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# The impact of social media on destination branding: Consumer-generated videos versus destination marketer-generated videos

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## Abstract
A one-way conversation with consumers in destination branding was pervasive when destination-marketing organizations created and generated their destination brands. However, social media has made a two-way conversation possible with consumers participating in the development of a destination brand identity/image. This study investigates consumer perception of destination brands created by consumer-generated videos and destination-marketing organization videos. The findings suggest that consumer-generated videos do not carry the same destination brand as destination marketer-generated videos. In addition, consumer-generated videos have little positive impact on a destination brand. This study provides insight into destination-branding strategies with respect to the roles that social media plays in creating destination-brand identity and image.

## Keywords
Consumer-generated content, destination branding, marketer-generated content, social media, two-way communication

## Introduction

Traditionally, destination branding was created and generated by destination-marketing organizations (DMOs) (Blain et al., 2005) to create a positive image and differentiate their destinations from other destinations (Cai, 2002; Gnoth et al., 2007). Therefore, unique logos and slogans of destinations have been created by DMOs (Lee et al., 2006); this translates into a one-way conversation with the consumer. However, the emergence of the Internet has altered the environment encompassing the marketing mix (Dev et al., 2010). Methods of marketing communication have been forced to change with the advent of the Internet and social media, for example, Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube (Dev et al., 2010).

Specifically, social media has become a powerful source of "word of mouth" communication. Since social media provides sites for consumers to share their experiences and opinions with others, it can have a positive influence

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on consumers if there are satisfied customers or a negative influence on others if there are unsatisfied customers (Trusov et al., 2009). In addition, social media influences the purchase decision-making process. According to Xiang and Gretzel (2010), social media sites are substantially directed to those who look for travel information through search engines. During the consumers' information search, social media has become one of the major sources of online travel information (O'Çonnor, 2008; Xiang and Gretzel, 2010).

Today, many DMOs have incorporated branding techniques with social media. DMOs are using social media to create destination-brand identity and image by posting their branding activities on YouTube and creating pages on Facebook. Social media has made a two-way conversation possible with the consumer participating in the development of a destination-brand identity/image (Hipperson, 2010). In other words, not only DMOs but also consumers are able to post what they want on social media websites and gain attention from others. Currently, a substantial number of consumer-generated videos (CGVs) exist on destinations; these CGVs have the ability to influence consumers' brand perception of a destination. Therefore, DMOs are no longer the major controllers over their brands and messages and consumers are also creators and distributors of social media content.

Accordingly, DMOs recognize the importance of having consumer-generated social media contents. They have sought ways to market their destination utilizing the Internet and social media, the most favored media choices for those born after the late 1970s (Dev et al., 2010). This group of individuals has a high buying power; therefore, research is necessary to discover and refine effective branding strategies. It is important for destination marketers to understand whether CGVs deliver the same destination-brand identity/image as marketing organizations have traditionally delivered. If not, how does the destination identity and brand created by CGVs impact consumer choice? Currently, there is a lack of research on consumer perceptions of videos and contexts created by consumers and those created by DMOs.

Thus, this study proposes three research questions:

1. How do consumers perceive destination brands created by consumer-generated content?
2. How do consumers perceive destination brands created by DMOs?

3. How are consumer perceptions of a destination brand created by consumer-generated content different from a destination brand created by DMOs?

## Literature review

### Destination branding

Branding techniques have become "powerful tools" for tourist destination marketers because a brand can identify and differentiate the destination through a positive image that ties tourists to the destination emotionally (Cai, 2002; Gnoth et al., 2007). A brand is defined "as name, term sign, or combination of them intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of the competition" (Kotler, 2000: 404); a branding concept incorporating visitor experience into the process of branding is supported within a tourist destination context (Blain et al., 2005). Ritchie and Ritchie (1998) define a destination brand as follows:

> A name, symbol, logo and word mark or other graphic that both identifies and differentiates the destination; furthermore, it conveys the promise of a memorable travel experience that is uniquely associated with the destination; it also serves to consolidate and reinforce the recollection of pleasurable memories of the destination experience. (p. 103)

According to Tasci and Kozak (2006), a destination brand refers to the marketing activities of DMOs and would influence awareness, choice, satisfaction, recommendation, and loyalty. Many DMOs use destination branding as their main strategy because a strong brand creates value added to the seller and buyer as it builds strong equity (Cai, 2002). Many state DMOs have created logos and slogans for their destination to differentiate and promote themselves from others (Lee et al., 2006). A number of destination-branding success stories were introduced in _Destination branding: creating the unique destination proposition_ (Morgan, 2004).

A branding technique, such as brand advertising, was used by DMOs before the advent of the Internet, and was referred to as a one-way communication (Pereboom, 2011). However, due to the use of social media offered through the Internet, brand marketers are currently facing a dilemma (Hipperson, 2010). Today, consumers

often refer to social media posts by other consumers when they make a purchase decision; the brand posting can have a positive or negative impact on the brand purchase (Hipperson, 2010). Therefore, because of social media, destination branding has become a two-way communication. Consumers not only share their experience on a brand but also create a brand by posting their own content, which can consist of videos, a few words, sentences, or essays on the brand. Social media has made it possible for marketer-generated content and consumer-generated content to coexist.

## Social media

Although the term *social media* is difficult to define, it is considered an Internet-based application that conveys consumer-generated content (Blackshaw, 2006). The applications refer to consumers' activities related to the Internet such as "posting," "tagging," "digging," or "blogging." Consumer-generated content is considered "a mixture of fact and opinion, impression and sentiment, founded and unfounded tidbits, experiences, and even rumor" (Blackshaw and Nazzaro, 2006: 4). It is created, disseminated, and used by consumers and aimed at educating each other about products, brands, services, and issues (Blackshaw and Nazzaro, 2006). According to Bughin (2007), the chief motivations of consumers for posting content on social media were found to consist of a hunger for fame, the urge to have fun, and a desire to share experiences with friends. Therefore, social media content is produced by consumers among themselves, and can challenge DMOs (Xiang and Gretzel, 2010).

The use of social media on the Internet has changed the information search and contributed to the five key marketing functions—promotion, product distribution, communication, management, and research (Schmallegger and Carson, 2008). DMOs use social media, especially blogs, as part of their business strategy for each of the above-listed functions (Schmallegger and Carson, 2008), while travelers use social media in their online travel information search stage of the purchase decision-making process (Xiang and Gretzel, 2010). Xiang and Gretzel (2010) found that travelers were directed to social media as a result of search activity and suggested that social media plays an important role in traveler information search behavior. In addition, social media influences the decision-making process of prospective tourists (Volo, 2010). Comments and recommendations for future intentions to travel to a destination from blogs have an impact on prospective tourists (Volo, 2010).

Word-of-mouth (WOM) marketing is a viable alternative to traditional marketing communication tools and an appealing strategy among practitioners. WOM affects most consumer purchase decisions and has literally no cost and a faster delivery than traditional marketing communication tools (Brooks, 1957; Dichter, 1966; Trusov et al., 2009). Social media on the Internet has empowered marketers to exploit WOM marketing strategies (Kozinets et al., 2010). The impact of WOM on social media has been significantly magnified in the marketplace because one consumer can easily communicate with hundreds or thousands of other consumers about products (Mangold and Faulds, 2009). In addition, companies can communicate with their customers and customers can talk to companies via social media (Mangold and Faulds, 2009). According to Trusov et al. (2009), WOM referrals of social media influence new customer acquisition. In short, social media has been a driving force or a main vehicle for WOM marketing strategies.

Social media has shifted the paradigm of brand creation. Traditionally, company information was available internally and the company controlled information dissemination. However, today company information can be exploited by consumers through social media by either posting comments, opinions, or sharing information with peers (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). These actions result in an enormous amount of consumer-generated content that is easily formed on the Internet through social media. A brand can be created or tailored by consumer-generated content with social media. With consumer-generated content, companies can provide better customer service and attain consumer insights on product innovation. In addition, consumers can carry over company information or content to peers, which is a more effective way to advertise the company's products and services than through traditional advertisements (Foux, 2006). Marketers have acknowledged the benefit of using consumer-generated content because it aids in customer support and/or brand image enhancement/branding strategies (Foux, 2006).

Currently, a substantial number of videos and blogs regarding tourist destinations have been created and posted on social media websites. It is easy to search travel videos posted by individuals or DMOs before making a travel decision. DMOs attempt to build its brand by creating

advertisements and posting them on social media, while a consumer posts and shares his/her experience on a destination brand. Eventually, both the contents generated by a destination and a consumer will comprise the destination brand. It has become necessary for DMOs to monitor consumer-generated content and consumer perceptions on the content. Thus, the following propositions were proposed:

> *Proposition 1*: Consumers have multiple perceptions of a destination brand created by consumers.
> *Proposition 2*: Consumers have multiple perceptions of a destination brand created by DMOs.
> *Proposition 3*: Consumer perceptions of a destination brand created by consumers are different than a destination brand created by DMOs.

## Methods

Given the importance of social media on marketing communications and branding strategies, the first objective of this study was to investigate how consumers perceive destination brands created by consumer-generated content and destination brands created by DMOs. The second objective explores how consumer perceptions of a destination brand created by consumer-generated content differ from a destination brand created by DMOs. Las Vegas was chosen as a target destination. In the past, Las Vegas had an image of "Sin City" with mixed and confusing messages given to consumers. Since Las Vegas experienced high visitor fallout following 9/11, extensive research was undertaken and Las Vegas DMOs rebranded the destination image from "Sin City" to "What Happens in Vegas Stays in Vegas" (Hudson and Ritchie, 2009).

The current study used YouTube for data collection purposes. It is the most popular site for individuals to share videos and comments. Videos posted by individuals and videos posted by DMOs were selected as consumer-generated content and marketer-generated content. To measure consumer perception about destination brands, this study used video comments left on YouTube. Two separate content analyses were conducted to analyze the comments associated with both the CGVs and marketer-generated videos (MGVs). Content analysis is scientific, objective, systematic, quantitative, and can attain a generalizable description of the communication content (Kassarjian, 1977).

Since YouTube poses unique sampling problems, it was important to obtain a good representation of the defined universe (Kassarjian, 1977). At the time of the study (20 September 2011), a search of "Las Vegas" resulted in 1014 videos posted on YouTube. First, the authors gleaned their pool of CGVs. A systematic random sampling technique narrowed down the number of CGVs. Every second video from the list was randomly selected for a total of 506 videos. Each video was scanned to identify who posted it. Those posted by DMOs and videos related to media or news, not related to travel, were excluded. A total of 107 CGVs were drawn.

Next, MGVs were identified by searching the user's name "lasvegas," which is the name of Las Vegas's DMO on YouTube. In total, 91 videos were posted by the destination organization at the time of the study. These videos were referred to as MGVs in this study. Finally, to perform the data analysis all comments that belonged to 107 CGVs and 91 MGVs were saved into two separate text files.

Textual data was content-analyzed using the computer-based content analysis software "CATPAC." This is text-mining software that reduces the text to meaningful dimensions by analyzing a large number of textual files. As explained in the manual by Woelfel (1998),

> CATPAC is a self-organizing artificial neural network that has been optimized for reading text. CATPAC is able to identify the most important words in a text and determine patterns of similarity based on the way they are used in text. (p. 11)

CATPAC includes hierarchical cluster analysis and multidimensional scaling of words, which allow researchers to effectively identify dominant themes that were conveyed in the texts. As a result, CATPAC has been often used in tourism research (Douglas and Mills, 2006; Govers and Go, 2007; Stepchenkova and Morrison, 2008; Tussyadiah and Fesenmaier, 2009). The program identifies the most frequently used words and the co-occurrence of words. Then, it produces visual relationships among the frequently occurring words with a dendrogram. Computer-aided content analysis requires an iterative smoothing procedure for interpretable and meaningful results: (a) certain grammatical and stop words such as *is*, *a*, *the*, and *I* and Internet slangs and

**Table 1.** Descriptive statistics of videos and comments

|  | CGVs | MGVs |
|---|---|---|
| Number of video clips analyzed | 107 | 91 |
| Total number of views (hits) | 4,671,467 | 1,847,448 |
| Average number of views (hits) across all video clips | 50,235 | 20,302 |
| Number of hits on the most viewed video clip | 1,163,362 | 944,379 |
| Number of comments across all video clips | 17,477 | 321 |
| Number of comments on the video clip with the most comments | 5246 | 33 |

Number of video clips analyzed = Number of video clips used in this study; Total number of views (hits) = Total number of times the videos were watched; Average number of views (hits) across all video clips = Total number of hits/Number of videos analyzed; Number of hits on the most viewed video clip = The highest number of hits on a single video; Number of comments across all video clips = Total number of comments of videos analyzed; Number of comments on the video clip with the most comments = The highest number of comments on a single video.
CGV: consumer-generated video; MGV: marketer-generated video.

abbreviations such as *lol*, *rofl*, *btw*, or *gi* are excluded and (b) plurals and past tense are replaced with singulars and present tense. After the technical operations, content analysis was conducted using Ward's clustering method and multidimensional scanning and the five-word window size of CATPAC.

## Results

Consumer comments were collected from 107 CGV clips (CGVCs) and 91 MGV clips (MGVCs) about Las Vegas on the YouTube website. CGVCs were watched more than MGVCs: the total number of CGVC views (hits) was 4,671,467, while the total number of MGVC views (hits) was 1,847,448. (Total number of views are the total number of times the videos were watched or the total number of hits received.) The average number of views (hits) for CGVCs was 50,235 and that for MGVCs was 20,302. The average number of views across all video clips was calculated by dividing the total number of views (hits) across all video clips by the number of video clips analyzed. The most watched video of CGVs was viewed 1,163,362 times and the most watched MGV was viewed 944,379 times. Descriptive statistics of video clips and comments indicate that CGVs attract online users more than MGVs (see Table 1). The key observation regarding the comments is that viewers are much more active when watching CGVs than MGVs. The number of comments by users across all CGVCs analyzed was 17,477, while only 321 comments were made by users across all the MGVCs. The number of comments on the CGV clip with the most comments was 5246, while the MGVC with the most comments received only 33 comments.

### Consumer perception of destination brands created by consumer-generated content

In an analysis of the comments of 107 videos, the most frequently occurring word was *girl*, occurring 621 times (9.8% of total words). The second most frequently used word was *love*, occurring 575 times (9.1%). The third most frequently used word was *show*, occurring 346 times (5.5%). The next most frequently used word was *funny*, occurring 324 times (5.1%). *People* was ranked as the fifth most frequently used word, occurring 321 times (5.1%). *Awesome* (307 times, 4.9%), *good* (306 times, 4.8%), *nice* (295 times, 4.7%), *best* (294 times, 4.7%), and *great* (293 times, 4.6%) were ranked within the top 10 most frequent words (see Table 2).

> *Proposition 1*: Consumers have multiple perceptions of a destination brand created by consumers.

The dendrogram produced by the content analysis of CGVs identified three categories of keywords, and thus supports the first proposition that consumers have multiple perceptions of a destination brand created by consumers (see Figure 1). The first category was titled "adult entertainment" and includes the clustered keywords *amazing*, *awesome*, *good*, *love*, *great*, *show*, *girl*, *people*, *best*, *nice*, *live*, *funny*, *hot*, *hard*, and *real*. The second category was titled "overall feeling" and includes the keywords *cool*, *fun*, and *happy*. The last category was titled "evaluation of videos and music" and includes the keywords *life*, *music*, *wait*, *win*, *water*, *song*, and *shay*. The largest cluster of keywords, "adult entertainment," seems to represent consumer interest in stimulating and provocative content. The comments are often made among negative criticism

**Table 2.** Importance of keywords: frequencies

| Consumer-generated videos | | | Marketer-generated videos | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Word | Frequency | Percent | Word | Frequency | Percent |
| Girl | 621 | 9.8 | Song | 24 | 13.8 |
| Love | 575 | 9.1 | Love | 23 | 13.2 |
| Show | 346 | 5.5 | Best | 9 | 5.2 |
| Funny | 324 | 5.1 | Funny | 9 | 5.2 |
| People | 321 | 5.1 | Girl | 9 | 5.2 |
| Awesome | 307 | 4.9 | People | 9 | 5.2 |
| Good | 306 | 4.8 | Awesome | 7 | 4 |
| Nice | 295 | 4.7 | Great | 7 | 4 |
| Best | 294 | 4.7 | City | 6 | 3.4 |
| Great | 293 | 4.6 | Playing | 6 | 3.4 |
| Hot | 265 | 4.2 | Show | 6 | 3.4 |
| Live | 235 | 3.7 | Good | 5 | 2.9 |
| Song | 216 | 3.4 | Hot | 5 | 2.9 |
| Amazing | 202 | 3.2 | Lights | 5 | 2.9 |
| Real | 184 | 2.9 | Treats | 5 | 2.9 |
| Cool | 163 | 2.6 | Amazing | 4 | 2.3 |
| Shay | 162 | 2.6 | America | 4 | 2.3 |
| Wait | 161 | 2.5 | Club | 4 | 2.3 |
| Fun | 157 | 2.5 | Cool | 4 | 2.3 |
| Life | 154 | 2.4 | Favorite | 4 | 2.3 |
| Water | 152 | 2.4 | Place | 4 | 2.3 |
| Music | 151 | 2.4 | Tuna | 4 | 2.3 |
| Happy | 148 | 2.3 | Wait | 4 | 2.3 |
| Win | 145 | 2.3 | Wrong | 4 | 2.3 |
| Hard | 143 | 2.3 | Brilliant | 3 | 1.7 |

and responses to each other's comments. CGVs appear to have little positive impact on a destination brand and the power of negative and provocative feedback could increase as social media and user-generated comments proliferate. Examples of comments in this category are as follows:

> Your videos are amazing, Great to visit Las Vegas
>
> Cute and sexy lol Wow those girl are getting hotter and hotter: D
>
> I can't believe this trash. It's ridiculous not everyone wants to see sluts dancing around the old pirate show was ten thousand times better
>
> I remember a time when this show didn't include any whorish looking women in it. Now the once family friendly show on the strip has turned into a cheap sex ridden nightmare

## Consumer perception of destination brands created by DMOs

In an analysis of the comments of MGVs, the most frequently occurring word was *song*, occurring 24 times (13.8% of total words) and the

second most prevalent word was *love*, occurring 23 times (13.2% of total words). The third most frequently used word was *best*, *funny*, *girl*, and *people* occurring 9 times each (5.2%). *Awesome* (7 times, 4%), *great* (7 times, 4%), *city* (6 times, 3.4%), *playing* (6 times, 3.4%), and *show* (6 times, 3.4%) were ranked within the top 10 frequently used words (see Table 2).

> *Proposition 2*: Consumers have multiple perceptions of a destination brand created by DMOs.

The dendrogram produced by the content analysis keywords in MGVs identified six clusters and supports the second proposition that consumers have multiple perceptions of a destination brand created by DMOs (see Figure 2). The first category was titled "night city life" and includes the clustered keywords *amazing*, *lights*, and *city*. The second category was titled "gaming" and includes the clustered keywords *awesome*, *playing*, and *cool*. The third category was titled "general and adult entertainment" and includes the clustered keywords *best*, *girl*, *love*, *funny*, *song*, *people*, *wait*, and *hot*. The fourth

```
                        ⎧  AMAZING..............<<<<<<<<<<<
                        ⎪                       <<<<<<<<<<<<
                        ⎪  AWESOME...<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<
                        ⎪            <<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<
                        ⎪  GOOD.....<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<
                        ⎪            <<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<
                        ⎪  LOVE.....<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<
                        ⎪            <<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<
                        ⎪  GREAT......<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<
                        ⎪             <<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<
                        ⎪  SHOW.......<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<
   Adult                ⎪             <<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<
   Entertainment        ⎨  GIRL.........<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<
                        ⎪               <<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<
                        ⎪  PEOPLE.......<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<
                        ⎪               <<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<
                        ⎪  BEST...........<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<
                        ⎪                 <<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<
                        ⎪  NICE............<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<
                        ⎪                 <<<<<<<<<<<<<<<
                        ⎪  LIVE.............<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<
                        ⎪                  <<<<<<<<<<<<
                        ⎪  FUNNY................<<<<<<<<<<<
                        ⎪                       <<<<<<<<<<
                        ⎪  HOT...................<<<<<<<<<<
                        ⎪                        <<<<<
                        ⎪  HARD....................<<<<<<<
                        ⎪                          <<<<<<<
                        ⎩  REAL....................<<<<<<<
                                                    <
                        ⎧  COOL....................<<<<<<
   Overall Feeling      ⎨  FUN....................<<<<<<<<
                        ⎪                          <<<<<<<<
                        ⎩  HAPPY.................<<<<<<<<<<
                                                   <<<<
                        ⎧  LIFE...................<<<<<<<<
                        ⎪                          <<<<<<<<
                        ⎪  MUSIC..............<<<<<<<<<<<<<
                        ⎪                     <<<<<<<<<<<<<
   Evaluation of        ⎪  WAIT..........<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<
   Video and Music      ⎨                <<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<
                        ⎪  WIN..........<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<
                        ⎪               <<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<
                        ⎪  WATER.............<<<<<<<<<<<<<<
                        ⎪                    <<<
                        ⎪  SONG.........................<<<
                        ⎪                                <<
                        ⎩  SHAY..........................<<
```

**Figure 1.** Pattern of relation between keywords in comments of CGVs: Dendrogram.
CGV: consumer-generated video.

category was titled "overall feeling" and includes the clustered keywords *good*, *show*, and *great*. The fifth category was titled "food" and includes the clustered keywords *America*, *brilliant*, *treats*, *tuna*, and *wrong*. The sixth and last category was titled "club" and includes the clustered keywords *club* and *place*. Comments generally reflect the viewers' own experiences and knowledge of the destination. Examples of comments in this category are as follows:

> There are hot women in Vegas and I see them all the time but most of the people do go there to gamble and not hang out at the pool
>
> I was there (on the strip) when it happened it was amazing because Vegas Never turns off lights. It was dark that rare for a city like viva Las Vegas
>
> I just came back from Las Vegas two days ago and it was an amazing experience I would like to come back again

### Differences in consumer perceptions of a destination brand created by CGVs and MGVs

The results indicated that CGVs generate more views (hits) and comments than MGVs and that there are also differences between CGVs and MGVs in terms of the frequencies of word occurrence and topics discussed. More than half of the keywords (i.e. *amazing*, *awesome*, *best*, *cool*, *funny*, *girl*, *good*, *great*, *hot*, *love*, *people*, *show*, *song*, *wait*) were commonly found between CGVs and MGVs. However, the importance of the words when measured by frequencies of occurrences was generally different between CGVs and MGVs. For instance, *girl* was often found in both the comments on CGVs and MGVs, but the word, *girl*, occurred most frequently in CGVs while it was the fifth most frequently occurring word in MGVs. Some keywords were different between CGVs and

```
                         ┌  AMAZING..................<<<<<<<<
                         │                          <<<<<<<<<
   Night City Life      ┤   LIGHTS....................<<<<<<<<<
                         │                            <<<<<<<<
                         │   CITY......................<<<<<<<<
                         │                                <<<<
                         └  FAVORITE......................<<<<
                                                           <<
                         ┌  AWESOME.............<<<<<<<<<<<<<<
                         │                      <<<<<<<<<<<<<<
      Gaming            ┤   PLAYING.............<<<<<<<<<<<<<<
                         │                           <<<<<
                         └  COOL.........................<<<<<<
                                                         <<<<<
                         ┌  BEST.......<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<
                         │             <<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<
                         │   GIRL......<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<
                         │             <<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<
                         │   LOVE......<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<
                         │             <<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<
   General/Adult        ┤   FUNNY.......<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<
   Entertainment         │               <<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<
                         │   SONG.............<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<
                         │                    <<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<
                         │   PEOPLE............<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<
                         │                     <<<<<<<<<<<<<<<
                         │   WAIT..................<<<<<<<<<<<<
                         │                         <<<<<<<<<<<
                         └  HOT.....................<<<<<<<<<<
                                                    <<<<<<<
                         ┌  GOOD.........<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<
                         │               <<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<
   Overall Feeling      ┤   SHOW.........<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<
                         │               <<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<
                         └  GREAT.............<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<
                                                             <
                         ┌  AMERICA.............<<<<<<<<<<<<<<
                         │                      <<<<<<<<<<<<<<
                         │   BRILLIANT......<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<
     Food               ┤               <<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<
                         │   TREATS........<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<
                         │                 <<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<
                         │   TUNA...........<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<<
                         │                   <<<<<<<<<<<<
                         └  WRONG.....................<<<<<<<<<
                                                      <<<
     Club              ┌   CLUB..................<<<<<<<<<<<<
                         │                        <<<<<<<<<<<<
                         └  PLACE.................<<<<<<<<<<<<
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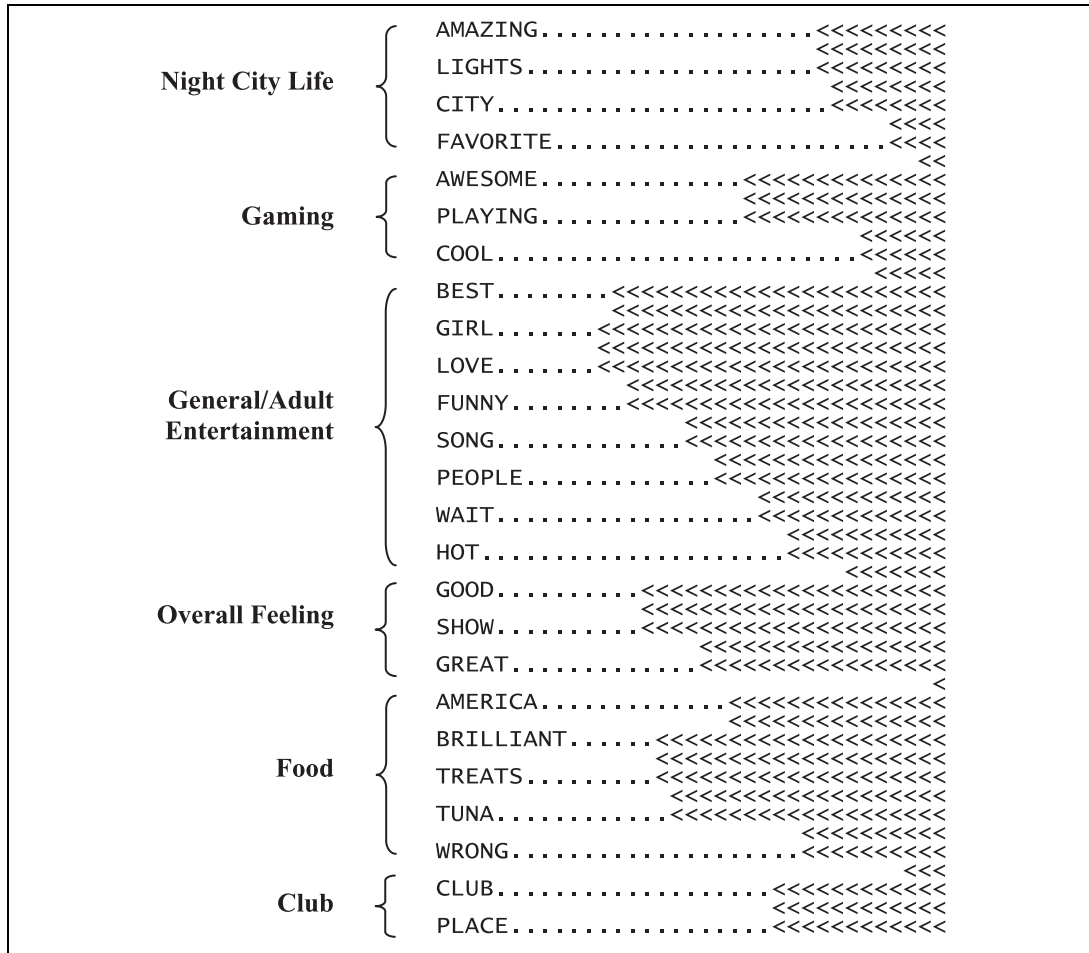
**Figure 2.** Pattern of relation between keywords in the comments of MGVs: Dendrogram.
MGV: marketer-generated video.

MGVs: *fun*, *happy*, *life*, *live*, *music*, *nice*, *real*, *shay*, *water*, and *win* were words from CGVs and *America*, *city*, *club*, *favorite*, *lights*, *place*, *playing*, *treats*, *tuna*, and *wrong* were found as keywords in MGVs. Negative or provocative words tended to occur more frequently than positive words on CGVs. The word that occurred the most frequently in the CGV category was *girl*, while that in the MGV category was *song*.

> *Proposition 3*: Consumer perceptions of a destination brand created by consumers are different than a destination brand created by DMOs.

Therefore, the results of the content analysis presented in the dendrograms and frequency table support the third proposition that consumer perceptions of a destination brand created by consumers are different than a destination brand created by DMOs. First, the number of dominant

themes from consumer perceptions of CGVs was much smaller than those from MGVs. Viewers of MGVs share information about various attractions and activities in Las Vegas, while viewers of CGVs tend to pay more attention to sexual and negative stimulation. This tendency resulted in the largest cluster of adult entertainment that includes negative criticism, arguments, and words of abuse in the CGV category.

## Discussion

The purpose of this study was to investigate consumer perception of destination brands created by consumer-generated content and DMO content. In addition, the differences between consumer perceptions of a destination brand created by consumer-generated content and consumer perceptions of a destination brand created by DMOs were investigated. Using textual data from an online social networking site, consumer

comments were content-analyzed. The results identified three categories of consumer-perception clusters of consumer-generated content: "adult entertainment," "overall feeling," and "evaluation of video and music." Six categories of consumer-perception clusters of marketer-generated content were identified: "night city life," "gaming," "general/adult entertainment," "overall feeling," "food," and "club." The popular words used in comments were similar across consumer-generated content and marketer-generated content. However, the number of times the words were used varied across consumer-generated and marketer-generated content. More negative or provocative words occurred in consumer-generated content. Even though Las Vegas rebranded its image from "Sin City" to "What Happens in Vegas Stays in Vegas" (Hudson and Ritchie, 2009), these results suggest social media seems to disseminate more "Sin City" image than "What Happens in Vegas Stays in Vegas" image.

According to Qualman (2009), traditional advertisements have less trustfulness than opinions by peers to consumers. Also, individuals are more likely to look up peer posts than postings by an online news site. Therefore, reviews on specific products and services posted in social media are more popular. Similar results were shown in that the volume of page views and comments of consumer-generated content was much higher than those from marketer-generated content. It seems that consumer-generated content attracts more people than marketer-generated content.

This work has several important implications for practitioners. A destination brand is being shaped by not only DMOs but also consumer-generated content on social media as consumer-generated content can significantly and quickly influence a destination brand image. Destination marketers should not ignore consumer-generated content on social media. Consumer comments on consumer-generated content are valuable sources for marketers because they reflect interactive activity meaningful to destination brands. The current study shows consumer-generated content does not seem to carry the same destination brand that marketer-generated content creates because there were differences on consumer perceptions of consumer-generated content and marketer-generated content. Marketers should acknowledge that a two-way communication in social media allows consumers to participate in the development of a destination brand identity

and image (Hipperson, 2010). Therefore, marketers should develop effective ways to influence consumers. Suggested examples include the following: (a) utilize consumer-generated content to deliver messages that marketers want to disseminate regarding their destination brand, (b) regularly monitor consumer-generated content and comments of consumer sentiment, and (c) exploit consumer comments on consumer-generated content and marketer-generated content to drive product/service/brand development/improvement.

Consumer comments on social media are an indication of content engagement intent and underlying motivation. Our results indicate consumer-generated content currently has little positive impact on a destination brand due to the negative and provocative feedback from consumer-generated content. The success of branding strategies with social media depends on the quality of a small number of heavy uploaders having many subscribers or celebrities. Thus, marketers should identify heavy and popular uploaders on social media and understand their motivations. Then, marketers can encourage them to post quality content on the destination and create destination brand desired by marketers through postings on social media.

There are several limitations to this study. First, the data came from one large social media site, YouTube, targeting just one destination, Las Vegas. The results can be considered as case sensitive. Therefore, more destinations and social media sites should be investigated in the future. Second, negative elements such as *not*, *never*, *hardly*, and so on were not measured and Internet slangs/abbreviations such as *lol*, *rofl*, *btw*, *gi*, repeated words, and misspelled words were excluded in the analysis.

## Funding

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