

**MARKETING AND COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES IN THE FACE OF MEDIA
INFLUENCE DURING IMAGE CRISIS IN TOURIST DESTINATIONS: THE CASE OF
OURO PRETO AND THE DAM BREAKS**

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Introdução

Ouro Preto, a World Heritage city, is one of the most important historical and cultural tourist destinations in recent Brazilian history. Founded in 1711 and now with 310 years of existence, the city is renowned worldwide for its old mansions, monuments, cuisine, alleyways, and the everyday life of its inhabitants. Tourism in the area holds great significance, particularly in the historical and cultural tourism segment.

Problema de Pesquisa e Objetivo

The image of a destination can encompass the set of beliefs, impressions, and ideas that individuals have access to regarding a specific subject or place (Lin Et Al., 2009; Yüksel; Akgül, 2007), moreover, the consumer decision-making process involves a series of subjective factors (Moutinho, 1987; Medeiros & Cruz, 2006). Considering this, the present study seeks to comprehend the marketing and communication strategies implemented by the Ouro Preto local government.

Fundamentação Teórica

Tourism is a phenomenon that entails various complexities. Beyond its economic aspects, the tourism activity generates and reproduces relationships while creating new forms of sociability with and for destinations (Neves, 2007). In the context of a crisis, marketing and promotion strategies for tourist destinations need to be adapted to deal with challenging circumstances. The images of tourist destinations are closely related to communication because, beyond the image itself, there is also discourse that is produced to add value to the image (Moutinho, 1987).

Metodologia

For this article, a qualitative approach was adopted, with the research being exploratory and descriptive in nature. In addition, six in-depth interviews were conducted with key stakeholders in the tourism field in the municipality, using semi-structured interview scripts. The selection of these stakeholders was based on their proximity to the topic and their role in promoting the tourist destination of Ouro Preto. Furthermore, an analysis of the main headlines published by major media outlets such as G1, Folha de S. Paulo, Estado de Minas, Veja, among others.

Análise dos Resultados

Many of the actions taken aimed to attract media attention in an attempt to reverse the impact of the news about the dams, especially during the "second wave" of headlines related to the statements released by Vale S.A., close to the Holy Week period. The goal was to prevent these headlines from further damaging the destination's image. According to one of the interviewees, one of the strategies adopted was the massive promotion of Holy Week, including the revival of the Procissão do Fogaréu (Procession of the Torches), which had not taken place for many years.

Conclusão

The city of Ouro Preto possesses an exuberant wealth and authentic experiences that go beyond its historical and cultural tourism. However, the construction of the destination's image is largely limited to the massive valorization of its historical heritage, while the city holds a welcoming and mystical essence that promotes genuine and lasting relationships. This unique characteristic could be explored in the construction of the destination's image.

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