THE NEW REALITIES OF TOURIST EXPERIENCES WITH THE USE OF ELECTRONIC TOOLS: A LITERATURE REVIEW

AUTHOR: Aldira Raquel Paula Maia ⓘD, Secretaria da Educação do Ceará, Brazil, professoraraquelmaia@gmail.com.

ABSTRACT

Technology, in recent years, has experienced significant advances, which allows us to say that we currently live in the digital age. The internet allows the constant exchange of information and communication between individuals, the reduction of physical spaces, the overcoming of barriers, among many other facilities. In a context of immersion of users in digital media, the dissemination of information implies an incessant need to update and consume content. Information is essential for the tourism sector and, therefore, technology becomes an indispensable tool for the qualified functioning of the sector. In view of this, the present work sought to analyze how electronic tools provide new realities of experiences in the tourism sector. It was decided to use bibliographical research in books and articles as methodological procedures, as it is a literature review on the subject. It was possible to verify that electronic tools lead to new configurations and new travel experiences, since they allow the tourist to have access to platforms and mechanisms that allow the choice, definition and acquisition of products and services.

KEYWORDS: Digital Media; Electronic Tools; Technology.

1. INTRODUCTION

Contemporary society is experiencing a time of continuous and significant advances and technological innovations. As a result of this fact, the means of social communication have expanded their capacity to allow constant exchanges of information and communication between individuals.

In regard to consumer relations, the means of technology allow the configuration of new relationships between consumers and suppliers, as well as allowing the advertising of numerous brands, services, and goods. The context of globalization and the rise of the internet and mass media have provided an increase in the dissemination and publication of content in the most varied media.

Due to the current scenario of globalization and the significant and frequent technological innovations, consumer relations undergo several changes, making it possible, in this sense, for the wide dissemination of companies that exhibit their brand, services and products.

This dissemination can be carried out in different ways and with the use of different instruments, with a view to reaching as many people as possible. Thus, the media and social networks become tools used by a large number of individuals, a fact that allows the marketing strategy of the most varied sectors.

In this way, it is possible to say that the internet allows constant interactions between individuals, as well as instant access to information. In this sense, individuals become a direct part of various processes and relationships in which they were previously a mere participant.

This is the case in the tourism sector, where new digital technologies and new electronic tools allow constant exchange of information between individuals, as well as the dissemination of products and services by tourist companies.

As a result, currently, there is a significant change in tourist experiences due to the use of digital tools. These changes occur from the moment of searching and choosing the tourist destination to the moment of enjoying the trip.

Nowadays, there is a range of digital tools that allow these experiences. Among these tools, there are websites and applications, which allow the most varied resources: interaction with other users, exchange of information, visualization of reports and experiences, and evaluations. Examples include: Booking.com, TripAdvisor, and Airbnb, among others.

Thus, it is possible to observe that digital means foster the development of the tourism sector, since these mechanisms bring numerous benefits, such as interaction among consumers, the customization of the product or service offered, the increase of points of sale and dissemination, and the cooperation among partners, among others. In this way, these tools help tourists in their process of choosing, deciding, and purchasing certain products and services, in addition to encouraging this process.

In this sense, the present work seeks to analyze the new realities of tourist experiences with the use of electronic tools made available to consumers in the digital age.

Regarding the methodology, it was chosen to use as methodological procedures the bibliographic research in books, scientific articles, dissertations, theses, and reports present on the internet, as well as documentary research, which works with current data and documents that have not received analysis and scientific treatment. The use of such a research method is justified by the need to use current information that addresses the topic. Regarding the approach of the present work, a qualitative-quantitative research was used.

2. THE ADVENT OF TECHNOLOGY AND ITS IMPACT ON COMMUNICATIONS

With the consequent advance of technology and the means of social communication, several transformations were observed in the daily life of individuals, such as the forms of interaction, communication, and information exchange.

The internet, which has brought connectivity and transparency to the lives of individuals, is responsible for countless changes in contemporary society. In this sense, social media eliminates geographic and demographic barriers, allowing people to connect and communicate and companies to innovate through collaboration (Kotler et al., 2017).

Thus, it can be observed that the internet and new media allow the continuous interaction and exchange of information of the users, as well as the readiness of the reach to information.

In this scenario, Cooper et al. (2008) add that information and communication technologies and the Internet provided a second industrial revolution in the late 1990s, given that the development and application of computerized systems showed significant acceleration, as well as enabling their use for a wider range of business functions and activities.

Nowadays, computers are no longer used only for sending e-mails, preparing documents, and other activities exclusive to the workplace. This is because, nowadays, it is possible to access technologies and digital media everywhere and, for this reason, they become part of the daily activities of society, both considering each individual and the whole collectivity. (Araujo & Vilaça, 2016).

It is important to mention that communication is inherent to the individual, and in contemporary society, this communication has an essential role, being inserted in the daily life of individuals and the community, for various purposes and facilities. Technology is inserted in the school context, in the scope of work, leisure, among others.

With the introduction of new technologies, and their constant improvement and renewal, the world of communication has undergone a notorious and irreversible revolution, in view of the fact that the ways of communicating have multiplied, allowing for greater efficiency and fluidity in the transmission of messages and information (Matias, 2016).

In this sense, the use of digital technologies leads to a new way of connecting users in contemporary society, given that the daily life of individuals is shaped by digital technologies. Thus, in modern cities, different services with technological solutions are offered to users of urban space, contributing to the development of these spaces (Araujo & Vilaça, 2016).

In other words, it is possible to observe that advances in technology provide changes in all areas of society. This is because digital media are present in the daily lives of citizens in different ways.

In this way, in the midst of the user's immersion in digital media, in this environment in which the circulation of information causes a constant need to update and consume content, a scenario can be observed in which the user seeks not only information, but also interaction. (Bernardazzi & Costa, 2017).

Therefore, social media are widely used instruments in contemporary society. With the emergence of new means of communication and advances in technology, new tools and new opportunities have emerged, which has led to a change in the communication paradigm, updating and adapting itself (Matias, 2016).

The intensification of technology and connectivity motivated a convergence of human behavior, which had already been noticed in recent years, and led to changes in marketing practices, given that new trends are emerging, such as the sharing economy, content marketing, the customer relationship management strategy through social networks, among others (Machado & Oliveira, 2018).

In this context, the new media directly affect individuals, given that they are capable of causing permanent and irreversible changes in the way citizens communicate, seek information and also in the way they receive, interpret and update it (Matias, 2016).

It is also possible to affirm that, nowadays, we live in an era in which territorial borders are crossed by vitality, not knowing physical limits, and it is possible, therefore, to perform several tasks that before required physical displacement, now only with access to internet-connected devices. (Taufer, 2020).

The emergence and development of the Internet led to the strengthening of the international computer network, enabling individuals and organizations to access a range of multimedia information and knowledge sources, regardless of their location or ownership and often free of cost (Coopert et al., 2008).

The society driven by significant technological innovations had its maximum impact reached in a recent moment, due to the convergence of multiple technologies, and this technological advance is capable of providing the promotion of several sectors of the economy, in addition to promoting more competitiveness among the brands and organizations (Machado & Oliveira, 2018).

Thus, the post-modern world has brought about new ways for individuals to relate to each other, and technologies are an intrinsic part of the new configurations and organizations, including temporal and spatial (Taufer, 2020).

In this way, due to the connectivity that marks today's society, the weight of social conformity is increasing across the board. Consumers increasingly care about the opinions of others and share their opinions. The internet, especially social media, has facilitated this major shift by providing the platforms and tools (Kotler et al., 2017).

Social media and social networks have become popular and brands take advantage of these new channels as a way to expose their products, and these new online environments, which provide instant interaction between people, have made social networks a means of mass communication for sharing content, opinions, experiences between people (Ratcheva, 2017).

3. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOCIAL MEDIA AND TOURISM

It is important to mention that discussing the tourism sector necessarily implies covering discussions about consumption, causing a complex and polarized relationship between tourism and consumption to be established (Paula & Faria, 2021).

Tourism is a sector that is constantly growing, and, in this scenario, the advancement of technologies has significantly contributed to transforming people's travel experience (Rossi & Ramos, 2019).

In tourism, Cooper et al. (2008) point out that technology is increasingly present in this sector, and tourism is in an appropriate position to take advantage of advances in information technology, which range from the use of the internet to organize trips and search for information about tourist destinations, to the use of mobile telephony, to the innovative role played by technology in presenting and interpreting tourist destinations.

The rapid growth in the number of travelers from the 1990s on, as well as the demands for sophisticated, specialized and qualified products, imposed the need to use information and communication technologies (Cooper et al., 2008).

For example, it is appropriate to reflect on the functions previously performed by tourism agencies; today, information can be accessed directly by tourists, who can organize their own packages, purchase tickets on the internet, search for information directly through various websites or digital media (Taufer, 2020). That's because these technologies and new electronic tools make it possible for travelers to access reliable and secure information and make reservations in a fraction of the time, cost and convenience required by conventional methods. (Cooper et al., 2008).

Thus, the significant development of tourism supply and demand has made information and communication technologies a mandatory tool to allow the commercialization, distribution, promotion, and coordination of the sector (Cooper et al., 2008).

In this sense, the internet is a tool that makes information about destinations, packages, travel, accommodation, services, and prices available. In addition, it is possible that the consumer, before making the choice of destination and purchasing the desired products and services, has access to images, reviews, experience reports, interaction with other people, among others.

This is because, in the contemporary era, marked by digital and the significant evolution of the internet, the way companies promote their products and services has also followed this evolution (Santos, 2018).

Information is essential to the tourism sector and, therefore, technology becomes an indispensable tool for the qualified operation of the sector. Unlike durable goods, intangible services cannot be physically displayed or examined at the point of sale before the purchase is made. Thus, these services are usually acquired prior to their use and outside the place of consumption. As a result, they rely exclusively on presentations and descriptions by the travel agent and other intermediaries in their ability to attract consumers (Cooper et al., 2008).

Consumer trust is no longer the same as it was: in the past, consumers were influenced by advertising campaigns. They also looked for specialists and qualified people to speak on the subject. Currently, research from different sectors shows that most consumers believe more in social media factors such as friends, relatives, social networks followers, and their digital influencers than in marketing campaigns (Kotler et al., 2017).

Given this, it is possible to observe that advances in technologies and the popularization of social media lead to changes in the way of sharing and disseminating information related to travel and leisure. Social media platforms have been presented as mechanisms that enable the online recording and sharing of experiences and image records (Paula & Faria, 2021).

Paula and Faria (2021) state that, in addition to digital media providing this content dissemination, communication channels function as true portals for direct communication with tourists.

As a result, information technologies and the internet have enabled tourism organizations to develop their processes and adapt their management, in order to take advantage of emerging digital tools and mechanisms, to increase their internal efficiency and manage their capacity and profit more; effectively interacting with consumers and personalizing the product; revolutionize intermediation and increase points of sale; empowering consumers to communicate with other consumers; enable efficient cooperation between partners; enhance the operational and geographic scope by offering strategic tools for global expansion (Cooper et al., 2008).

As a result of this current technological scenario, consumers have increasingly used these mechanisms. Therefore, new websites and applications appear, aiming to provide a better tourist experience to consumers.

An example of this is Booking.com (website and app). According to information obtained on the website, this platform provides a virtual booking service, where accommodation providers offer their services and products. The platform does not buy or sell booking services, and the user pays the provider directly.

Furthermore, the website clarifies that, when making a reservation through the platform, the consumer has a direct contract with the provider, this platform being only an intermediary at the time of purchase. As part of this contractual relationship, the providers pay the commission to Booking.com as soon as the consumer has benefited from the provider's service or product.

On this platform, the user can have access to reviews carried out by people who previously had access to a particular location and reservation. This facilitates the decision and choice of the tourist.

Another example is TripAdvisor. According to the website, TripAdvisor is used to obtain reviews of hotels and restaurants. Thus, both in the planning and travel phases, the site is used to compare prices for airline tickets, accommodation, cruises, attractions, and restaurants.

In the relationship between interactive platforms and tourists, by sharing their experiences and images of the visited destination, they contribute to the construction of the tourist image (Paula & Faria, 2021).

In this way, with the advent of the internet and new digital technologies, information provides ease of reaching people, who have come to have a greater ease in meeting their information needs. As a result, technologies have started to encourage travelers and provide them with information favorable to their decision to travel (Bezerra & Silva, 2016).

Thus, it is possible to observe a trend toward the re-intermediation of tourism, when a variety of online actors emerge to bridge the gap between providers and users, including hotel consolidators, electronic travel agencies, and destination management organizations (Cooper et al., 2008).

Therefore, according to Araujo and Vilaça (2016), digital tools, by allowing the potentiation of communication, do not present themselves only as a means of relationship between users but also as sources of information and as an instrument that promotes mobilization and brings about changes in society.

Also, according to the authors, social networks, as a source of research and news, are capable of promoting interactivity and the participation of individuals who make use of them, which entails not only access to information, but also the possibility of disclosing.

In this way, the dissemination of tourist spaces and destinations in the media can be considered essential in the tourist decision and choice process, since the information disseminated creates a global representation of these places and cultures, encouraging the desire to visit, contemplate and consume that particular destination (Marujo & Cravidão, 2012).

When information is disseminated in digital media, it is characterized as virtual and available for consultation, regardless of the geographical coordinates of its physical support (Paula & Faria, 2021).

Electronic tools, therefore, help the tourist to make decisions about the choice and planning of the trip. The media are relevant in this process, as they work with the target audience's imagination so that consumption occurs (Rossi & Ramos, 2019).

Thus, in recent years and due to advances in technology, tourists have used digital tools and other interactive means to enable them to plan their trips at all stages.

According to Paula and Faria (2021), both the dissemination of actions and the construction and reconstruction of the image of a particular tourist destination can be enhanced through digital interaction platforms.

Thus, online tourism provides opportunities for business expansion in every sense: geographic, marketing, and operational. Several factors have made these technologies an integral part of tourism, such as: economic necessity, as fierce global competition demands maximum efficiency; rapid advances in technology, which provide new market opportunities; low barriers to entry, allowing many new entrants into the market; and improvements in the pricing of technologies and increased consumer expectations as they begin to use advanced products and expect better quality of presentation and service (Cooper et al., 2008).

3. CONCLUSION

The work aimed to analyze the new realities of tourist experiences with the use of electronic tools made available to consumers in the digital age.

It was found that with the consequent advancement of technology and the means of social communication, several transformations were observed in the daily life of individuals, such as the forms of interaction, communication, exchange of information.

Thus, with the introduction of new technologies, and with the constant improvement and renewal of these, the world of communication has undergone a notorious revolution and irreversible, in view of the fact that the ways of communicating have multiplied, allowing for greater efficiency and fluidity in the transmission of messages and information.

These changes have also been seen in the tourism sector. Technology is increasingly present in this sector, and tourism is in an appropriate position to take advantage of advances in information technology, which are displayed through the use of the internet for travel arrangements and the search for information about tourist destinations.

Thus, information technology and the internet have enabled tourism organizations to develop their processes and adapt their management, in order to take advantage of emerging digital tools and mechanisms, to increase their internal efficiency and manage their capacity to make more profit; to interact effectively with consumers and personalize the product; to revolutionize intermediation and increase the points of sale; to empower consumers to

communicate with other consumers; to enable efficient cooperation between partners; to enhance operational and geographical scope by providing strategic tools for global expansion.

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ETHICAL STATEMENT