The visual dimension denotes their motives, but connotes them also with dimensions of meaning that often make emotional appeals and mobilize imaginary. This broughts the fifth and final question:
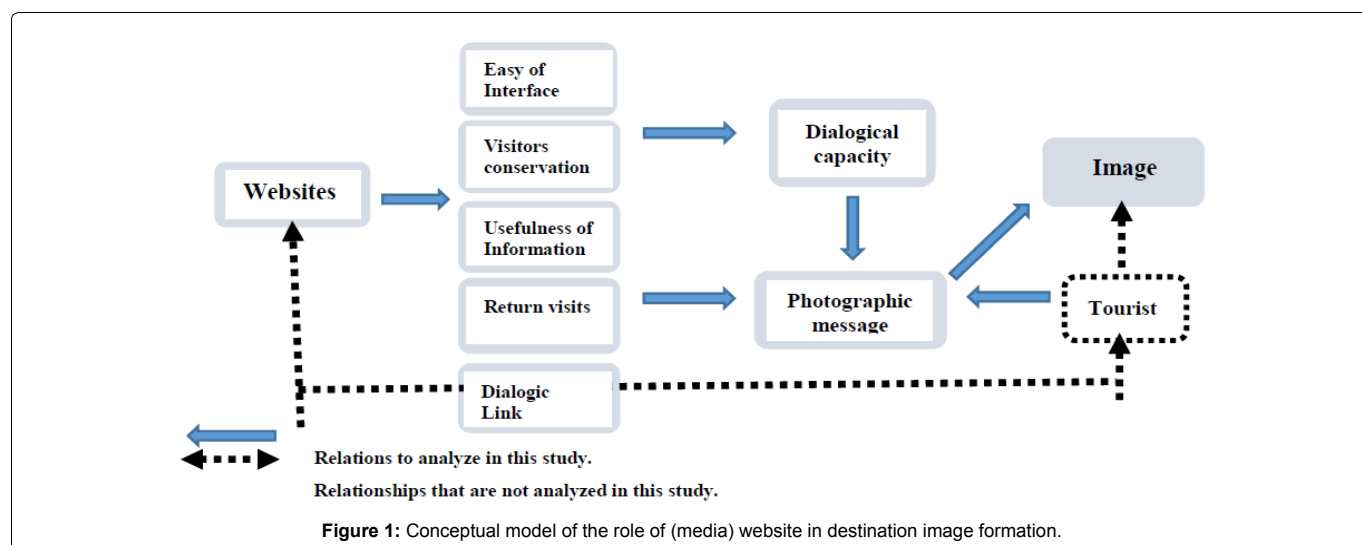
Question 5: What imaginative connotations can be found in the images dialogically built?

This study suggested a relationship between the variables under study: dialogical principles, photographic messages and destination image (Figure 1). The variable dialogical principles (dialocigal capacity) was defined and operationalized in five interconnected and interdependent functions: usefulness of information, ease of interface, dialogic link, return visits and visitors conservation [40,41]. The variable photographic message was about predominant motifs, contexts and themes represented in photographs, accordingly with the conceptualization of photography of Van Dijk [124] that defines it as a visual language that conveys messages, and of MacKay and Fesenmaier [91] which state that photograph communicates in nonverbally manner the "attributes, features, concepts, values and ideas", through the motifs, contexts and themes represented. Destination image variable was analyzed as a result of joint production by entities and tourists, through the analysis of the projected image by photographs disseminated by entities on their websites and of the perceived image that can be given by experiential photos shared by tourists, representing the meaning that the touristic experience had for him. In this sense, the concept of destination image that best fits to this study was the concept defined by Echtner and Ritchie [119,120] who say that image involves three pairs of components: a holistic component/attributes based on an overall impression and a perception of the attributes of a functional component / psychological, based on tangible and intangible characteristics, and a single/common component, based on attributes and differentiating features.

Methodology

The data collection methodology used was content analysis. The content analysis appeared in 1920, but had a stronger application since the World War II, in a serious of research areas, as political science, psychology and communication and later in tourism studies (although with less projection). With the emerging new media, especially with the internet, content analysis knews a strong growth [76], because it may refer to verbal and visual elements, words and images, with a view to understanding itsmeaning [131]. Attentive to the development of the emerging new media and to the diversity and complexity of contents to analyse, Herring [132] proposes an expanded web content analysis, "WebCA", which receives contributions from other methodological paradigms and uses tools of qualitative and quantitative analysis. Jenkins [62], Kastenholz [88] and Echtner and Ritchie [71] proposes a joint use of unstructured and structured methodology based on quantitative and qualitative analysis, allowing a holistic analysis of destination image. So, this study was based on a quantitative and qualitative methodology. Thus, the empirical research was divided in two parts. The first part consisted in a quantitative analysis concerns to the understanding of the dialogical capacity of the entities to ascertain the degree of adoption of dialogical principles on websites by entities of tourist destination (question 1, 2 and 3). The second part analyzed the joint and dialogic production of meanings and image by analyzing the photos disseminated by entities and shared by tourists on the websites of these entities. This second part of the analysis was divided into two stages: the first, a quantitative analysis, concerned to the identification of denotative elements, themes and motifs, founded in the photographs produced by the entities and shared by tourists (question 4); the second moment, of qualitative analysis, was an examination of the connotative elements of a small number of photographs (question 5).

Figure 1: Conceptual model of the role of (media) website in destination image formation.

To the first part of empirical research, the research corpus consisted on 28 websites of official entities (OE) and 25 websites of unofficial entities (NOE), a total of 53 units of analysis. These units were the components that defined the sample and variables [133]. Sample was selected from a stratified mode, because the sample selection was based on this criteria: websites of the entities and photos with interest to the study [131,133], because the formation of Portugal image depends on the promotion efforts, dissemination and communication of public-private touristic organizations. According to legislation, tourism "requires the involvement, mobilization and accountability of all public and private entities" [134,135]. Decree-Law number 33/2013, of 16th May, states that the regional tourism entities have as one of the tasks: "to organize and disseminate tourist information, keeping or managing a network of tourist offices and tourist information portals" (point e) of number 2 of article 5 of Decree-Law number 33/2013, p. 2912. In this sense, it seemed relevant and of great interest to analyze the websites of the central, regional and local entities, official and unofficial ones of Portugal destination. Contact with Turismo de Portugal allowed to realize that there isn't a list of all official and unofficial destination entities. There is only a list with all the entities and associations of the various sectors of activities destination in theconstruction of list was based on an online search of the websites of the destination entities that have as a function the communication of the destination. The research allowed in finding 28 websites of official tourism entities that were active. This list not included the websites of entities linked to the municipal councils, the tourism products and entities of other sector (accomodation, catering, transports,...). In addition to these, other websites of unofficial entities have been identified through a Google search using the words "Douro tourism", "visit Douro" (...) for all subcategories: district towns and regional and local areas, having been selected the websites that came up on Google's first page (25 unofficial websites). Websites of tourism products and construction sites were not considered.

For the second part of the empirical research, the universe consisted of all the photos disseminated and shared on the websites of the destination entities that enable such sharing by tourists. The pre-test of the application of analysis grid of dialogical principles had identified the websites that have photos shared by tourists. As the study was about Portugal destination image, two national websites were selected: official (www.visitportugal.com) and unofficial (www.portugal-live.net). Then, all the photos presented on the homepage and three links similar on both sites were chosen: "Portugal", "Regions" / "Photos" of the regions, "Things to Do", accordingly to the method used by Govers and Go [93] and Hellemans and Govers [95] in their studies. Photos with written phrases or words, pictures that represent banners, advertising, homepage background, magazine covers, postcards and videos were excluded. From a total of 811 photographs in two websites, 351 were repeated. So the analysis focused on 460 photos: 352 published by the entities and 108 shared by tourists. For the second moment, of qualitative analysis, the units of analysis were selected from the photographs that showed greater coincidence and combined motifs and contexts between entities / tourists, following here the need, in qualitative analysis, to center the attention on "detailed case studies of relatively few images" [96]. This second moment was focused on a small number of photographs, 23 photographs, 13 of official entity and 10 of unofficial entity, 13 of entities and 10 of tourists. For the collection of data for the analysis of the adoption of dialogical principles by entities it was applied an analysis grid with 59 indicators: usefulness of information (25 indicators), ease of interface (9 indicators), dialogic link (12

indicators), return visits (10 indicators) and visitors conservation (3 indicators). This grid was based on existing codification schemes: the five dialogical principles proposed by Kent and Taylor [40], also treated by Kent, Taylor and White [41], Kent and Taylor [55], McAllister-Spooner and Kent [49], McAllister- Spooner [57], with the contributions of the new rhetoric of Kent [114,115] and indicators used by Li and Wang. The homepage and all pages with the same URL for each website were analyzed, like the study of Ingenhoff and Koelling [60]. Each item was scored with 0 "not present" or 1 "present." After data collection, it was proceededfor the quantitative analysis, with a statistical treatment through descriptive analysis procedures, including the frequency distribution, measures of central tendency, association measures, non-parametric testing. The non-parametric tests are advised when we don´t know the exact distribution of the population and when the sample is small. The Mann-Whitney test lets to compare two groups, even though they don´t have the same dimension, as well as evaluate the significance of the difference found between the two groups: OE websites and NOE websites, for each one of the dialogical principles. For the quantitative analysis of photographs, it was created a coding scheme using the visual method of Hunter [102], which is incident in the collection of visual data, the selection of visual data, the generation of classes and identification of denotative and connotative elements. Thus, the collection of data for the analysis of photographs was divided into two stages: first, quantitative analysis and a second stage of qualitative analysis. The variable photographic message was analyzed by denotative elements represented in the photographs of entities and tourists, based on the identification of motifs, objects and contexts, as well as the presence or absence of the human element. Like the studies of Govers and Go [93], Hellemans and Govers [95] and Volo [135], the motifs (objects) and the themes of the photographs were analized, based on three sequenced classes: identify the objects represented; analyze the combination of objects (objects that appear together); analyze the surrounding context. The data were recorded in Excel through two dichotomous variables presence or absence of registration issues (0 = absent, 1 = present). Then, they were exported to SPSS, where they were treated statistically. The frequency registration and association analysis have identified the motifs, context and prevailing themes of the photographs. In the second moment of analysis, a qualitative analysis, the symbolic messages were studied, messages underlined in representations of photographs of entities and feelings and emotions about the destination of tourists manifested through their photographic representations, involving a content analysis with a semiotic basis, which was made with support of Nvivo program. Firts, objects and motifs represented in the photographs were identified and described in detail, involving the identification of functional and tangible attributes of the destination (attractions, accommodation facilities,..) and the destination icons. Then, it was proceeded to a subjective analysis of the objects and icons, based on the typology of representations of space and human presence from Hunter [136], authenticity stages of Cohen [137], typology of touristic experiences of Cohen [138] and typology of tourist gaze from Urry[118].

Results and Discussion

Research results are presenting and discussed in the following order: dialogic principles adoption by entities, variation in dialogical principles adoption, relationship between the adoption of dialogical principles and the possibility of sharing photographic tourist messages, themes and motifs represented on the photographs and imaginative connotations of photographs. The results indicated

that there were differences in the degree of adoption of dialogic principles and that the official entities adopted more the dialogic principles than unofficial. The official entities adopted more the principle of easy interface (0.865) and useful information (0.743) than unofficial (easy interface: 0.676 and useful information: 0.621). The dialogic link (OE: 0,310; NOE: 0,222) and the return visit (OE: 0,564; NOE: 0,316) were the least practiced (Table 1). The data also showed that there was a little significant difference with regard to visitors conservation on the page, with a median of 0.653 adoption of the websites of the unofficial entities and a median of 0.619 in the official ones. These results confirmed the first hypothesis. Entities adopted more dialogical principles related to easy of interface (OE: 0.865; NOE: 0.676), usefulness information (OE: 0.743; NOE: 0.621) and the visitors conservation (OE: 0.619; NOE: 0.653). The degree of adoption of the dialogic link (OE: 0.310; NOE: 0.222) and return visits (OE: 0.564; NOE: 0.316) were lower, and the less adopted by entities. It was realized that there was a greater adoption of dialogic principles related to the technical dimension than with the dialogical dimension like some studies identified. The data confirmed the second hypothesis related with the existence of variation in the adoption of dialogical principles.

After this, it was important to understand if entities were open to the possibility of sharing photos by tourists and if there was a relationship between their dialogical ability and the openness to sharing (third question). The results revealed that there were significant differences between the two groups only concerning to the dialogic link principle (that involve 12 indicators) by taking this higher values in the group of websites with photo sharing. The third hypothesis search was thus confirmed. Answering to the fourth question, it should be noted that the predominant motifs of photographs were places, the sea, the flora, the Portuguese coast and historic buildings. The results showed that: 27.75% of photographs of the website of official entity represented the sea, 26.50% represented the flora and 23.12% had the localities, towns or villages. In the analysis of 179 photographs of website of unofficial entities, the data reflected that 56.98% had localities, 36.31% represented the sea and 21.79% had historical buildings. 44.57% of 92 photos shared by tourists on the website of official entity had the sea, 39.13% had localities and 34.78% represented the flora of the destination. 62.5% of the 16 photos shared by tourists on the website of unofficial entity represented localities and 37.5% historical buildings (Table 2). These

data pointed to a predominance of themes and motifs associated with the sea, the flora and localities, cities or towns in photographs published on the website of official entity and a similarity of themes and motifs depicted in photographs shared by tourists. On website of unofficial entity the three predominant motifs in photographs were: locations, the sea and the historical buildings and coincided in some way with the representations of photographs shared by tourists, also related to locations and historical bulding (Table 3).

The results showed that the predominant context in photographs published by official entity and shared by tourists was the maritime scenario, followed by the cultural scenario. On the website of the unofficial organization, the sea landscape was mostly represented in photographs, followed by the urban scenario and cultural scenario. On photos shared by tourists at this website, the predominant context was the urban scenario, followed by the sea scenario and cultural. The association analysis of motifs and contexts showed that the associations of cultural landscape and sea, maritime scenario and historic building and urban landscape and sea were reasonable. The association of urban scenario and location, maritime scenario and flora and cultural scenario and historical building were also reasonable associations, albeit with higher coefficients than those referred in the previous associations. The association of maritime scenario and sea and the association of maritime scenario and coastline were reasonably strong. These results showed that there was a similarity in motives and contexts represented by the photographs of the entities and the photographs of tourists, either on the website of the official entity, whether on the website of unofficial entity (Table 4). The fourth hypothesis formulated was confirmed. To answer to fifth question, the connotations of photographic representations were interpreted. The interpretation of denotative and connotative meanings allowed to understand that photographs of entities represented the symbols and icons that they wanted to project. The photos of tourists represented the tourist gaze, what he liked or what he experienced at the destination, the perceived image and they were experiential photographs. The data confirmed two major types of representations: the natural and seascapes and the cities and heritage.

The results of qualitative analysis showed that the photographs of entities represented more objects than those of tourists, covering an extended overview of destination, with a greater distance of the scenario.

Table1: Adoption of dialogic principles entities.

Dialogical Principles	Entities				
	Non Official		Official		
	Median	Standard Deviation	Median	Standard Deviation	P (Mann-Whitney)
Usefulness Information	0.621	0.130	0.743	0.157	0.008
Dialogic Link	0.222	0.130	0.310	0.147	0.044
Easy Of Interface	0.676	0.154	0.865	0.119	<0.0005
Visitors Conservation	0.653	0.152	0.619	0.149	0.412
Return Visits	0.316	0.170	0.564	0.128	<0.0005

Table 2: Relationship between dialogic principles and sharing photos.

	Item 28 - Sharing (Photos)				
	Websites Without Sharing		*Websites* With Sharing		
	Median	Standard Deviation	Median	Standard Deviation	P (Mann-Whitney)
Usefulness Information	0.671	0.160	0.748	0.131	0.134
Dialogic Link	0.233	0.122	0.425	0.134	<0.0005
Easy Of Interface	0.770	0.169	0.800	0.155	0.674
Visitors Conservation	0.651	0.145	0.567	0.161	0.108
Return Visits	0.447	0.189	0.450	0.222	0.982

The photos of the tourists were more linked to the objects and what they actually had appreciated and liked to see in the destination, representing in a closer angle these same objects. On the photographs of entities, the representation of maritime scenario, sea appeared associated with other motifs and objects, flora, vegetation, plants, cultivated fields, with little transformation of natural, meaning the authentic nature, representing modes of experience looking for a natural environment, quiet to rest, but also to bring them a new meaning, as the experiential tourism defined by Cohen [138]. There were also photographs that represent recreated places, with evident tendency for the promotion of a new way to receive, which makes the place a "spectacle place" (Figure 2). In the representations of cities and heritage there were also an evident authenticity, being represented places of importance and historical and cultural interest, the history of destination (MacCannell [139], "places of memory", as stated by Holmes [140]. In photographs of entity, the destination icons were: historical buildings, cities, a wall of castle, cannon, a ship, a caravel, a bridge, a restored palace in contrast to urban landscapes of the city, the square and streets, the ferries, the marina and small boats (Figure 3).

Photos of tourists were taken in a closer angle. In photographs shared on the official website, tourists associated the sea to city, representing urban places, where it was clear the intervention of man. On photographs of tourists shared on the websites of unofficial entity were also evident some icons: historic buildings, historic squares, typical boats associated with port wine, which are unique, famous objects, but at the same time they represented specific and particular objects of destination, as the monument or the historic bridge. They also represented common objects, such as city water sources, cars, visitors and local people. Tourists had the same type of representation of entity, but their photos were closer and represented every detail and different signs that they had appreciated when visited destination. The data also indicated that tourists had appreciated the functional characteristics associated with the possibility of living and stay at destination, like security and easy access. It was also valued the way of recreational experience, where livid experience can be, as literature review says, an escape that allows recovering from the daily grind. Website determines the perceived image of tourist, by the symbolic expressions of the entities, the visual narratives that inform and seduce, but on the other hand, experiential photography brings additional symbolic information and reinforces the meanings represented in the photographs of entities, strengthening its message.

Conclusion

This study aimed to analyze the role of website in destination image formation. Research results demonstrated that organizations do not use dialogical capacity in a full and effective way, because, as other studies, entities had a higher adoption of dialogic principles related to a technical dimension. Websites of entities, through dialogic capacity, driven by dialogue, by the exchange and sharing between organizations and the tourists, can design the holistic destination image, because they involve a joint production of destination representations. Website determines the perceived image of tourist, but experiential photography brings additional symbolic information. The dialogical capacity of entities allows the dissemination of textual and visual information about destination, about the common attributes associated with destination icons that entities wanted to project, but it also enables the sharing of psychological attributes associated with feelings and emotions about the lived experience at destination by tourist. It is his tourist gaze. Michaelidou [106] argue that tourists "reinforce the visual representations", "co-criate the destination image" and reinforce the image projected by entities, "help to outline the holistic image of the destination". Thus, the dialogism allows a better understanding of the role of digital media, the website, on destination image formation process.

This study brings a contribution to the communication and public relations theory and has implications for the communication practices of organizations of tourist destinations. The main contribution to academy is related to the use of theories ever conceived - medium theory and dialogical theory - testing them in a context not studied yet: the tourism sector in Portugal. The use of a mixed empirical methodology, using a combination of different analysis types, a quantitative analysis and a qualitative analysis of connotative elements is also a contribution to public relations research. This research

Table 3: Frequency of Motifs.

Motifs (objects)	Entities n	Entities %
Location (city, town, street, small, square)	188	40.87
Sea (water cave, the deep sea, beach, rock pools)	155	33.70
Flora (plants tree, forest, garden)	120	26.09
Costa (inlet cliff faja)	94	20.43
Historic building (palace, theater, castle, University, Spa, Fort, Bridge, Monastery, Convent, ruins)	90	19.57
Water resources (river bank, estuary, lake, pond, waterfall)	77	16.74
Vessels (boat, sail, ship, marina)	63	13.70
Construction (bridge, mill, light house, aqueduct)	46	10.00
Natural High (Montes hill, Volcano)	32	6.96
Religious site (Church, Fatima shrine, synagogue, worship)	32	6.96

Figure 2 A & B: Extended overview of the destination.

Table 4: Frequency of Contexts in Websites of Official/Unofficial Entities

Contexts	Entities		Photos OE Websites		Photos of NOE Websites		Tourists Photos OE		Tourists Photos of NOE	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Sea scene	166	36.09	55	31.79	65	36.31	43	46.74	4	25
Scene of nature	70	15.22	40	23.72	15	8.38	14	15.22	1	6.25
Urban setting	92	20.00	22	12.72	61	34.08	4	4.35	5	31.25
Cultural scene	99	21.52	43	24.86	31	17.32	21	22.83	5	25
Rural setting	25	5.43	7	4.05	9	5.03	7	7.61	2	12.5

Figure 3: The representation of maritime scenery.

highlights the importance of increased dialogical capacity of entities linked to the promotion of touristic destination in order to involve tourists in the creation of imaginary process, suggesting a guideline of dialogic practices, proposing a set of indicators to be included on the websites of organizations. This study has limitations too. The first limitation is related to the difficulty in obtaining concrete information of the data of the entire population under study. The study of other destination entities linked to accommodation, entertainment, culture and local organizations could have solidified the study, so we leave here the suggestion of future research.

Acknowledgments

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Author Affiliation

[1]Polytechnic Institute of Viseu, Portugal
[2]University of Coimbra, Portugal

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