User-generated Destination Image through Weblogs: A Comparison of Pre- and Post-visit Images

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Abstract
Despite the increase in use of user-generated electronic content as an information source by tourists, its influence in destination image formation is not yet fully understood. This research aimed to explore the communicated destination image held by tourists to Zanzibar Island (Tanzania) by utilizing communications in Lonely Planet. Content analysis of 214 posts using TextSTAT yielded 13 destination attributes. Comparatively, functional attributes were dominant in potential tourists whereas post-travel image perception was dominated by psychological attributes. Those who have visited tended to have a positive image of the island compared with those who are planning to visit the island. The results necessitate the differential use of the functional- and psychological-based information in communicating with tourists at different information-search stages. Studies to capture communications in another language are recommended as well as the employment of methodologies that might reveal hidden images held by tourists.

Keywords
Destination image,
Content analysis,
Weblogs,
Travel status