

# The traveller gender game! The **branding** challenge in social media with **gamification**: A case study of Tripadvisor

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Deep changes in human relations provided by the internet revolution demand a new approach from tourism businesses and brands to all stakeholders. All companies and organisations will be forced to revise their media, engagement and dialogue with (and between) brands and consumers. The consumers cease to be a mere receiver of content. They start to get engaged in the creation, distribution and dissemination of information. In these complex and multiple scenarios, this study proposes to analyse gamification presence in social media as a 'game changer' in branding approaches.

In social media, brands, products and services are actively discussed and criticized, and the information about them is widely shared. Gamification instigates an active participation of consumers and organisations in these media through the use of techniques and elements originated from game design and applied to new business perspectives. This study was aimed at understanding how gamification in social media can be converted into a competitive edge for brands and how perception and evaluation of these brands is influenced by the consumers' gender. Bearing in mind these objectives, Tripadvisor and its rating system was selected as a case study.

Tripadvisor uses a five point scale on which the users are asked to rate hotels and attractions. A convenience sample from hotels of the Accor hotel chain located in Paul  nia was selected and 196 hotel reviews were analysed. The following users' ratings were considered: overall score, value, location, sleep quality, rooms, cleanliness and service. Men represent the majority of the sample with 58.16% against 24.49% of the women.

When the context of hosting in the sample was observed, it was possible to verify that the majority of hosts made for business purposes occurred at a much higher frequency for men than for women (40.35% and 22.92% respectively). However, the hosts with a spouse or family were lower for men (41.23%) than for women (64.58%).

Exploratory research and theoretical analysis supported by content analysis indicates that companies are starting to invest in communities where consumers are invited to more active participation. Through gamification, social media users are instigated to express their opinion and to engage in effective relationships, as they frequently help to create and improve products and services that can better meet their needs and wishes. Not only results demonstrated that the presence of gamification in the social media has impact for the brands, but also indicated that women have a stranger contributing to more positive ratings than men.

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