

## Papers

# Restaurant positioning based on online travel reviews (OTRS)

Análise do posicionamento dos restaurantes de São Paulo estrelados pelo guia Michelin com base nas On-line Travel Reviews (OTRS)

El posicionamiento de los restaurantes con base en las on line travel (OTRS)

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### Keywords:

Restaurants;  
Positioning;  
Social media;  
Michelin Guide;  
Online travel review;  
Tripadvisor.

### Abstract

**Justified purpose of the topic:** analysis of catering services has been the object of several studies in the field of tourism, and in this work, we analyze the positioning of the thirteen starred restaurants in the Michelin Guide 2016 in the city of. **Objective:** Within a marketing and management vision, the present research aims to analyze the positioning of restaurants through the evaluations posted on said social media of said restaurants. **Methodology and approach:** The study is characterized by being exploratory and descriptive, with a quantitative approach, performed through the collection of user-generated content (CGU) or User-Generated Content, on the site related to 1,300 customer ratings of restaurants that form the research universes and as an analysis tool Iramuteq software was used. **Results:** The results obtained through the descending hierarchical classification (CHD) that IRAMUTEQ retained and divided the total of the corpus of the evaluations collected into four classes: 1) attendance; 2) the restaurants; 3) hospitalitythe service; 4) food, characterizing what customers perceive to be important when choosing and utilizing catering projects and, through the analysis, point out that high-class restaurants in São Paulo are ranked by attribute, by users, by category of products and by class of service. **Original document:** This work is original on the theme and framework.

### Palavras-chave:

Restaurantes;  
Posicionamento;  
Mídias sociais;  
Guia Michelin;  
Online travel review;

### Resumo

**Propósito justificado do tema:** A análise dos serviços de restauração vem sendo objeto de diversos estudos no âmbito do turismo e neste trabalho busca analisar o posicionamento dos treze restaurantes estrelados no Guia Michelin 2016 na cidade de São Paulo através dos comentários no site Tripadvisor. **Objetivo:** Dentro

Tripadvisor.

de uma visão mercadológica e de gestão a presente pesquisa tem como objetivo analisar o posicionamento dos restaurantes por meio das avaliações postadas na referida mídia social dos referidos restaurantes. **Metodologia e abordagem:** O estudo caracteriza-se por ser exploratório e descritivo, com abordagem quantitativa, realizado por meio de coleta dos conteúdos gerados pelos usuários (CGU) ou *User-Generated Content*, no site, relacionadas a 1.300 avaliações de clientes dos restaurantes que formam o universo da pesquisa e como ferramenta de análise foi utilizado o software Iramuteq. **Resultados:** Os resultados alcançados através da classificação hierárquica descendente (CHD) que o Iramuteq reteve e dividiu o total do corpus das avaliações coletadas em quatro classes: 1) atendimento; 2) os restaurantes; 3) hospitalidade e serviço; 4) a comida, caracterizando o que os clientes percebem de importante no momento de escolha e utilização dos empreendimentos de restauração e mediante as análises apontam que os restaurantes de alta gastronomia de São Paulo estão posicionados por atributo, por usuários, por categoria de produtos e por classe de serviço. **Originalidade do documento:** Este trabalho é original quanto ao tema e enquadramento.

**Palabras clave:**

Restaurantes;  
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Redes sociales;  
Guía Michelin;  
En línea travelreview;  
Tripadvisor.

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**Resumen**

**Propósito justificado del tema:** El análisis de los servicios de restauración viene siendo objeto de diversos estudios en el ámbito del turismo y en este trabajo busca analizar el posicionamiento de los trece restaurantes estrellados en la Guía Michelin 2016 en la ciudad de São Paulo a través de los comentarios en el sitio Tripadvisor. **Objetivo:** Dentro de una visión mercadológica y de gestión la presente investigación tiene como objetivo analizar el posicionamiento de los restaurantes a través de las evaluaciones publicadas en la referida media social de dichos restaurantes. **Metodología y enfoque:** El estudio se caracteriza por ser exploratorio y descriptivo, con abordaje cuantitativo, realizado por medio de recolección de los contenidos generados por los usuarios (CGU) o *User-Generated Content*, en el sitio relacionados a 1.300 evaluaciones de clientes de los restaurantes que forman el universo de la investigación y como herramienta de análisis fue utilizado el software Iramuteq. **Resultados:** Los resultados obtenidos a través de la clasificación jerárquica descendente (CHD) que IRAMUTEQ conservó y dividió el total del corpus de las evaluaciones recolectadas en cuatro clases: 1) atención; 2) los restaurantes; 3) hospitalidad del servicio; 4) la comida, caracterizando lo que los clientes perciben de importante en el momento de elección y utilización de los emprendimientos de restauración y mediante los análisis apuntan que los restaurantes de alta gastronomía de São Paulo están posicionados por atributo, por usuarios, por categoría de productos y por clase de servicio. **Originalidad del documento:** Este trabajo es original en cuanto al tema y encuadramiento.

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**1 INTRODUÇÃO**

The increasing use of social media as a source of information for selecting a restaurant and other tourist services raises the need for more research on the relationship between the various segments of consumers and the hospitality industry.

TripAdvisor defines itself as “the world’s largest travel site” (online, 2018), and it has become a useful tool for travelers when making purchasing decisions. This online platform offers advice from millions of travelers and a wide variety of travel options and planning features. Besides, it has direct links to booking tools, which find the best hotel rates on hundreds of websites. It reaches 340 million unique monthly visitors and 350 million reviews and opinions covering 6.5 million accommodations, restaurants, and attractions (TripAdvisor, 2018).

TripAdvisor is a website “where you can get real information, advice, and opinions from millions of travelers to plan and take your perfect trip [...]. A traveler review is a way for you to write and share your hotel experience, restaurant, attraction, or location with other travelers. You can be 100% candid and honest about your experience as long as you adhere to our guidelines” (TripAdvisor, 2018).

TripAdvisor was founded by the American Stephen Kaufer, in February 2000, and since then the brand has expanded to 27 countries and offers traveler reviews to peruse and ranking lists for over 600,000 restaurants, the main object of this work. The information and advice on the website are based entirely on reviews left by partners and users. In other words, travel guidelines are not produced by paid experts or professionals, but rather they result from the experience of millions of tourists (TripAdvisor, 2018).

The positioning of a company, service or product consists of defining or choosing how we want to be perceived by customers. According to Kotler (2006), positioning means that the company is different because its products/services have some characteristics that target customers consider important and preferential. In this case the company becomes the best option, referring customers to obtain considerations of a brand, product, or service, so that this is perceived as different from the competition by the target public and deciding for purchasing the one with greater perceived value (Toledo & Hemzo, 1991).

The city of São Paulo, considered the largest metropolis in Brazil, has the largest number of starred restaurants in the Michelin Guide - 2016, as well as the largest number of restaurants, in the country (Guia Michelin, 2016, p. 158). Also, São Paulo ranked third in the segment of destination marketing and promotion in the competitiveness index of the 65 tourism-inducing destinations' (BRASIL, 2014). In this context, we sought to investigate how customers perceive restaurant positioning by analyzing their reviews and ratings on TripAdvisor.

At the international level, some research has been conducted on the relationship between user-generated content (UGC) and tourism (Ayeh, Au, Law, 2013; Wilson, Murphy, Cambra-Fierro, 2012; Ye et al., 2011). This study aims to analyze the relationship between restaurant reviews on Tripadvisor and positioning of restaurants that constitute the study population.

The research focuses on the positioning of fine-dining restaurants and it has both practical and academic implications for approaching positioning. First, it aims to provide practitioners with useful insights on restaurant management, particularly brand positioning. Second, the study aims to contribute to the body of knowledge on the topic, particularly useful to students and researchers in the field of tourism.

Some articles in relevant journals have emphasized the importance of studying the reviews and ratings posted on restaurant-related social media. Research by Sacramento (2013) and Limberger & Anjos (2015) investigated the variables related to online reviews of restaurant consumers. The results indicate that reviews are mostly positive, highlighting the relevant attributes of restaurants. Other studies that show the importance of the present topic are presented in the theoretical framework that follows the introduction.

## 2 RESTAURANTS

The definition of restaurant, according to Castelli (2016, p. 297), is an establishment that provides the public with paid food and the tourist restaurant can be considered as the establishment that is intended to provide food services and which, because of its location or typical conditions, is considered of tourist interest. Thus, as an element of the tourist activity, restaurants have the task of promoting the cuisine of the place where they are inserted.

Restaurants, also known as food establishments or enterprises, have as main characteristics the preparation and sale of food. The term “restaurant” originated in Europe, more precisely in France, from the sale of soup called and considered “restorative” for sick people. With the end of the French Revolution and the fall of the monarchy there was a growth of these enterprises, the Chefs who worked in the castles and palaces were unemployed and to survive they created small establishments aimed at the new bourgeoisie (Gustafsson, Ostrom, Johansson & Mossberg, 2006).

Over the course of time, other types of restaurants emerged becoming places of social interaction and not only a place for the sale and consumption of food (Sloan, 2005, p.76). Currently, there is a diversity of types

and categories with some restaurants considered as places where hard work, art, and creativity are attributes relevant to their success (Johnson, Surlemont, Nicod & Revaz, 2005).

Restaurants are the object of several studies that discuss the most diverse aspects and approach several variables and dimensions characteristic of these business establishments. Some authors have discussed the restaurant atmosphere in relation to air conditioning, overall ambience of the place, and social life. (Mendes, Pires & Krause, 2014; Krause, 2014; Limberger & Dos Anjos, 2015; Kleinová, Paluchová, Berčík & Horská, 2015; Araújo, Consoni & Pacheco, 2015; Wu, Zurinawati, 2015; Woo, Jun & Brymer, 2016.)

Other researchers have discussed the quality of service delivery, including staff uniforms personal presentation, treatment of patrons, and agility in meeting customer requests. (Pakes, Rebelato, Manfrim & Rodrigues, 2012; Sacramento, 2013).

Menu variety has been a research topic of some authors. These studies have revealed the importance of offering menu options according to restaurants' clientele, thus maximizing customer satisfaction. (Angnes & Moyano, 2013; Yim et al., 2014; Araújo et al., 2015).

Other researchers have identified hygiene and cleanliness as relevant factors for service quality perception (Matos, Raimundini & Polo, 2007; Liu & Jang, 2009; Yen & Tang, 2015) and concluded that these attributes are essential for customers to feel safe in the consumption of food prepared in the restaurant and offered in the menu.

### **3 RESTAURANTS AND POSITIONING**

Studies on restaurant positioning have been increasing and attracting the interest of researchers such as Kaynak and Kucukmiroglu (1997); Matos et al. (2007); Rebelato (2007); Cabral, Kalbusch, Nahas, Neto, & Schitti (2009); Chung, Kim, Kim, Woo & Choe (2012); Angnes & Moyano (2013); Kondo & Limeira (2015).

Brand positioning as a tool for restaurant management is defined as "the act of designing the company's offering and image to occupy a distinctive place in the mind of the target market" (Kotler, 1998, p. 265).

The positioning strategy reflects the place the restaurant wants to occupy in the market, i.e., the way the business it is going to compete. This is how the restaurant's offer will be perceived by customers vis-à-vis competitors. Thus, the most sustainable competitive positions are those where a product or a service stand out as a provider of unique value to customer and more capable of meeting their needs (Hooley et al., 2001).

This understanding is crucial for catering establishments, as the industry faces high competition, forcing restaurants to offer consumers products with high level of perceived value and to provide a service superior to that of competitors. Thus, restaurants must position themselves in a market segment in order to gain and sustain a competitive advantage, based on the preferences of target consumers (Lee, Hallak, Sardeshmukh, 2016).

In the early days, meal options were simple yet primitive. The purpose of eating was obtaining calories with hunting and fishing as the main means of getting meat, the basic source of protein.

Nowadays, with the development of the food industry and catering establishments such as restaurants, among others, the act of feeding oneself has become a bit more complex, if we take into account the different options of industrialized products, fresh vegetables, canned vegetables, frozen food, meats of the most diverse species all within the categories with distinct brands, and in restaurants cold or hot starters, pastas, fish, meats, day specials, international cuisine, self-service, pay per kilo, rodizio, among others with various price, style of service options which makes the process of eating even more difficult (Siebeneichler, Wieningkamp, Ruchel, Trombini & Zamberlan, 2007).

The marketing arena can be viewed as an ever-expanding sea of categories (Trout, 2000).

The success of the positioning strategy is intrinsically linked to the communication of this position to the target audience or market segment, thus, catering companies need to communicate with the market in a clear and objective manner, ensuring that the message received and interpreted by the consumer conveys

exactly what the company, service and product want to communicate. Kotler (2006) argues that for a successful positioning the offer should be presented in a way that the consumer can easily differentiate it from competing offers. From this perspective, the restaurant should be able to communicate its products and services to the target audience so that they are perceived as more valuable than that of competitors.

The various types of positioning strategies adopted by companies are presented in Frame 1.

**Frame 1** – Types of Positioning

Positioning strategies	Description
Attribute positioning	It occurs when the company positioning is based on the performance of the product in some specific attributes, tangible or intangible.
Benefit positioning	It presents not only the product performance in certain attributes, but also its benefits; the product is positioned as a leader in a particular benefit.
Use/application positioning	It presents the product as the most appropriate to be used or applied in a specific situation.
User positioning	It associates the product to a certain type of user, based on characteristics such as lifestyle, personality traits, life history, among others.
Competitor positioning	It compares, implicitly or explicitly, the product or brand with a competitor, to facilitate the understanding of the positioning or to present itself as being better than competitors.
Product category positioning	Ranks the product as a leader in a particular category; is more used when it comes to new products, because it allows to emphasize the differences between a product and the others existing in the market.
Service class positioning	When the service is positioned as a leader in a certain category, "recreation theme park" or "integrated marketing communication service".
Quality or price positioning	When the positioning strategy communicates that the brand or service offers potential consumers best value for money (price-quality ratio) or the best value.

**Source:** Adapted from Aaker & Shansby (1982), Kotler (2006), Lovelock & Wright (2001)

The main purpose of positioning is to induce the target audience to enhance and perceive the values of the company, service, brand, or product (Sarquis & Ikeda, 2007) and by achieving a successful value proposition, to favor and enable the target market to consume the product offered (Adcock, 2000; Muhlbacher, Dreher, Gabriel & Ritter, 1994).

According to Cravens (1994), the positioning indicates how an organization, product, or service is distinguished from its competitors by consumers or customers. Users, customers, or buyers of a company's products or services position through attributes or specific dimensions of products or corporation values.

For Wilensky (1997), in terms of positioning, the perfect product or service is the one in which the functional product and the imaginary coincide.

In turn, Semprini (2006) and Oliveira & Campomar (2007) emphasize that in company positioning, the way the brand, or product differentiates itself from the competition in the customers mind is essential. Moreover, for achieving success in the moment of communication, the company must occupy a position in the mind of its customer and target audience, considering its competitors, as well as the strengths and weaknesses of that competition.

#### 4 RESTAURANTS AND ON-LINE TRAVEL REVIEW (OTRs)

The concept of social media can be applied to the production of content in a decentralized way and without control of business groups. Fontoura (2008, p. 1) highlights that "social media are technologies and online

practices, used to disseminate content, provoking the sharing of opinions, ideas, experiences and perspectives."

In the globalized world, business is constantly changing with the emergence of new methods, techniques, and technological innovations, as happened with the Internet that has completely altered the way business is done (Wijaya et al., 2011). Information technology and communication (ICT) has become an integral part of management tools in organizations (Silva & Teixeira, 2014). These advances in information technology have changed the way products are distributed and destination marketing strategies (Hsu, Wang & Buhalis, 2017).

The expansion of the Internet fostered the proliferation of virtual communities, i.e., groups of people that interact online, including, sharing ideas, making comments on everyday life events, and on personal experiences with tourism services (Weilin & Svetlana, 2012).

Moreover, the growing use of the Internet and technological advances allowed companies to develop their relationship with consumers and customers, on a context known as Web 2.0.

According to Click & Petit (2010), Web 2.0 is a network platform that offers various possibilities of use, enabling the user to socialize information, opinions, and observations interactively; within these conditions of use it becomes possible to create, share, and search information, besides all data stored in the platform, facilitating access to what was published by users in the community. TripAdvisor can thus, be viewed from a Web 2.0 perspective.

Technology-enabled innovations empower tourists to deal directly with suppliers (Hsu, Wang & Buhalis, 2017). In this way, electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) has become a major influence in the tourism industry and, according to Litvin, Goldsmith & Pan (2018), it will continue to play this role in the future.

A study by DiPietro, Gustafson & Sandy (2013) investigated the use of social networking sites in 250 establishments of 50 American chain restaurants, and concluded that the use of social media by the surveyed restaurant managers is limited to filling job vacancies by posting low-cost ads, getting customer feedback on menu changes, connecting with employees, communicating and informing customers about changes in the organization, there are no indication of social media use as a tool for positioning strategies.

The exploratory study conducted by Neirotti, Ragassuo & Paolucci (2016) collected 50,115 user-generated reviews on TripAdvisor, aiming at rating of 240 hotels in OTR and the market positioning of these hotels. The findings suggest that the quality of customer service is the attribute that positions the ventures in the local market, as well as the geographic location of hotel developments.

The research by Barcelos et al. (2014) categorized, interpreted, and described UGC on TripAdvisor showing how theme categorization and visual data can condense the information available in a social travel network such as Tripadvisor.

## 5 METHODOLOGY

This exploratory and descriptive research with a quantitative approach sought to identify the positioning strategy of the 13 Michelin-starred restaurants in São Paulo, for 2016, through the collection of user-generated content (UGC) on TripAdvisor. The Michelin Guide 2016 was used as the basis for this research and choice of restaurants because it is a culinary ratings compilation, listing some of the best restaurants in different countries throughout the world (Salvio, 2008).

For this study, we used 100 reviews and ratings in ascending chronological order from December 31, 2015 to December 31, 2016, regardless of the number of restaurant reviews or completing the 100 reviews. Data was collected on July 201 on each of the restaurants that compose the study population from TripAdvisor, the largest online travel review (OTR) site in the world (Jeong & Jeon, 2008; Huang; Basu & Hsu, 2010).

The number of reviews selected was based on Sampieri, Collado & Lucio (2013), who suggest a minimum sample size of 30 to 50 cases. In this study, 1,300 reviews were used with 34,592 words, comprising 100 reviews for each restaurant, for convenience.



Restaurant reviews posted from December 31, 2015 to December 31, 2016 were considered for the survey, because the latest Michelin Guide available from which the restaurants were selected refers to 2016.

After collection, data were coded for tabulation in the software IRAMUTEQ, a free software developed at the University of Toulouse, France, using open-source philosophy, licensed by GNU GPL (v2). Iramuteq software is anchored in the statistical R software environment and in the python programming ([www.python.org](http://www.python.org)). This software enables different types of analysis of textual data, from simple ones such as basic lexicography (word frequency calculation) to multivariate analyzes (descending hierarchical classification, similarity analyzes). It organizes vocabulary distribution in an understandable and visually clear way (similarity analysis and word cloud).

In the classical lexical analysis, the program identifies and reformulates text units, transforming Initial Context Units (ICU) into Elementary Context Units (ECU); it identifies the number of words, mean frequencies, and number of hapax legomenon (words that occur only once in a text); it researches vocabulary and groups together inflected forms of a word (lemmatization); it creates a dictionary of reduced forms and identifies active and supplementary forms.

In the analysis of specificities, it is possible to associate database texts directly with descriptive variables of its producers; it is possible to analyze the textual production according to the characterization variables. It is a contrastive analysis, in which the corpus is divided according to a variable chosen by the researcher (Camargo & Justo, 2013; Castro, Aguiar, Berri & Camargo 2016).

In the discussion of the results, the following analyses are presented:

A word cloud analysis, a visual representation of words frequency collected from the customers' reviews of the restaurants on TripAdvisor.

A descending hierarchical classification dendrogram that allows to understand the expressions and words collected on TripAdvisor reviews, analyzing them from their links in the context of opinions.

## **6 ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS**

The corpus content includes reviews and ratings expressing favorable, unfavorable, and neutral positions regarding the attributes, characteristics, and customers' opinions of São Paulo restaurants that have been awarded stars in the 2016 Michelin Guide; Iramuteq software recognized the separation of the corpus of 1,300 reviews with 34,592 words represented in the word cloud, below:

Figure 1 - Word cloud



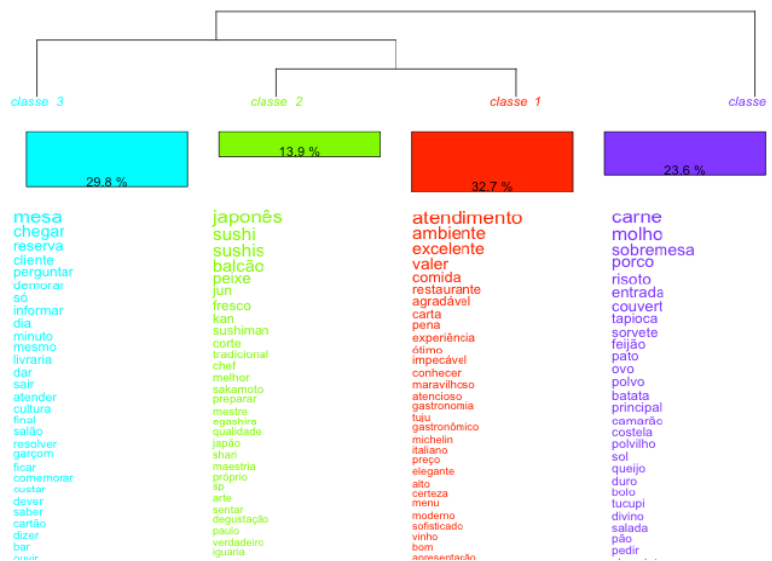
Source: Iramuteq (2017)

The word cloud groups and arranges words graphically according to their frequency. It is a simpler but visually interesting lexical analysis in that it enables the rapid identification of keywords in a corpus.

It can be observed in the cloud that the words restaurant, excellent, dish, good, menu, environment, and dessert stand out. Other words that appear frequently in the customers' reviews are: food, pleasant, experience, price, and great.

The descending hierarchical classification (CHD) retained and divided the total of the corpus into four classes according to the figure.

Figure 2 - Class dendrogram of restaurant reviews on Tripadvisor



Source: Iramuteq (2017)



The classes represented in the hierarchical classification dendrogram are: Class 1 Service; Class 2 Restaurant; Class 3 Reception and hospitality; Class 4 Food, corroborating the visual representation of the word cloud shown in Figure 2.

The corpus analyzed is composed of 1,300 reviews posted on TripAdvisor with 34,792 words that from the crossing of texts and words, using the method of descending hierarchical classification (DHC), we obtained 4 classes (Figure 2).

The descending hierarchical classification dendrogram (Figure 2) allows to understand the expressions and the words in reviews posted on TripAdvisor by users about the 13 São Paulo Michelin-starred restaurants.

Figure 2 depicts the classes which should be read from right to left, i.e., first the corpus was divided into two subgroups. In a second moment, the left subgroup was divided in three classes: Reception and Hospitality (3), Restaurant (2), and Service (1); and the right subgroup included Food (4). This means that Class 4 Food has less relation or approximation with the classes 1, 2, and 3, but denotes a greater importance represented in the comments made by customers and shown in the Descending Hierarchical Classification (DHC).

The results of the research are presented by class, in ascending order, from 1 to 4.

Class 1, Service (table service), yielded the highest amount of comments, 32.7%. It refers to the service and environment suggesting that the restaurants in the study have excellent table service, direct service, and a pleasant and favorable dining environment.

The elements that make up this class suggest the trust of customers in searching for this category of restaurants where they find pleasant service and environment without unexpected surprises.

In the corpus of this class there are words such as: service, environment, excellent, pleasant, and impeccable, as it is possible to observe in the following reviews:

[...] I recommend it even with closed eyes, excellence in **service**, wonderful **food**, and a breathtaking **atmosphere** I still had the pleasure of knowing the vegetable garden, everything was very fresh and of **excellent** quality (review 1027).

[...] for special occasions very elegant contemporary **atmosphere excellent service** tasting menu option, the presentation service aroma and taste of the dishes are different from almost everything I have ever eaten **worth** going at least once to check out (review 1272).

[...] spectacular warm **atmosphere** cordial and efficient **service** wonderful **food** very tasty with typical ingredients, but with differentiated preparations is **worth** it although the distance the highlight of the dinner was the 'baião' of two with a divine jerked meat (review 56).

Class 2, Restaurant, represents 13.9% of the total of the reviews, the elements of this class are mainly related to the characteristics of the restaurants, typology, and brand, which suggests that these characteristics can constitute a relevant factor in deciding which restaurant to patronize.

In its content this class has words like Japanese, sushi, counter, Jun, sushi man, according to the following comments:

[...] sensational best **Japanese** food from SP great service and excellent reception from master Tsuyoshi Murakami (review 576).

[...] one of the best **Japanese** in Sao Paulo **Jun** Sakamoto owner and sushi chef and one of the best in Sao Paulo and Brazil for those who appreciate or do not know good **sushi** and the place to go the niceness of **Jun** is an extra treat (review 359).

[...] good Asian gastronomic restaurant **fresh** ingredients but I found the quality inferior to that of other Asian restaurants of lower reputation in Sao Paulo the tasting menu was varied and delicious I found the quantity slightly below ideal (review 553).

Class 3 is related to Hospitality and Reception and it represents 29.8% of the reviews and ratings. The elements in this class address mainly aspects that precede the consumption of foods and beverage, being characterized by hospitality and reception of guests, making them perceive the way to be received and served in the pre-consumption of the delicacies offered in the restaurant. The reviews included words such as: table, arrive, reservation, customer, ask, and inform as shown in the following comments:

[...] I'd eat about 10 of these, we've been trying to book the counter for a few **days** because of the difficulty I advise to call a couple of **days** before to book it lives up to its reputation and **Michelin star** (review 291).

[...] an unforgettable experience we managed to **book** in the D.O.M. for the **same day** when we **arrived** the restaurant it was already full there are some **tables** on the top but the cool thing is to sit downstairs and see the kitchen and all the charm of the decor of that place (review 1212).

[...] fantastic it was me and my wife on 9/19/2016 upon arrival at the restaurant we received a **warm welcome** from all the waiters, specially my wife. (review 1153).

Class 4, Food, appears in the dendrogram standing out from Classes 1 Service, 2 Restaurant, and 3 Hospitality and Reception, and accounts for 23.6% of total reviews. This class has elements related mainly to food (flavor, dishes). It is important to emphasize that reviews in this class are directly related to the items, produce and products used in the production, preparation, and cooking of food as the following reviews on social media show:

[...] the **meat** was well-done as I asked but the 'baião' came cold and as it was creamy it was a bit strange the **dessert** was 'cocada' [coconut candy] with ice cream I ate only the ice cream (review 69).

[...] my 'baião of two' with jerked **meat** was simply delicious and the **dessert** with 'brigadeiro' [chocolate truffle] and 'paçoca' [peanut candy] I couldn't get enough of it (review 74).

[...] very good I went to Attimo just to buy a voucher on a group buying site we ordered an **entree** of **risotto** cookies that were extraordinary the best thing I ate there be sure to ask (review 600).

The informative nature of the data complements the positioning of the studied restaurants in what refers to how the customers perceive their attributes. Thus, service (table service), restaurant (typology), hospitality (reception), and food (dishes/flavor) appear as attributes that form the positioning of restaurants in user-generated content (UGC).

## 7 DISCUSSION

When analyzing UGC on TripAdvisor's platform, it is possible to access the complex dimension of restaurant management and positioning. Review analysis and quantitative visual representation (dendrograms, word cloud) of data makes it possible to provide more solid knowledge on the positioning of the surveyed restaurants. Moreover, the study of OTR enables to understand patrons' needs and wants and overall satisfaction or, in turn, the reasons for dissatisfaction, creating conditions for developing targeted restaurant positioning strategies.

The study by Rhee, Yang, Koo, and Chung (2016) shows how UGC on TripAdvisor allowed to analyze three restaurants and compare the attributes which can provide restaurant managers with information useful to develop specific strategies to meet customers' needs and expectations.

In the same vein, Kim, Li and Brymer's (2016) study is consistent with Class 1 of this research which points out service as a relevant attribute to restaurants and that a large number of online reviews or a better overall rating have a significantly positive influence on three major drivers of restaurant financial performance (net sales, guest counts, and average check), the survey was conducted in 70 establishments and demonstrated that food, value, service and atmosphere, number of reviews, overall rating, regional ranking and excellence certificate of all restaurants in the sample favor performance.

The study by Mendes, Pires and Krause (2014) of themed restaurants found that the cuisine that characterize them is a relevant factor for consumers when choosing a restaurant. This characterization demonstrates the typology of the restaurant which is consistent to Class 2 Restaurant (typology) found in this study.

Class 3 of this study indicates that guests seek more than just food in restaurants. As reviews have shown, reception and hospitality are perceived also as important for them, either at arrival or departure, or in restaurant telephone answering. Oliveira, Silva, Moretti and Pozo (2015) conducted a study of four restaurants in São Paulo and evidences suggest that hospitality management is a top priority for food service managers.

Research by Sacramento (2013) and Azevedo, Moura & Souki (2015) identified the attributes consumers value when choosing a restaurant, being food one of the attributes that guests perceive as important. This finding is in line with Class 4 of this work that presents, in a class apart from the others, food as an important variable for restaurant positioning in the competitive fine-dining segment. The study by Karson and Murphy (2013) of hotels in Orlando, USA sought to understand what features could attract local diners to food and beverage outlets housed in hotels as a way of mitigating non-peak periods. One of the factors described in the study is offering food options that arouse the desire and interest of diners to consume, acting as a marketing promotion strategy to expand brand awareness in the community.

Users, customers, or buyers of products or services of food companies perceive these, through specific attributes or dimensions of products or values of the corporations, triangulating the authors' assertions and notes, with the literature and the results of the analyzes with the classification of the classes here described in Class 1- Service, Class 2- Restaurant, Class 3 - Hospitality and Reception, and Class 4 - Food, one can infer that the restaurants in this study are positioned as:

- **By attribute:** occurs when the company establishes its positioning based on the performance of the product in some specific attributes, tangible or intangible; In the case of this research the restaurants are classified in this typology of positioning, considering the tangible attributes like food, desserts, environment; and the intangible ones such as hospitality, service, and experience.

- **By user:** associates the product with a certain category of user, based on characteristics such as lifestyle, personality traits, life history, among others; Positioning in this type is related to the status associated with people attending certain restaurants, the prices charged and the prior knowledge to use the services, considered sophisticated.

- **By product category:** ranks the product as a leader in a particular category; is more used when it comes to new products, because it allows to emphasize the differences of characteristics between it and the others existing in the market; In these categories, the study restaurants are considered by the offering of products, tasting menu, new flavors, imported products, unusual preparations, and table service.

- **By service class:** when the service is positioning as leader in a certain category. The study restaurants, due to its classification and presence in the Michelin Guide, ensure that this category is derived from food, service, and reception and hospitality variables, among other variables that place the restaurants in this positioning category.

## 8 FINAL REMARKS

The objective of this research was to analyze restaurant reviews on TripAdvisor and to relate them to the types of positioning of restaurants that compose the study population and from the results to classify the positioning of the restaurants from the perspective of the authors such as Aaker & Shansby (1982) ), Kotler (2000), Lovelock & Wright (2003), Cravews & Piercy, (2007) and Trout & Ries, (2010) that, in short, report that "the positioning shows how an organization, product or service is distinguished by consumers or customers from their competitors. "

It can be concluded that, for companies that want to remain competitive in this market and with the desired positioning, it is essential to know the eating habits, tastes, and preferences of consumers. This can be done through opinion polls, or informal inquiries when the customer pays the check, or even through online opinion poll sent to the customer's email.

The manager should also ask customers about restaurant attendance, preferences regarding service and dishes, as well as constant monitoring of their attributes.

What are the limitations of this study and suggestions for further studies?

The main limitation of the present study is that it surveyed only customers, the survey could have included the opinions of employees, owners, and suppliers to broaden the understanding of the positioning of these haute-cuisine restaurants in São Paulo.

Finally, it is suggested that further studies be conducted in other food establishments such as pizzerias, typical restaurants, or in same-segment restaurants, trying to understand how the clientele perceives the positioning and what differentiate them from competitors.

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