

How is the Brazil's **projected image** as a tourism destination perceived by the Portuguese tourist **intermediaries**: A Comparative analysis

Como a **imagem projetada** do destino turístico Brasil é percebido pelos **intermediários** turísticos portugueses: Uma análise comparativa

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Abstract | Due to increased competition among tourist destinations many destinations become easily replaceable. Therefore, influencing the decision of tourists has been a great challenge for managers and marketers. In this perspective, the image of tourist destinations plays an important role, as it influences the behavior of individuals and allows the destination to differentiate itself from other in the highly competitive tourist market. The present research analyses the projected image of Brazil based on the official website of the country (visitbrasil.com), in order to understand if it is consistent with the perceived image by the tourist intermediaries in Portugal. To determine the perceived image of Brazil, a questionnaire survey is used, whereas the projected image from the website is analysed using content analysis with the QSR NVivo10 software. It is found that Brazil intends to position itself as a tourist destination devoted to cultural tourism, while the Portuguese tourist intermediaries promote it as a destination mainly oriented to sun and sea tourism.

Keywords | Tourism marketing, destination image, Brazil, tourist intermediaries, content analysis

Resumo | O aumento da concorrência entre os destinos turísticos tem feito com que muitos destinos se tornem facilmente substituíveis. Assim sendo, influenciar a decisão dos turistas tem sido um grande desafio para gestores e marketeers. Nesta perspectiva, a imagem de destinos turísticos exerce uma importante função, pois influencia o comportamento dos indivíduos e permite que o destino se diferencie no mercado turístico altamente competitivo. A presente investigação tem como objetivo analisar a imagem projetada do destino turístico Brasil a partir do website oficial de promoção do país (visitbrasil.com), com o propósito de perceber se existe uma coerência entre a imagem projetada do país e a imagem percebida pelos intermediários do setor em Portugal. Para apurar a imagem percebida do destino turístico Brasil, recorreu-se ao inquérito por questionário, enquanto a imagem projetada a partir do website foi analisada por meio de análise de conteúdo, com recurso ao software QSR NVivo10. Constatou-se que

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o Brasil pretende se posicionar como um destino turístico vocacionado ao turismo cultural, enquanto que os intermediários turísticos portugueses o promovem como um destino majoritariamente voltado ao turismo de sol e praia.

Palavras-chave | Marketing turístico, imagem de destino, Brasil. Intermediários turísticos, análise de conteúdo

1. Introduction

The development of tourism has created major challenges for the tourism marketing. The 'alternative' destinations are expanding and consequently marketers are strongly challenged to influence tourist's decision-making (Baloglu & Mangaloglu, 2001; Echtner & Ritchie, 1991). Due to the emergence of new markets and new competitors, the prosperity of tourist destinations depends on a constant flow of tourists (Tasci & Gartner, 2007). Therefore, only well managed destinations are able to progress in this super competitive scenario (Buhalis, 2000; Ekinci & Hosany, 2006).

In addition, a tourism product requires subjective evaluations, since it cannot be tested before the visit (Fodness & Murray, 1997, 1998, 1999; Gursoy & McCleary, 2004a, 2004b, Um & Crompton, 1992). In this way, for destinations to be successful, they need to differentiate themselves taking into consideration consumer needs (Bramwell & Rawding, 1996).

In this sense, marketing research has extensively studied the strength of the brand image and other images in relation to consumer behavior, since the image has been seen as a strong influencer of attitudes (Elliot, Papadopoulos & Kim, 2011). According to Jenkins (1999, p. 2): "Marketers are interested in the concept of tourist destination image mainly because it relates to decision-making and sales of tourist products and services". In addition, tourism destinations compete mainly through their images being compared to their competitors in the market (Baloglu & Man-

galoglu, 2001).

In this perspective, tourism destination image plays an important role because it influences individuals' behavior (Beerli & Martin, 2004), for example the decision of purchase (Agapito; Vale & Mendes, 2013; Ahmed, 1991; Bigné, Sánchez & Sánchez, 2001; Chon 1990; Echtner & Ritchie, 1991; Farmaki, 2012; Gallarza, Saura & García, 2002; Konecnik & Gartner, 2007; Tapachai & Waryszak, 2000; Tasci & Gartner, 2007), satisfaction (Nikolova & Hassan, 2013; Pearce, 1997) and the probability of recommendation (Agapito et al., 2013; Bigné et al., 2001; Konecnik & Gartner, 2007). Therefore, there is a need for efforts to build or continually improve the image of tourist destinations (Chen & Tsai, 2007; Chon, 1991; Echtner & Ritchie, 1991; Gallarza et al., 2002; Grosspietsch, 2006; Hunt, 1975).

In this context, the present study analyses the projected image of Brazil from the official website of the country (visitbrazil.com) and to investigate if there is a concordance between the projected image and the way the Portuguese tourist intermediaries perceive Brazil as destination. It is important to analyse the relationship between the two concepts of projected and perceived image to better understand the similarities and differences between them.

One of the main determining factors for the formation of the perceived image of tourist destinations is the projected image from several sources of information (Baloglu & McCleary, 1999; Baloglu, 2000; Gartner, 1994; Govers, Go & Kumar, 2007). In this sense, the tourist intermediaries

(tour operators and travel agents) have the function of connecting supply and demand in tourism. Often customers and suppliers depend on these actors of the tourism value chain, which gives tour operators enough influence in sales and distribution in the tourism sector (Budeanu, 2005).

To achieve the objectives proposed in this study, this article is organized as follows: after the introduction, the second section presents the theoretical framework built on the assumptions underlying the various issues discussed in the literature. The third section describes the research methodology, as well as the questions used in the questionnaire, the sample population and the data collected. The results of the content analyses are presented in section four, followed by a discussion of the results. Finally, section five covers the conclusions, study limitations and directions of future research.

2. Literature review

2.1. The Positioning of a Tourism Destination

The positioning of a tourism destination has as main objective to identify the attractions and to clarify how the tourism management entities can differentiate it and make it meaningful for the consumers (Pike & Ryan, 2004). Perceptions are the most relevant factors for positioning the destination attributes, because marketing strategies will be developed and implemented accordingly to achieve the desired market position (Ahmed, 1991).

According to Font (1997), positioning means creating a unique and differentiated image in the memory of consumers. In the view of the author, the success of a product depends on the development of an appropriate positioning strategy. This strategy must be elaborated after the iden-

tification of the markets that one wishes to reach and their respective perceptions. Mayo and Jarvis (1981) argue that the destination image provides information for the development of positioning strategies and also provides information for the development of promotional strategies. In tourism, as explained by Pike and Ryan (2004), the image is the main construct used in the positioning.

To analyse the positioning of a destination it is necessary to understand how it is perceived based on attributes that are important to the target (Pike & Ryan, 2004). In order to positioning the tourism product, it is necessary to reflect the particularities of the image (Ahmed, 1991). An important role of positioning strategies is that they can modify the perception of destinations, making them a special attraction that cannot be found in competing locations. When an image is constructed from a correct positioning, tourists add value to this product (Ahmed, 1991). Taking into account the concepts discussed in section 2.1 the following study proposition was formulated:

Proposition 1: There is a congruence between the attributes of the destination Brazil promoted by Embratur (*Instituto Brasileiro de Turismo*) and the attributes of destination Brazil promoted by Portuguese travel agents and tour operators.

2.2. The Image of Tourist Destinations Projected Through Promotion

The role of information sources for tourism products is crucial because these products are very complex since they cannot be tried before purchase. Moreover as stated Milman and Pizam, (1995; p.22):

Unlike material products or pure services, the tourism experience is an amalgam of experiences with various pro-

ducts and services. Therefore, it is possible to say that the image of the destination is a sum total of the images of the individual elements or attributes that make up the tourism experience.

According to Chen (2001) the literature shows that promotions can influence the formation of destinations images. For this reason, marketers recognize the value of promoting and building strong target brands (Chen & Phou, 2013).

Due to the intangible essence of tourism products, promotion is fundamental because it is a way to represent and make the destination more tangible before the visit (Mackay & Fesenmaier, 1997; Sonmez & Sirakaya, 2002; Zhang, Fu, Cai, & Lu, 2014). The promotion also has the function of positioning the destination through the establishment, reinforcement or change of its image (Hunt, 1975; MacKay & Fesenmaier, 1997; 2000; Sonmez & Sirakaya, 2002; Young, 1999;). Usually individuals tend to choose destinations with more positive images (Gartner, 1989; Hu & Ritchie, 1993; McLellan & Foushee, 1983). The elements that influence perception are essential, because before the trip potential tourists tend to create images and expectations (Buhalis, 2000; Choi, Tkachenko & Sil, 2011).

According to Fakeye and Crompton (1991) the purpose of tourism promotion is to design or modify buying behavior, or remind individuals of the experience they have already experienced in the destination. In Chon's (1991) view the most rational strategies to be put into practice tourism destination promotions is to project the strengths of the tourism product and the image of the destination, creating from these attributes the advertising themes. One should emphasize the attractive characteristics that are positively identified by the market.

Promotional marketing strategies aimed at the general public and, more specifically, at tourist in-

termediaries need to address potential problems perceived with destination. Through promotional materials that project positive characteristics of the destination's attractive attributes, messages can be used to calm fears of possible perceived problems (McLellan & Foushee, 1983). Gurusoy (2003) argues that tourism destinations should develop communication materials that provide detailed information about the destination. Moreover, marketers must work collaboratively with tourism intermediaries to attract tourists. It is therefore important that destination managers identify where their target is concentrated, and then provide promotional information for tour operators to publicize the destination.

3. Methodology

3.1. Sample, data collection and questionnaire development

To achieve the research objective, the data collection was performed in two phases. The first involved a questionnaire survey with semi-structured questions applied to tourism intermediaries in Portugal and the second was an analysis of the visit-brasil.com website.

The choice of Portugal as a target for data collection is due to the fact that this country is among the largest tourist emissions to Brazil, ranking 10th in 2013 and 11th in 2011 and 2012. Aiming to reach the largest number of tourist intermediaries, 793 questionnaires were sent via e-mail to the contacts obtained in a database from the National Tourism Registry (RNT), available on the *Turismo de Portugal* website.

The original database contained 1,494 companies, but through an online refinement, which considered information on the activities of the companies, 700 were eliminated, reaching a final sample

of 793 travel agencies and tour operators. The questionnaire was distributed between March and June 2015 and used the LimeSurvey platform operationalized by the University of Aveiro.

Given a target population of 793 tourist intermediaries, a total of 123 completed questionnaires were obtained, representing a response rate of 15.51%. In order to validate the response rate, Baloglu and Mangaloglu's (2001) research was taken as the basis, who carried out an image study of tourist destinations, whose target population were tourism intermediaries. The authors obtained a response rate of 14.9%, representing 46 valid questionnaires. In addition, Paxson (1995) argues that in questionnaires applied to organizations, response rates are generally low and range from 1% to 20%.

In order to identify the main spontaneous associations made to Brazil, it was decided to use three semi-structured questions. Firstly, intermediaries were asked to indicate the top five main destinations that they promote (Santos, 1998), then they were asked to write the three most used words to promote Brazil, and lastly the respondents should list five unique tourist attractions from the country. The last two questions were adapted from the

study of Echtner and Ritchie (1991).

3.2. Data processing and analysis of Brazil's official website

Given the enormous impact that the online media have played in recent years and the unlimited reach of the data exposed on the web, it was decided to carry out the analysis of the official portal of international tourism marketing in Brazil (visitbrasil.com). The analysis of the website visitbrasil.com aims to focus on the written content, at this stage of the research it is intended to identify the main attributes promoted by international tourism marketing in Brazil and to identify the national and international projected image of the destination.

The methodologies used by several authors (eg. Choi, Lehto & Morrison, 2007; Gomes, 2014; Govers & Go, 2005; Hashim, Murphy & Hashim, 2007; Hsu & Song, 2012; Stepchenkova & Morrison, 2006) were adapted. They carried out content analysis of websites to analyze the projected image of tourism destinations. In this research, it was used the steps shown in table 1.

Table 1 | Procedures for data collection, data processing and data analysis.

Step 1	Data collection	Result
1.1 Website structure analysis; 1.2 Selection of promotional text; 1.3 Text transcription.		115,118 words
Step 2	Data processing	Result
2.1. Automatic list of words that repeat at least 20 times (NVivo10) and analysis of the absolute and relative frequencies; 2.2. Filtration of words without relevance.		Word cloud
2.3. Export word list to Excel; 2.4. Separation of words grouped by NVivo 10 that do not have similar meanings.		List of 65 most frequent words
Step 3	Data analysis	Result
3.1. Categorization of attributes of words that repeat at least 20 times and calculation of their frequencies; 3.2 Calculation of the absolute and relative frequency of the categories.		Main attributes promoted; main destinations promoted.

Source: Own elaboration

In step 1, as recommended by Bardin (2011), a floating reading of the website was carried out, in order to understand its structure, proceeding subsequently with the choice of relevant content to respond to the problem. Next, the entire content was transcribed into a Word document. In the second step, the NVivo 10 software listed the words, or groups of derived words (e.g. culture, cultures, cultural) that are repeated 20 times and more. It was decided to exclude words with less than 3 characters, and words predefined by the software as irrelevant (unimportant words for analysis).

Subsequently through an exhaustive reading, for the constitution of the corpus of analysis, some words that were considered irrelevant for the study were eliminated. Deleted words have been added to the list of irrelevant words. After obtaining the final listing of words that are repeated at least 20 times, a cloud of words was elaborated to visually highlight the most frequently quoted words on the visitbrasil.com website.

Then, the final word listing was exported to Excel. Words grouped automatically by NVivo10 into the same category, but actually not having a similar meaning (e.g. *milhares*, *milhas* and *milho*) were manually corrected. An analysis of homo-

graphic words was done according to their context, for example: *Natal* (city or commemorative date). Still in the data processing phase, the 65 words that were most frequently repeated on the website were chosen.

In the third stage, we proceeded to categorize the most relevant concepts, the words belonging to different groups were classified and regrouped. The categories were defined based on the floating reading of the website and studies about the image of tourism destination: tourism infrastructure and activities (Chi & Qu,2008); natural attractions (Chi & Qu,2008); cultural attractions (Chen & Phou, 2013; San Martín & Del Bosque, 2008); events and entertainment (Chi & Qu,2008); sun and beach (Chen & Tsai, 2007); fame and reputation (Echtner & Ritchie,1991); crowdedness (Echtner & Ritchie,1991); accessibility (Echtner & Ritchie,1991); business.

In order to verify which are the most publicized destinations through the website visitbrasil.com, destination categories, which group cities, towns, islands and Brazilian regions, were created. Finally, after finishing the categorization of the words, the absolute frequency and the relative frequencies were calculated to quantify which are the

destinations and attributes most promoted by the online marketing strategy having as support the website visitbrasil.com.

4. Analysis and discussion of results

4.1. Characterization of the Brazil's Image as a tourism destination

For the analysis of tourism attractions spontaneously cited by the Portuguese tourism intermediaries, a content analysis of the five spontaneous associations made to Brazil was carried. The 61 spontaneous associations mentioned were classified into 7 categories (infrastructure, natural attractions, cultural attractions, events and entertainment, sun and beach, destinations and hospitality and friendliness). In this analysis, we first consider the totality of associations, regardless of the order in which they were mentioned, and secondly, we take into account those that stand out as first, second and third associations.

This analysis reveals that the sun and sea is the category that stands out, representing 25% of total associations. This category is followed by landscapes and cultural attractions (23.1%), events and entertainment (19%), natural attractions (13.8%), destinations (9%), hospitality and friendliness (7.9%) and infrastructure and activities 2.2%).

Regarding the second phase of the analysis, the sun and beach categories and events and entertainment stand out as the first association mentioned, which means that Brazil as a tourist destination has a strong position in these two areas. For the second associations the category natural attractions was mentioned most frequently, followed by the category sun and beach. For the third association, cultural attractions dominate.

This research also aimed to analyze which are the Brazilian destinations most promoted by Portuguese travel agents and tour operators. The corresponding content analysis shows that the most cited destinations are Rio de Janeiro, Salvador and Natal. With regard to the three words most used to promote the image of Brazil, a content analysis was carried out, using the same method as the previous analyzes.

According to the tourism intermediaries, the most used words to offer the destination Brazil are in the first place, those related to the sun and beach, this category stands out strongly from the others with a percentage of 50.8%; in second place are the words related to the cultural attractions (22.3%), and finally, natural attractions was mentioned (8.6%). This analysis corroborates the vocation for sun and beach tourism in Brazil, although in recent years, the international tourism marketing of the country has worked hard to diversify its image and presented other options of tourism products, mainly focusing on the segment of cultural tourism.

4.2. Content analysis results of the portal visitbrasil.com

During the treatment of content analysis data 407 concepts were categorized. The 407 categorized concepts comprise 27,930 words, corresponding to 24.27% of the textual information collected on the website (115,118 words). The first output resulting from this analysis was a word cloud made from Nvivo10 software with the most frequent terms found on the website (see Figure 1). As can be observed, among the words that stand out in the cloud are elements related to culture ("cultura", "cidade", "centros", "Brasil"), elements related to the sun and beach tourism ("praia") and concepts related to natural attractions ("ecoturismo", "aventura", "parque").

Table 2 | List of 65 relevant and most frequent concepts on the website visitbrasil.com

Ranking	Concept	Absolute frequency	Relative frequency (%)	Words
1º	cultura	1083	2.10	cultura, culturais, culturas
2º	praia	913	1.77	praia, praias
3º	cidade	535	1.04	cidade, cidades
4º	centros	441	0.86	centro, centros
5º	Rio	423	0.82	Rio
6º	aventura	408	0.79	Aventura
7º	brasil	405	0.79	brasil, brasilã, brasilidade
8º	ecoturismo	405	0.79	Ecoturismo
9º	conhecer	396	0.77	conheçam, conhecer, conhecerem, conhecida, conhecidas, conhecido, conhecidos
10º	parque	362	0.70	parque, parques
11º	histórico	335	0.65	história, histórias, histórica, históricas, histórico, históricos
12º	passeios	329	0.64	passeie, passeio, passeios
13º	Sol	320	0.62	sol, solar, solo
14º	museu	311	0.60	Museu
15º	Mar	254	0.49	mar, maré, maria
16º	eventos	246	0.48	Eventos
17º	grandes	245	0.48	grande, grandes
18º	águas	232	0.45	Águas
19º	igreja	211	0.41	Igreja
20º	casas	208	0.40	casa, casarão, casas
21º	esportes	205	0.40	Esportes
22º	atração	196	0.38	Atração
23º	natureza	186	0.36	naturais, naturas, natureza, naturismo
24º	cachoeiras	181	0.35	cachoeira, cachoeiras, cachoeirismo
25º	belos	179	0.35	bela, belas, belo, belos
26º	brasileiro	178	0.35	brasileira, brasileiras, brasileiro, brasileiros
27º	restaurantes	177	0.34	restaurante, restaurantes
28º	diversão	175	0.34	Diversão
29º	imperdível	174	0.34	Imperdível
30º	visitar	166	0.32	visita, visitação, visitado, visitados, visitam, visitando, visitar, visitaram, visitas, visitou
31º	trilhas	162	0.31	trilha, trilhar, trilhas, trilho, trilhos
32º	negócios	156	0.30	negócio, negócios
33º	Arte	154	0.30	Arte
34º	nacional	153	0.30	nacional, nacionalidades
35º	Paulo	153	0.30	Paulo (cidade)
36º	caminhada	149	0.29	caminhada, caminhadas, caminhar, caminho, caminhos
37º	pedras	145	0.28	pedra, pedras
38º	típico	144	0.28	típica, típicas, típico, típicos
39º	compras	140	0.27	compra, comprar, compras, compre
40º	mergulhos	137	0.27	mergulha, mergulhador, mergulhadores, mergulhar, mergulhará, mergulhe, mergulho, mergulhos
41º	vista	133	0.26	vista, vistas
42º	banhos	130	0.25	banha, banhada, banhadas, banho, banhos
43º	famosos	126	0.24	famosa, famoso, famosos
44º	Ilha	124	0.24	Ilha
45º	artesanato	123	0.24	Artesanato
46º	convenções	123	0.24	Convenções
47º	cultural	123	0.24	Cultural
48º	incentivos	121	0.23	incentivo, incentivos
49º	feita	119	0.23	feita, festas
50º	feira	117	0.23	feira, feiras
51º	bares	114	0.22	bar, bares
52º	estilo	112	0.22	Estilo
53º	janeiro	112	0.22	Janeiro
54º	serras	112	0.22	serra, serras
55º	peixes	112	0.22	peixada, peixarias, peixe, peixes
56º	santos	112	0.22	sant'ana, santa, santarem, santas, santo, santos
57º	forte	111	0.22	forte, fortes
58º	pescaria	110	0.21	pesca, pescada, pescados, pescam, pescar, pescaria
59º	patrimônio	109	0.21	patrimônio, patrimônios
60º	piscinas	109	0.21	piscina, piscinas
61º	prédio	109	0.21	prédio, prédios
62º	morro	107	0.21	morro, morros
63º	mata	106	0.21	mata, matas, mato
64º	País	105	0.20	país, países
65º	água	101	0.20	Água

Source: Own elaboration

Nine attributes among the concepts presented in table 2, are mentioned with a very high frequency, this indicates that the portal visitbrasil.com promotes a diversified tourism offer, namely:

“cultura”, “brasil”, “histórico”, “museu”, “grande”, “igreja”, “casas”, “brasileiro”, “arte”, “nacional”, “típico”, “artesanato”, “cultural”, “estilo”, “santos”, “forte”, “património”, “país” are concepts that refer to the rich and varied Brazilian culture;

“praia”, “sol”, “maré”, “mergulhos”, “banhos”, “ilha” are words that refer to the extensive Brazilian coast, which with 8 thousand kilometers of beaches, constitute a product of sun and beach offered by Brazil;

“rio”, “ecoturismo”, “parque”, “águas”, “natureza”, “cachoeiras”, “trilhas”, “pedras”, “seras”, “peixes”, “pescaria”, “morro”, “mata”, “água” are words associated with elements present in nature;

“aventura”, “passeios”, “eventos”, “esportes”, “diversão”, “caminhada”, “vista”, “festa”, “piscinas” are concepts that relate to recreational activities, leisure and entertainment provided by country;

“cidade”, “centro”, “prédios” emphasize the urbanization of Brazil refer to culture;

“conhecer”, “atração”, “belos”, “imperdível”, “visitar”, “famosos” refer to the fame and reputation of Brazilian tourist destinations;

“restaurantes”, “compras”, “bares” are words that highlight the infrastructure;

“negócios”, “convenções”, “incentivos”, “feiras” are concepts that reveal the vocation for business tourism;

“São Paulo”, “Rio de Janeiro” are the only destinations on the list which indicate that those are the two most promoted cities.

From the results of this analysis the following study proposition was verified:

Proposition 1: There is congruence between the attributes of the destination Brazil promoted by Embratur and the attributes of the destination Brazil as promoted by Portuguese travel agents and tour operators.

When comparing the analysis data of the website visitbrasil.com, with the three words most used by Portuguese tourism intermediaries to promote the Brazil's image, it is concluded that the proposition 1 is partially verified. According to the tourism intermediaries, the most used words to offer the tourist destination Brazil are: firstly, those that concern the tourism of sun and beach, a category that stands out strongly from the others; secondly, the concepts related to the country's climate are used and in the third the gastronomy was mentioned, which refers to culture. The words quoted in fourth and fifth place are respectively related to natural attractions (landscape and nature) and cultural attractions (history and language).

Although the Portuguese tourist intermediaries consider the attributes related to the Brazilian culture to promote the destination, it is clear that this is not the main motivation, contrary to what is projected in the visitbrasil.com website. Thus, it is concluded that there is a discrepancy, in terms of the order of importance, between the attributes used by Portuguese tourism intermediaries to promote Brazil and the attributes promoted by the tourism portal in Brazil.

Following the analysis of the portal visitbrasil.com, categories were defined for the concepts that were repeated at least 20 times (total of 406). According to the analysis on the 406 word (or set of words) that are repeated more than 19 times (see Table 3), the cultural attractions category is further promoted by the website visitbrasil.com with a relative frequency of 20,78%. This category has a greater importance in relation to the natural attractions category, which is second in terms of repetition (9.59%). This indicates that Brazil

has focused its positioning on the tourist attributes that concern its cultural wealth (heritage, gastro-

nomy, customs, people, architecture, typical festivals etc).

Table 3 | Result of categorization of the most frequent words.

Category	Absolute frequency	Relative frequency (%)
Cultural Attractions	10,705	20.78
Natural attractions	4,925	9.59
Entertainment	3,318	6.47
Fame and reputation	3,237	6.24
Soun and beach	2,868	5.57
Infrastructure	1,199	2.32
Business	763	1.48
Destinations	915	1.78
Total	27,930	100\%

Source: Own elaboration

As the cultural attractions category is the one that stands out it is pertinent to analyze separately the aspects belonging to the aforementioned classification. Thus, 6 subcategories were established, based on Gomes (2014): immaterial culture, traditions and lifestyles; gastronomy; history and art; monuments, museums and buildings of historical and/or architectural; longevity temporal and religion.

The attributes that refer to immaterial culture, traditions and lifestyles in the Brazilian tourism destination are the most cited in the portal, with 35.05% relative frequency. This reveals that the most subjective and intrinsic aspects of Brazilian culture are the most relevant in promoting the country. The words that refer to monuments, museums and buildings of historical and/or architectural interest are the second most common, with a relative frequency of 30.53%. Another aspect that presents a high importance is the subcategory History and Art (19.17%). It makes sense that these three subcategories are the most frequently used on the visitbrasil.com website because they are extremely interconnected, so they are displayed prominently. The three less frequent subcategories: (i) religion (7.15%), (ii) gastronomy (4.1%) and (iii) temporal longevity (4%) contribute, even if peripherally, to positioning Brazil as a destination with a strong vocation for Cultural Tourism.

Considering the destinations that are repeated

more than 19 times in visitbrasil.com portal, the top five destinations promoted are: São Paulo (0.3%), Rio de Janeiro (0.22%), Recife (0.12%), Manaus (0.12%) and Salvador (0.9%). When comparing the data obtained in this analysis, it is observed that there is a coherence between three of the five destinations most promoted by the portal and the five destinations most promoted by Portuguese tourism intermediaries, although the order of importance is not the same. While in the portal, Manaus and São Paulo appear in the Top5 of promoted destinations, this is not the case for Brazilian tourist destinations most promoted by the Portuguese tourist intermediaries including Natal and Fortaleza.

5. Conclusion

Tourism marketing is an extremely important topic for the planning of a destination, especially with regard to its projected and perceived images. To increase the competitiveness of the destination it is fundamental to analyze its image and reputation with the market. Destination marketing organizations rely heavily on their knowledge of how the tourist destination is perceived, because without a consistent understanding of what is expected of a destination, it is very difficult to make

intelligent decisions about the planning and positioning. Thus, it is important to align the projected image by the destination to the perceived image by the target and by the professionals that commercialize it.

As Fakeye & Crompton (1991) argue, that the failure or success of tourism depends heavily on the effective management of its image and the image that individuals perceive of this place. Thus, segmentation should be considered in the design of the promotion and in the decisions about the development of the destination. Several authors argue that marketers must realize if the destination that is being promoted is adequate for each market segment to adapt existing products to the demand (Baloglu & Uysal, 1996; Gursoy, 2004; Gursoy & McCleary, 2004a). In the content analysis made to the official Brazil's tourism website it is found that the five most promoted destinations in visitbrasil.com are: São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Recife, Manaus and Salvador. It is observed that there is a coherence between three of the five destinations most promoted by the portal and the five destinations most promoted by Portuguese tourism intermediaries (Rio de Janeiro, Salvador, Natal, Fortaleza and Recife), although the order of importance is not the same. It is concluded that the promotion directed to specific destinations is concentrated in large urban centers.

When comparing the projected image through the website with the three words most used by Portuguese tourism intermediaries to promote the image of Brazil, it is concluded that there is a partial agreement. Although the Portuguese tourist intermediaries consider the characteristics related to the Brazilian culture, this is not the main appeal, contrary to what is found in the visitbrasil.com website. Thus, proposition 1 is partially accepted, because there is a divergence between the orders of importance of the attributes most promoted by the travel agents and tour operators and the attributes most promoted by the official tourism portal of Brazil.

This reveals that the managers and marketers responsible for Brazil's positioning in the international tourism market should increase their efforts to highlight their cultural attractions as exclusive and special, so that this image is assimilated more deeply. One solution could be to associate sun and beach tourism with cultural tourism, as these two tourism segments are not exclusive.

5.1. Contributions, limitations and suggestions for future research

One of the main contributions of this research concerns the development of theoretical framework for investigating Brazil's image, since the amount of research that aims to analyze the image of this destination is limited. This research used a methodology to perform a comparative analysis that made it possible to understand the differences and similarities between what is promoted by the country, what is the positioning of the destination and how this image is perceived by Portuguese tourism intermediaries.

Another contribution was the selection of travel agents and tour operators as the target population, since most of the studies that aimed to carry out an analysis of the destination image had tourists as the target population. The information obtained through the analysis contributes to adapt the international tourism marketing strategies of Brazil. In the scientific field, this research contributed to expand the use of a methodology based on the content analysis in the studies of image of tourism destinations, using Nvivo10 software.

Although this research has contributed in the sectorial and scientific scope, some limitations were found. Although, similar to suggestions in the literature, the response rate was not high. Future research should focus on a larger samples and may include tourism intermediaries that do not promote Brazil, so analyses can be made to understand why

these professionals do not offer Brazil as a tourism destination. Longitudinal studies may also be carried out to verify if there are changes in the perceived image of Brazil depending on changes in international marketing strategies.

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