

Projected Destination Image: A Content Analysis of Promotional Videos for City-level Tourism Destination

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ABSTRACT The current paper used content analysis to examine 50 commercials featuring the most internationally visited cities in the world as of 2019. It analyzed the components, scenes, and frames used to create the projected image of an attractive tourism destination, appealing to tourists from all walks of life. Regardless of the region to which the city belongs, most promotional videos used items from all the significant dimensions identified: natural resources; atmosphere of the place; culture, history, art; tourist infrastructure; entertainment resources; shopping resources; social environment; other resources. Overall, the most common frames identified were outdoor sports activities, historical and archeological buildings, and restaurants, and fine dining. In contrast, the least common frames were tourist information center, smart city aspects, and awards and distinctions. The analysis shows that most Asia and the Pacific, and European cities choose frames depicting historical and archeological buildings, while cities in the Americas, and the Middle East and Africa go for frames depicting outdoor sports activities. From an affective perspective, the atmosphere of the place depicted for Asia and the Pacific, and American cities emphasizes inclusivity, European cities are relaxing, and for the Middle East and Africa is vibrancy. As a subcategory, inclusivity defined as racial, age, sexual and gender, religious, and disability related diversity, had the best representation for racial diversity in all the regions, sexual and gender, and age-related diversity were polarized by region, while religious diversity and disability-related diversity were the least visible.

KEYWORDS:

Projected destination image; DMO; image framing; content analysis; promotional videos; inclusivity.

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1. Introduction

Tourism destination image is a concept with extensive research (Pike, 2002). On the one hand, numerous researchers focused on the role of tourism destination image, such as its impact on travel decision, tourist behavior, and tourist satisfaction (Chen and Tsai, 2007; Crompton, 1979; Mayo, 1973; Woodside and Lysonski 1989). More recently, Zhang et al. (2014) have confirmed that individually held image destination has the most significant impact on personal behavioral loyalty (visitation and revisitation intentions) and attitudinal loyalty (recommendation intentions). On the other hand, the destination image concept is fundamental from the perspective of tourism offer created by destination marketing organizations (DMOs), as the projected image is an essential factor in promotional and positioning strategies (Baloglu and McCleary 1999; Pike and Ryan 2004; Tasci and Gartner, 2007).

Marketers use the destination image as a promotional instrument and competitive advantage to differentiate from the competition and create a distinct image in consumers' minds (Hosany, Ekinci and Uysal, 2006; Morgan, Pritchard and Piggott 2002). Destination image is the combined product of administration and private commercial efforts to create a unique and iconic representation or an ideal

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palette of destination characteristics. Researchers have long emphasized that destination image must be credible, distinctive, attractive, and in line with visitors' experience (Gilmore, 2002; Kotler and Gertner, 2002).

Analyzing the destination image is strongly correlated with analyzing destination advertising's video content (Pan, Tsai and Lee, 2011). Destination promotional clips are mostly used in online marketing and a primary source of information for tourists during their buying decision process (Leung, Dickinger and Nixon, 2017). Still, tourism commercials are rarely analyzed, whether it is the case of T.V. ads or Internet promotional videos (Alvarez and Campo, 2011; Shani et al., 2010), even though tourists use them for their mental image of the tourism destination (Gartner, 1993). In this context, analyzing the video content and determining the distinct characteristics of promotional videos is essential for destination marketing strategies and programs' success.

However, most studies have focused on the promotional videos created for only one destination. In the context of a theoretically infinite number of tourism destinations, most with very similar resources and attractions, placed in a highly competitive global market, and increased tourism mobility, determining how DMOs choose to promote a destination is essential. The destination image, its components, and themes relevant to attracting and influencing potential tourists are currently a topic of great interest. This research has the potential to identify the most relevant characteristics that define the destination image as part of a promotional strategy shared by several organizations responsible for tourism destination marketing.

Therefore, the current paper aims at filling the current lack of research about video content analysis of commercials for a representative sample of tourism destinations. The destinations used are the most visited cities globally by international tourists as of 2019; choice justified since these cities' success in attracting foreign tourists can also be attributed to their promotional strategy (including the promotional videos used in this research). As a result of this analysis, the paper identifies the common elements and image symbolism used in successful image destination as best practice examples.

2. Literature review

The earliest studies of the destination image are from the 1970s (Hunt, 1975; Mayo, 1973), and since then, thousands more followed. Destination image is the product of all representations, projections, and perceptions transmitted and interpreted based on a specific place (Gallarza et al., 2002; Hunter, 2008). The image destination theory identifies the term as a generic concept to describe the complex relationships between imagery, projected destination image, and perceived destination image (Hunter, 2012).

Gunn (1972) has identified three image destination types, based on the factors contributing to creating it and the stages in which the image is formed: organic image, induced image, and modified-induced image. Other researchers such as Bonn, Joseph and Dai (2005), Govers, Go and Kumar (2007), or Hosany, Ekinci and Uysal (2006) also used this approach. The induced image results from tourists assimilating the information transmitted through the explicit communication actions implemented by DMOs. Gartner (1993) states that DMOs can use an extensive range of mediums to transmit the image desired by the public. Many studies have concentrated on the image projected through various sources, such as governmental promotion documents (Andreu, Bigne and Cooper, 2001), T.V. commercials (Pan, Tsai and Lee, 2011), travel guides (van Gorp and Beneker, 2007), and travel magazines (Song and Hsu, 2013).

The next stage of academic research on destination image focused on attitudinal theory as the basis for the studies on measuring destination image (Baloglu, 1997; Pike, 2009; Stepchenkova and Morrison, 2006). In this case, the image destination is analyzed through three interconnected components: cognitive, affective, and conative (Dobni and Zinkhan, 1990; Embacher and Buttle, 1989; Gartner, 1993). The cognitive dimension implies what a tourist knows and understands about a destination (Boulding, 1956; Watson and Hill, 1993). The affective dimension includes emotions, values, attitudes, and feelings (Watson and Hill, 1993). As the behavioral one, the conative dimension refers to the way individuals act regarding a specific destination by deciding to visit or not (Gartner, 1993; Pike and Ryan 2004).

Often, marketers control the projected image by focusing on cognitive components such as price, convenience, and availability (Alcañiz, García, and Blas, 2009; Michaelidou et al., 2013), although

empirical studies have emphasized the essential role emotions and feelings play in the projected image (Baloglu and Brinberg 1997; Mazanec 2010).

Other researchers define a destination image as a mental construct created based on the selected impressions, or the total number of impressions generated by the destination (Fakeye and Crompton, 1991; Reynolds, 1965). This definition underlines the importance of the reality frames, aspects, and components selected by DMOs marketers to be included in promotional materials, video ads, and promotional clips. The destination image is a holistic expression of all thoughts (knowledge, impressions, biases, fantasies, beliefs, and ideas) an individual has about a specific place (Crompton, 1979; Reilly, 1990). One of the fundamental problems studies about destination image have is that images are “holistic” representations of a place, and in their attempts to measure them, researchers must see them as components or singular attributes (Jenkins, 1999). Therefore, analyzing a commercial or promotional clip is the same as segmenting a collection of images by sequence, frames, and scenes (Lee, Tsai and Pan, 2011). Therefore, in this paper, destination image is evaluated and outlined by the perspective of “themes” and “frames”.

Together with other means contributing to creating a destination image, promotional clips or videos offer the audience a basis to imagine, fantasize, and dream about a destination (Pan, Tsai and Lee, 2011). Through commercial advertising, marketers try to create a cognitive, affective, or conative answer in their audience (Decrop, 2007). Videoclips are powerful marketing instruments that allow for a large variety of images in a compressed format (MacKay and Fesenmaier, 2000). They transpose human dreams and desires to visit a destination and intensify motivations to do so (Tussyadiah and Fesenmaier, 2009). As the most influential promotional instrument used for destination image, videos are its most visual description and most vivid illustration (Hou et al., 2016). However, despite its prevalence in the public space, tourism advertising is less studied in tourism literature (Butler, 1990; Feighey, 2003).

A representative study is that of Pan, Tsai and Lee (2011), who evaluated New Zealand’s destination image through T.V. commercials. Based on a systemic approach, they have identified several visual elements and specific themes meant to create a specific mental or affective response from the audience. Furthermore, Leung, Dickinger and Nixon (2017) have examined Macao’s projected image and its impact on visitor’s image perceptions and visitation intentions by analyzing the content of promotional clips. A similar study by Hou et al. (2011) looked at the promotional clips for the leading Chinese tourism attractions and analyzed the standard content components, orientation, and presentation and persuasion models.

In another similar analysis which used visual content analysis methods on the photographs used in the tourism brochures for the city of Seoul, Hunter (2012) proposed that tourism researchers should analyze and project better the visual image of the destination, with all its connotations, so that it becomes more representative to the real interests and experiences of the residents and visitors. Choi, Lehto and Morrison (2007) have tried to identify how Macao’s image as a tourism destination is represented on the Internet, through visual data and storytelling, by several online sources, including Macao’s official tourism website, tourism agencies, online tourism magazines and guides, and travel blogs.

3. Methodology

Krippendorff (1980, p. 21) defined content analysis as “a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from data to their context”, while Neuendorf (2002, p.1) extended the concept to “the systematic, objective, quantitative content analysis of message characteristics”. Content analysis is attribute-based. Its main objective is the quantitative description of the frequencies for specific themes and attributes from a collection of images to identify the central themes, random aspects, grouping, and other related issues (Stepchenkova and Zhan, 2013).

When applying content analysis, the basis was Dimitrova et al. (2002), who state that the first steps of the analysis are segmenting the clips in scenes and frames and extracting the keyframes. Based on this systematic approach, a coding schema was developed so that every scene can be coded for further analysis. The current research focuses only on the visual content analysis of the promotional clips. The evaluation matrix was created starting from the image attributes proposed by Beerli and Martin (2004) due to their reliability in previous studies. The image attributes identified in

the studies of Leung, Dickinger, and Nixon (2017), Pan, Tsai, and Lee (2011), and the research framework proposed by Echtner and Ritchie (1991) helped refine and adapt the items from the evaluation matrix. According to MacKay and Couldwell (2004), content analysis moved from descriptive to interpretative. Since this process is highly subjective, the items' interpretation was triangulated through "meaning cross-checks" between the various research team members. (Pratt 2009).

The Internet is an integrated part of our everyday life, hosting both our workplace and our leisure activities. Furthermore, the Internet has a massive capacity for storage, unlimited resources, and the most cost-effective means to virtual download, research, and store data virtually forever. Therefore, it was only logical that the promotional clips for the analyzed tourism destination were found on the Internet, either on official DMOs websites, the YouTube or Facebook page of the tourism destination. The research design quality was ensured by paying attention to objectivity, systematization, sampling, and reliability. To establish objectivity, rules, procedures, and training were provided to coders, followed by pretests. A data collection design that defined identifiable characteristics (i.e., natural resources, atmosphere of the place etc.) was used to achieve systematization. Reliability among observers' assessments was determined, and it is reported in the findings.

3.1. The analyzed sample

The selected promotional clips are that of the 50 of the world's most visited cities by international tourists according to "Top 100 City Destinations" that have presentation videos (Euromonitor International, 2019). The video ads were distributed on the Youtube channel or the Facebook page of the DMOs. Because the cities of Shenzhen, Taipei, Mecca, Medina, Agra, Riyadh and Florence do not have a video ad on Youtube or Facebook, the ads were analyzed for the following 50 cities: Bangkok, London, Macao, Singapore, Paris, Dubai, New York City, Kuala Lumpur, Istanbul, Delhi, Antalya, Mumbai, Phuket, Rome, Tokyo, Pattaya, Taipei, Guangzhou, Prague, Seoul, Amsterdam, Miami, Osaka, Los Angeles, Shanghai, Ho Chi Minh City, Denpasar, Barcelona, Las Vegas, Milan, Chennai, Vienna, Johor Bahru, Jaipur, Cancun, Berlin, Cairo, Athens, Orlando, Moscow, Venice, Madrid, Ha Long, Dublin, Hanoi, Toronto, Johannesburg, Sydney, Munich and Jakarta. In total, 129 minutes and 46 seconds of promotional videos posted between 2012-2019 were analyzed. The cities were divided by their geographical location: Asia and the Pacific (23), Europe (17), Americas (7) and the Middle East and Africa (3).

3.2. The coding procedure

The codebook contains the code name, operational definition, text examples and coding procedures. The literature review for the projected image of tourism destination provided the codes. A focus group between the members of the research team identified the themes. Two observers were selected and trained regarding the methodology to follow while analyzing the ads' content and performing the coding activity. The research team discussed the final codebook with the two coders to clarify the ambiguities and the use of the codebook. Then the two observers re-examined the coding scheme and discussed the definitions and coding rules. A pretest was carried on, in which the observers analyzed ten video ads of cities that were not included in the analysis. The two observers independently coded the ten videos, then the results were compared, and the differences were discussed, so the two coders reached a common understanding of the codes. The coding instrument was applied to each video. Each observer analyzed all 50 videos. Each video was coded for the dimensions of natural resources; atmosphere of the place; culture, history, art; tourist infrastructure; entertainment resources; shopping resources; social environment; other resources; and the region to which the city belongs. The final codebook consisted of 53 items. Because the promotional video clips in our sample contained more than one theme, each theme was coded as present (1) or absent (0).

The projected image of the tourism destination was analyzed based on the calculated frequencies of all the variables that pertained to the dimensions used. Cross-tables were used to evaluate the main themes across the region of where the city belongs.

3.3. Study reliability

When multiple coders are used for content analysis, a significant concern is the consistency between coders regarding how the themes should be coded (Bush, Hair and Bush, 1983). To compute the intercoder's reliability, an analysis was performed, using the Kappa statistic to determine the consistency among coders. The agreement percent was perfect for the themes: natural resources; culture, history, art; tourist infrastructure; entertainment resources; shopping resources, and other resources, so the intercoder reliability was determined to be $Kappa=1.0(p<0.001)$. In the case of atmosphere of the place, the reliability was almost perfect, with $Kappa=0.891(p<0.001)$ for the item vibrant cultural life, and $Kappa=1.0(p<0.001)$ for all the other items (O'Connor and Joffe, 2020).

3.4. Findings

In the *natural resources dimension* (Table 1), the most prominent frames featured in the promotional videos were spectacular views (56%) and rivers (44%). Most cities in Asia and the Pacific (60.9%) relied on spectacular views to promote themselves as a tourism destination, followed by 57.1% of cities in the Americas and 47.1% of European cities. 57.1% of the promotional clips from the Americas featured at least a river, followed by Europe (47.1%) and Asia and the Pacific (34.8%). Although the percentage is higher for Africa and the Middle East (66.7%) for both items, the results are not as relevant as those from the other regions due to the small sample size. The next popular image frame was beaches/seafront (40%), the cities located in the Americas leading in this category as well; however, the second place was occupied by cities in Asia and the Pacific (43.5%). Forests/national parks were fourth on the hierarchy (36%), with more emphasis on fauna (34%) than flora (30%), and mountains were visible in only 20% of the clips. Interestingly enough, fjords, a particular type of landform that not many destinations have, appeared only in clips promoting two cities from Asia and the Pacific (8.7%).

Table 1. The distribution of items from the 'Natural resources' dimension

Natural resources	Asia / Pacific		Europe		Americas		Middle East/ Africa		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Spectacular Views	14	60.9	8	47.1	4	57.1	2	66.7	28	56
Rivers	8	34.8	8	47.1	4	57.1	2	66.7	22	44
Beaches/seafront	10	43.5	5	29.4	4	57.1	1	33.3	20	40
Forests/National parks	13	56.5	2	11.8	3	42.9	0	0	18	36
Fauna	11	47.8	4	23.5	1	14.3	1	33.3	17	34
Flora	11	47.8	3	17.6	1	14.3	0	0	15	30
Mountains	6	26.1	2	11.8	1	14.3	1	33.3	10	20
Anthropogenic resources	4	17.4	1	5.9	1	14.3	0	0	6	12
Fjords	2	8.7	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	4

In the *atmosphere of the place dimension* (Table 2), the most prominent frames in the analyzed promotional videos were about inclusivity (82%). The term was applied to all the frames promoting racial, sexual, religious, age and disability related diversity. Due to this item's importance, a sub-analysis was conducted in a separate table on each category. As for the total theme of inclusivity, Asia and the Pacific cities heavily project this aspect (87%), followed closely by the cities in the Americas (85.7%) and European ones (76.5%). Not surprisingly, this was featured in most clips from Africa and the Middle East (66.7%). The second item with excellent scores was vibrancy (80%), applied to energy-filled frames and scenes with many people moving together. Asia and the Pacific cities are still in the lead (87%), followed by American cities (85.7%), and lastly, European ones (64.7%). This aspect was one of the few visible in all the clips promoting cities in Africa and the Middle East. The concepts of adventurous, exploring and escaping, and welcoming both had the same total projection (78%). The difference, in this case, is that American cities lead for adventure (85.7%), while Asia and

the Pacific cities lead for welcoming (87%), and European cities are in third place (76.5%) and second place (70.6%) respectively. Welcoming was also one of the few aspects promoted by all the clips for cities in Africa and the Middle East. Relaxing inducing frames were present in 72% of all the analyzed clips, with American cities using them in 85.7% of the cases, followed by European cities (82.4%), and Asia and the Pacific cities (65.2%). Overall, the cities present themselves as entertaining in 68% of the clips and romantic in 62%. Broken down by region, American cities incline towards the concept of entertaining (85.7%), but European cities go for the romantic imagery (76.5%). Asia and the Pacific cities lead in vibrant cultural life (69.9%) and exotic imagery (60.9%), but in total, these aspects were present in only 52% and 34%, respectively, of the clips analyzed. Also, vibrant cultural life was missing from all the clips promoting African and Middle East cities. Half of the world's most visited cities presented themselves as having an enthusiastic atmosphere, with American cities in the lead (57.1%), followed by Asia and the Pacific (56.6%), and Europe (41.2%). With nine out of ten items from this dimension present in at least 50% of the analyzed promotional videos, it is clear that the focus of the promotional messages created for the campaigns was on intangible benefits and experience, and less on the material elements which identify the tourism destination.

Table 2. The distribution of items from the Atmosphere of the place' dimension

Atmosphere of the place	Asia / Pacific		Europe		Americas		Middle East/ Africa		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Inclusivity	20	87	13	76.5	6	85.7	2	66.7	41	82
Vibrancy/energy of the place	20	87	11	64.7	6	85.7	3	100	40	80
Adventurous, exploring, escaping	18	78.3	13	76.5	6	85.7	2	66.7	39	78
Welcoming	20	87	12	70.6	4	57.1	3	100	39	78
Relaxing	15	65.2	14	82.4	6	85.7	1	33.3	36	72
Entertaining	15	65.2	11	64.7	6	85.7	2	66.7	34	68
Romantic	12	52.2	13	76.5	5	71.4	1	33.3	31	62
Vibrant cultural life	16	69.6	7	41.2	3	42.9	0	0	26	52
Enthusiastic	13	56.5	7	41.2	4	57.1	1	33.3	25	50
Exotic	14	60.9	1	5.9	1	14.3	1	33.3	17	34

As mentioned previously, the concept of inclusivity was further analyzed in all its components (Table 3). American cities were the ones who emphasized being racially (85.7%) and sexually and gender-related diverse (42.9%), less than a third promoted age-related diversity, and none underlined religious and disability-related diversity. Asia and the Pacific cities promoted the idea of racial diversity (69.6%), age-related and religious diversity (26.1% for both), and very few cities went with disability (8.7%) and sexual and gender-related diversity (4.34%). European cities promoted the idea of racial (58.8%) and age-related diversity (41.2%), followed by sexual and gender-related diversity (29.4%), religious diversity (11.8%), and disability-related disability (5.9%). The only element of inclusivity projected by the cities of Africa and the Middle East was racial diversity (66.7%).

Table 3. The distribution of subdivision for the 'Inclusivity' frame

Inclusivity	Asia / Pacific		Europe		Americas		Middle East/ Africa	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Racial diversity	16	69.6	10	58.8	6	85.7	2	66.7
Age-related diversity	6	26.1	7	41.2	2	28.6	0	0
Sexual and gender-related diversity	1	4.34	5	29.4	3	42.9	0	0
Religious diversity	6	26.1	2	11.8	0	0	0	0
Disability-related diversity	2	8.7	1	5.9	0	0	0	0

The most important feature of *the culture, history, and art dimension* was historical and archeological buildings (Table 4), featured in 90% of the analyzed promotional videos. As a staple of cultural tourism, they were featured in all the clips promoting European cities, in 95.7% of the videos from Asia and the Pacific and 71.4% of those promoting cities from the Americas. The Middle East and Africa had the lowest representation of this feature at 33.3%. Not surprisingly, next on the list are local experiences (82%) and cultural events (74%), which were visible for the American cities (100%, and 85.7% respectively), featured prominently in Asia and the Pacific cities (91.3, and 78.3% respectively), and lower for European cities (58.8%, and 70.6% respectively). Museums and arts, but also ways of life, both have the same total percentage of representation (66%), but in their case, American cities emphasized their museums (85.7%), while Asia and the Pacific cities emphasized their way of life (78.3%). Ways of life also had a better representation for cities in the Middle East and Africa (66.7%). Next in the hierarchy are customs (62%), handicrafts (58%) and artistic and cultural activities (56%). If for customs and handicrafts, Asia and Pacific cities are in the lead (78.3% and 82.6%, respectively), in the case of artistic and cultural activities, the emphasis comes from American cities (71.4%). The lowest total represented item was local history (14%), with only Asia and the Pacific cities making it a relevant aspect (13%).

Table 4. The distribution of items from the Culture, history, and art' dimension

Culture, history, art	Asia / Pacific		Europe		Americas		Middle East/ Africa		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
	Historical and archeological buildings	22	95.7	17	100	5	71.4	1	33.3	45
Local experiences	21	91.3	10	58.8	7	100	3	100	41	82
Cultural events	18	78.3	12	70.6	6	85.7	1	33.3	37	74
Ways of life	18	78.3	9	52.9	4	57.1	2	66.7	33	66
Museums and art	15	65.2	12	70.6	6	85.7	0	0	33	66
Customs	18	78.3	9	52.9	3	42.9	1	33.3	31	62
Handicraft	19	82.6	7	41.2	2	28.6	1	33.3	29	58
Artistic and cultural activities	11	47.8	12	70.6	5	71.4	0	0	28	56
Local history	3	13	2	11.8	1	14.3	1	33.3	7	14

The highest total representation in *the tourism infrastructure dimension* (Table 5) was for restaurants and fine dining (90%). This was an aspect emphasized by American cities (100%), Asia and the Pacific cities (95.7%) and close behind by European cities (82.4%). Interestingly enough, street food appeared in only 52% of the clips, mainly for Asia and the Pacific cities (69.6%), while being less representative for European cities (35.3%) and American ones (28.6%). The next on the list are modes of transport (72%), which were emphasized in clips from European cities (82.4%), and Asia and the Pacific cities (73.9%), with American cities lagging (42.9%). This was followed by transport structure (58%), where European cities are still in the first place (58.8%), but the balance shifted subtly between American cities (57.1%) and Asia and the Pacific cities (56.5%). Hotels and resorts were featured in only 42% of the commercials, with a strong emphasis for American cities (71.4%), followed by Asia and the Pacific cities (47.8%), and with a weak presence for European cities (17.6%). The many visible frames of hotels and resorts in the promotional videos about cities in the Americas can be explained by the fact that the hotel industry in the USA (the country with the most cities analyzed for the region) is one of the best developed at the international level, as both the biggest hotel chains and the largest individual hotels are located there. Another noteworthy aspect is that the tourism infrastructure dimension's items all had the same percentage of representation (66.7%) for the Middle East and African cities.

Table 5. The distribution of items from the ‘Tourist infrastructure’ dimension

Tourist infrastructure	Asia / Pacific		Europe		Americas		Middle East/ Africa		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Restaurants and fine dining	22	95.7	14	82.4	7	100	2	66.7	45	90
Mode of transport	17	73.9	14	82.4	3	42.9	2	66.7	36	72
Transport infrastructure	13	56.5	10	58.8	4	57.1	2	66.7	29	58
Street food	16	69.6	6	35.3	2	28.6	2	66.7	26	52
Hotels and resorts	11	47.8	3	17.6	5	71.4	2	66.7	21	42

In the case of *entertainment resources* (Table 6), outdoor sports activities ruled by far (94%), as they were a staple for clips promoting European and American cities (100%) and prominently featured for Asia and the Pacific cities (87%). The second place was taken by nightclubs and casinos (74%), who are representative for American cities (85.7%), and less for European (76.5%), and Asia and the Pacific cities (69.6%). Next, the clips presented adventurous and unusual activities/experiences (68%) and walking tours and excursions (66%), which are quite prominent for American cities (85.7% for both), while Asia and the Pacific and European cities put less emphasis on them (73.9% and 65.2%, respectively 52.9% and 64.7%). Parks, zoos, botanical gardens, and aquariums featured in 62% of the total promotional videos, extreme sports in 46% of them, and watching sports competitions were visible in 30% of the commercials, with American cities taking the lead for the three items (71.4%). A possible explanation for the last two items is that in the region of North America, where many of the analyzed cities are located, various and large sports competitions take place regularly, which gather an impressive gathering of participants and spectators.

In the case of the Middle East and Africa, the best representation was for outdoor sports activities (100%), adventurous and unusual activities /experiences, nightclubs and casinos (66.7%), while the rest appeared in 33.3% of the clips analyzed except for watching sports competitions, it being the only item missing from the clips.

Table 6. The distribution of items from the ‘Entertainment resources’ dimension

Entertainment resources	Asia / Pacific		Europe		Americas		Middle East/ Africa		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Outdoor sports activities	20	87	17	100	7	100	3	100	47	94
Nightclubs and casinos	16	69.6	13	76.5	6	85.7	2	66.7	37	74
Adventurous and unusual activities /experiences	17	73.9	9	52.9	6	85.7	2	66.7	34	68
Walking tours and excursions	15	65.2	11	64.7	6	85.7	1	33.3	33	66
Parks, zoos, botanical gardens, and aquariums	16	69.6	9	52.9	5	71.4	1	33.3	31	62
Extreme sports	11	47.8	6	35.3	5	71.4	1	33.3	23	46
Watching sports competitions	7	30.4	3	17.6	5	71.4	0	0	15	30

In the case of *shopping resources* (Table 7), shopping streets were visible in 70% of the analyzed clips, Asia and the Pacific cities taking first place (91.3%), followed by cities in the Americas (57.1%), and European cities (52.9%). Secondly, souvenir shops appeared in 56% of the promotional videos, Asia and the Pacific cities still in the lead (73.9%), followed by European cities (52.9%), and by American ones (14.3%). Thirdly, local markets made an appearance in 50% of the analyzed videos, with the distribution as follows: Asia and the Pacific cities presented them in 69.6% of the cases, European cities had them presented in 41.2% of the clips, and American cities only for 14.3%, or only one case. This distribution of shopping resources was not surprising, as numerous Asian cities, out of which many are in the analyzed region, are considered the “hottest” shopping destinations, with shopping a definitive characteristic of urban Asian culture. All these items had the same percentage of

representation in the Middle East and African cities analyzed for this research, 33.3%. The least represented shopping resource in the analyzed clips was malls, as they featured in only 44% of the analyzed clips. Interestingly enough, malls had a heavy presence in clips promoting American destinations (71.4%), followed by the Middle East and African cities (66.7%), Asia and the Pacific cities (43.5%), and lastly, European cities (29.4%).

Table 7. The distribution of items from the ‘Shopping resources’ dimension

Shopping resources	Asia / Pacific		Europe		Americas		Middle East/ Africa		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Shopping streets	21	91.3	9	52.9	4	57.1	1	33.3	35	70
Souvenir shops	17	73.9	9	52.9	1	14.3	1	33.3	28	56
Local markets	16	69.6	7	41.2	1	14.3	1	33.3	25	50
Malls	10	43.5	5	29.4	5	71.4	2	66.7	22	44

For the *dimension of social environment* (Table 8), the only item analyzed was how friendly the locals were shown to be. Not surprisingly, given the percentage allotted to welcoming in the atmosphere of the place dimension (78%), friendly locals were prominently shown in 82% of the analyzed promotional videos. They were a staple for Asian cities (87%) and American ones (85.7%) and a bit less visible in the clips about European cities (76.5%) and the Middle East and African cities (66.7%).

Table 8. The distribution of items from the ‘Social environment’ dimension

Social environment	Asia / Pacific		Europe		Americas		Middle East/ Africa		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Friendly locals	20	87	13	76.5	6	85.7	2	66.7	41	82

The last dimension to be analyzed included the miscellaneous items that could not be assigned to the previous categories (Table 9). The first item, day and night succession, was visible in 74% of the total promotional videos. Asia and the Pacific cities used it in 82.6% of the promotional clips, followed by American cities (71.4%) and European cities (70.5%). The second item emphasized in most clips was city particularities, which appeared in 70% of the analyzed videos. This aspect was promoted by American cities (71.4%), European cities (70.6%), and Asia and the Pacific cities (69.6%). The third most popular item was sustainability and nature, which appeared in 60% of the promotional videos. This item was visibly present for Asia and the Pacific cities (78.3%), but less so for European cities (52.9%) and American ones (42.9%). 20% of the promotional videos showed technological development and innovation images, not surprising since this is an aspect that is more attractive to investors and business people than tourists. This was an aspect present in 26.1% of the promotional videos of Asia and the Pacific cities, in 14.3% of videos for American cities and 11.8% of videos for European cities. Universities were present in 18% of the clips, a feature mostly reserved to European cities (29.4%) and Asia and the Pacific cities (13%), but in none of the videos promoting American cities. Smart city aspects were visible in 10% of the promotional videos, more a point for Asia and the Pacific cities (13%) than European cities (11.8%), and not relevant for American cities. Tourism information centers were in 8% of the videos and visible mostly for European cities (17.6%), and awards and distinctions appeared in 4% of the promotional clips, and only for Asia and the Pacific cities (8.7%). Besides city particularities, the only item present in 66.7% of the clips promoting cities from the Middle East and Africa, day and night succession, technological development and innovation, and universities, were also present in clips (33.3%), while all the other items had no presence.

Table 9. The distribution of items from the ‘Other resources’ dimension

Other resources	Asia / Pacific		Europe		Americas		Middle East/ Africa		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Day/night	19	82.6	12	70.6	5	71.4	1	33.3	37	74
City particularities	16	69.6	12	70.6	5	71.4	2	66.7	35	70
Sustainability and nature	18	78.3	9	52.9	3	42.9	0	0	30	60
Technological development and innovation	6	26.1	2	11.8	1	14.3	1	33.3	10	20
Universities	3	13	5	29.4	0	0	1	33.3	9	18
Smart city aspects	3	13	2	11.8	0	0	0	0	5	10
Tourist information center	1	4.3	3	17.6	0	0	0	0	4	8
Awards and distinctions	2	8.7	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	4

4. Conclusions

Projecting an accurate image destination is an essential part of cities worldwide’ promotional strategies to attract international tourists. Considering all the promotional videos analyzed for this study, the most common frames were outdoor sports activities, historical and archeological buildings, restaurants, and fine dining. These are all elements expected from all the tourism destinations available, regardless of the region, climate, or specific culture where they belong. The least common frames found in the promotional videos were tourism information center, smart city aspects, and awards and distinctions. Tourism information centers are an essential requirement for international tourism destinations, making sense that it was not an aspect many cities emphasized in their promotional videos. Both smart city aspects and awards and distinctions are related to the local administration’s initiatives and projects and less of a distinctive tourism competitive advantage.

Worldwide, cities used their promotional videos to emphasize the intangible benefits and experiences they offered, as proven by most of the items included in the atmosphere of the place dimension, out of which inclusivity was the most visible. However, at a closer look, only racial diversity obtained big scores across all the regions, being most prevalent for American cities, followed by modest scores for age-related diversity. In contrast to the current social movement present in both Europe and especially North America, sexual and gender-related diversity had a moderate score for cities in the Americas, modest scores for those in Europe, and very weak scores for the cities in Asia and the Pacific, where only one city made a point of mentioning it. Religious diversity was moderately visible for Asia and Pacific cities but missing for the American ones, and disability-related diversity appeared in only three promotional videos.

Looking at the four major tourism regions containing the cities chosen for the analysis: Asia and the Pacific, Europe, the Americas and the Middle East and Africa, some particularities emerged which underline the profile promoted by each region.

In the case of Asia and the Pacific, the biggest group with 23 cities, the most prominent frames appearing in the clips were: historical and archeological buildings, restaurants and fine dining, local experiences, shopping streets, outdoor sports activities, friendly locals, and as affective aspects they emphasized inclusivity, vibrancy and place energy, and welcoming. The least present were frames depicting local history, universities, smart cities aspects, fjords, awards and distinctions, and tourist information centers’ existence.

In the case of Europe, the second-biggest group with 17 cities, the most prominent frames appearing in the clips were: historical and archeological buildings, outdoor sports activities, restaurants and fine dining, modes of transport; as for the affective perspective, they emphasized relaxing. The least present were frames depicting forests and national parks, technological developments and innovation, local history, smart city aspects, anthropogenic resources, and exotic atmosphere. Completely missing were frames showing fjords, and awards and distinctions.

In the case of the Americas, the third group with 7 cities, the most prominent frames appearing in the videos were: outdoors sports activities, restaurants and fine dining, and local experiences – which were present in all the clips, followed by friendly locals, nightclubs and casinos, cultural events,

museums and art, walking tours and excursions, and adventurous and unusual activities/experiences. The promotional clips' affective elements were inclusivity, adventurous, exploring, escaping, vibrancy, and entertaining. The least present were frames showing souvenir shops, local markets, fauna and flora, mountains, technological development and innovations, local history, anthropogenic resources, and exotic atmosphere. Completely missing were frames showing universities, tourist information centers, smart city aspects, fjords, and awards and distinctions.

The Middle East and Africa, the least represented with only 3 cities, choose to feature most prominently outdoor sports activities, local experiences. As affective elements, the cities emphasized vibrancy and welcoming. Missing from the clips were frames showing museums and art, artistic and cultural activities, vibrant cultural life, watching sports competitions, sustainability and nature, forests and national parks, fjords, flora, anthropogenic resources, tourist information centers, smart city aspects, and awards and distinctions.

5. Future research

Understanding destination image is an essential component of successful tourism planning and marketing; therefore, studies like the current one are essential not only to DMOs, which need to apply the lessons learned from best practice examples so that future attempts at tourism marketing become more representative to the real interests and experiences of the residents and visitors, but also to tourism and marketing researchers which need to have a better understanding of the dimensions and frames used in successful tourism destination promotional videos. Still, this research is limited to the information available at the time of the publishing. Current international trends in promoting tourism destinations might change under the impact of global phenomena such as the COVID-19 pandemic, affecting the tourism industry and more. As a future research agenda, identifying which themes and frames have become prominent in promoting city-level tourism destinations globally after the COVID-19 threat will be especially important for tourism marketing research. Another future direction would be a quantitative study that analyzes the tourists' perceptions of the promotional videos to better refine the dimensions and provide better feedback to the marketers employed by DMOs.

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