

PREJUDICE AND DISCRIMINATION IN SEASIDE RETAILING. COMPARATIVE ANALYSES BETWEEN BRAZIL AND ITALY

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Received: November 14, 2016

Accepted: May 15, 2017

Online Published: October 2, 2017

Abstract

This paper focuses on the phenomena of prejudice and discrimination among the interactions of frontline employees and customers in retailing spatial environments. The aim is to identify if there is perception of prejudice and discrimination related to Ageism, Sexism, Lookism (ASL) and Sexual Orientation bias (SO) against customers in Brazil and Italy Seaside Retailing. Through quantitative research and descriptive study, data from Curitiba-Parana-Brazil and Urbino-Marche-Italy are collected, using sampling by convenience. Likert Scales have been used to evaluate ASL+SO. Findings: One statement (4.2 “The frontline male employees are nicer to younger female customers”), out of 15 shows that the interviewees from both countries had presented a highly agreement perception, which is the reinforcement that they had perceived that gender, age and appearance have influence on frontline employees’ behaviour. However, considering the results of the majority of the statements, an overall conclusion can highlight that the respondents do not perceive ageism, sexism, lookism or sexual orientation bias against customers when the seaside retail companies provide face-to-face services. A theoretical contribution of this paper can be drawn for the development of protocols that can be useful to identify and to evaluate ASL+SO phenomena in retailing. Its format and its methodology can be used to research different kinds of organisations, especially in the retail and services industries. The managerial implications are in the importance of developing T&D to reduce ASL+SO practices against customers and to include these issues as subjects in the organisation’s strategic statements. Also it would be suitable designing more efficient procedures of queueing management. These practices could avoid that dissatisfied customers reduce purchasing and consequent falling sales and profits.

Keywords: prejudice, discrimination, seaside retailing, ageism, sexism, lookism, sexual orientation bias.

1. Introduction

In today’s marketplace prejudice and discrimination are becoming hot topics and – as such – are receiving a great deal of attention by researchers. Previous literature has analysed different

forms of prejudice and discrimination in many contexts including workplace, communities, and consumption, but not specifically in the interactions among frontline employees and customers in retailing spatial environments. Sociology and Psychology are the fields that usually study prejudice and discrimination phenomena. The Marketing discipline is becoming very interested in the understanding of customer behaviour through the lenses of those two traditional grounds.

The subject is very complex to be researched due to people's negative reaction to what is different. Despite the so-called open-mind behaviour in the first decade of the 21st century, it is possible to observe prejudiced and detrimental evaluations among people. Some research on prejudice and discrimination in retailing has been previously published (Palmeira, Palmeira & Santos, 2012; Palmeira, Santos & Palmeira, 2012, and Palmeira, 2014). In the first study (Palmeira, Palmeira & Santos, 2012), there was an analysis of how customers perceived prejudice and discrimination from frontline employees during the face-to-face retail service process in different retail business, such as fashion shops, shoe shops, restaurants, fast food restaurants, IT stores, and so on. In the second and third researches (Palmeira, Santos & Palmeira, 2012, and Palmeira, 2014), the frontline employees of the types of retail companies with the highest scores have been interviewed about their self-perception of ageism, sexism and lookism against customers, and they had admit that this type of bias does indeed exist in both the Fashion and Food retailing sectors.

In this study the focus is on retailing within tourist seaside areas. The tourism industry is one of the most important services sectors nowadays. "The total economic impact of travel and tourism on the global economy was 7.58 trillion U.S. dollars and the direct economic contribution was 2.36 trillion U.S. dollars in 2014" (Statista, 2015). And the revenue of the global hotel industry was 457 billion U.S. dollars in 2011. People are more willing to travel due to less expensive costs of fares and hotels. Besides, many countries have been trying to improve their hospitality capacity, as well as putting their best efforts to improve their rankings in governments' advisory web sites, such as, UK foreign advice office (2016). This study was conducted with a survey in two phases: a first stage in the Brazilian southern seaside areas, and the second stage in the Italian coast locations along the Adriatic, Mediterranean, Ionian and Tyrrhenian Seas.

Comparative analyses related to prejudice and discrimination of these two different realities, Brazil and Italy seaside retailing, has been produced, through the use of sample by convenience. Italy and Brazil have been chosen to be the focus of this research due to their potential for improving revenue and competitiveness in tourism industry and to the easy access for research. Besides there are three reasons to focus on their tourist sector: (1) Italy and Brazil are not in the top ten's safest countries to travel (Global Peace Index, 2015). Italy is in the 36th position with 1.669 points of score (22^{sd} position in local rank), higher than the region average, which is 1.566. Brazil is in the 103rd overall position with 2.122 points, also higher than the average of South America region, which is 2.053 points and in the 9th level of the regional rank. Both countries need to improve their scores.

More tourists, higher the tourism revenue. (2) Italy is in the 8th rank (with 4.98 points) in the Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Index Ranking (2015) and Brazil is in the 28th position (with 4.37 points). And, (3) according to National Geographic ranks (2015), only Rio de Janeiro is the only Brazilian beach city in the rank of Top 10, occupying the 6th position. None of the Italian beach cities are mentioned in the different Top 10 classifications. Which are the motives that countries with so many vast areas of seaside do not appear in those rankings?

Tourist activities are characterized by providing services, which level of quality depends especially on frontline employees' motivation, expertise and commitment, because they are the ones who deliver the services to the customers. If the levels of motivation, expertise and commitment are not in balance and with high standards, the perception of good service would

be jeopardized through the eyes of the vacationers. If the staff have some kind of attitude or even behaviour that make the customers believe that there is prejudice or discrimination against them, this perception would affect how the travellers are going to evaluate the services in tourist retailing.

Since those ideas have been crystallized in the travellers' minds and hearts, it would be very hard and expensive to try changing this perception related to the business, its employees and its services. This issue becomes more critical when customers arrive in a retailing spatial environment when there is not a clear queuing system. Which one should be the first to get the service? Which are the criteria that frontline employees are going to choose to which customer they are going to provide the service before? Is there prejudiced behaviour from frontline employees against customers related to people's age, gender, appearance and/or sexual orientation? Would the customers perceive the bias? Considering this context, the central objective of this study is to identify if there is perception of prejudice and discrimination related to Ageism, Sexism, Lookism (ASL) and Sexual Orientation (SO) against customers in Brazilian and Italian Seaside Retailing.

The operational objectives are three: (a) to describe the travellers' (customers) profile: social segment that includes data on income, professional occupation, education level, and size of home residence; gender and age); (b) to identify the seaside locations and the types of face-to-face seaside retailing the tourists usually attend during their summer vacations; and (c) to evaluate the perception of prejudice and discrimination against customers related to ASL and SO in retailing if there is not a clear queue system.

2. Literature review

The subjects of this research are presented in three groups: prejudice and discrimination; types of prejudice and discrimination (ASL and SO bias); Seaside retailing and frontline employees. They are of great importance when it comes to helping companies to realize that the customers' perception related to how they evaluate frontline employees' behaviour when providing services in seaside retailing imprints a good or an unfavourable image of the business and how hard and expensive is to keep a good evaluation or to change a negative one. The importance of how frontline employees behave without showing prejudice or discrimination against consumers is one of the key factors to impress the customers, to improve the business and to guarantee the company's surviving in a very competitive field of tourist industry.

2.1. Prejudice and discrimination

Prejudiced behaviour can be part of the human's nature. For survival, people depend on their inner commands-in-action, to run or to fight since primeval times, or to relate among pals, to beat or avoid competitors, and to climb in the corporate ladder nowadays. Prejudice is related to attitudes and values, not to behaviours and actions. Prejudice is a set of inner comparison procedures in people's mind in order to evaluate, positively or negatively, an object or person that they had confronted, helping them decide if they are in favour or against this object or individual. Prejudice is related to thoughts and feelings. This final decision can lead people to show discrimination, which is the concrete result of prejudice.

Discrimination is related to spoken words, behaviour and any recognizable element from the other people's point-of-view, that can be produced (or not) in front of the object or individual that had been assessed, under the prejudiced set of values of the beholder. Although prejudice is related to attitude, it does not necessarily drive to discriminative behaviour. Sociology and Psychology are the fields that usually study prejudice and discrimination phenomena. The Marketing discipline is becoming very interested in the understanding of

customer behaviour through the lenses of those two traditional grounds (Solomon and Rabott, 2009; Eisend, 2010),), considering age, sex roles (Johnson, 2008), body image, race and ethnicity, for instance. The most common target groups of negative bias are different race and ethnicity, women and the elderly, especially the one that socially are not considered with suitable appearance and/or adequate behaviour. Gays, lesbians and gay-friendly's groups are also the ones that can suffer from not favoured evaluations under prejudice and discrimination.

2.2. Types of prejudice and discrimination

Commonly, the types of prejudice and discrimination do not come alone. Usually they are combined, but for clear understanding purposes, they are presented separately.

Ageism is a set of prejudice and discriminated values against people's age in a way to undermine age groups that are not considered suitable or productive from the society's point-of-view, typically the elderly, and especially in Western cultures (Abrams, 2005; Abrams *et al*, 2011; Haralambos & Holborn, 2008; Solomon & Rabott, 2009). It is "discrimination or the holding of irrational and prejudicial views about individuals or groups, based on their age" (Scott & Marshall, 2009, pp. 11). The definition of Ageism used in this study is "prejudice or discrimination against individuals or groups, based on their age" (Palmeira, 2014).

Sexism is a distinct bias against people's gender, frequently negative against women (Scott & Marshall, 2009:686). Sexism reproduces "social inequalities based on race, gender and class" (Williams, 2006). Sexism is the "prejudice or discrimination against individuals or groups, based on their gender" (Palmeira, 2014).

Lookism is related to the appearance and all sets of elements that aesthetically identify and differentiates an object or individual. It refers to the "right look" for a specific group or society and whether the person presents the suitable visual and behavioural characteristics chosen by those groups, to praise or to blame them. Commonly, Lookism is related to the prejudice and discrimination against a person or individuals, based on their phenotype (Palmeira, 2014). There are previous works related to ageism (Hsiang-Fei & Sheng-Hshung, 2011; Brennan *et al*, 2007), as well as sexism (Dirks, 2004; Prasad, Prasad & Mir, 2011) and lookism (Waring, 2011), but the main focus is on the workplace and how the issue impacts behavior among peers. There is another group of research that focuses on the advertisement stereotypes, related to sex roles (Solomon and Rabott, 2009).

Sex Orientation bias is related to people's choice of intimacy partnership, especially homosexual. Although it is linked to gender's issues, it is connected to the prejudice and discrimination against recognizable behaviour of close relationship between persons of the same sex and even against gay-friendly people. Sexual Orientation has influence from Heterosexism, which is "a diverse set of social practices –

...from the linguistic to the physical, in the public sphere and the private sphere, covert and overt – in an array of social arenas (including work, school, church) on which the binary distinction of homosexual (attracted to members of the same sex) versus heterosexual (attracted to member of the opposite sex) is at work in such a way that heterosexuality is privileged (Scott and Marshall, 2009:307).

Sexual Orientation is connected to sex role identity which "is a state of mind as well as body. A person's biological gender (i.e. male or female) does not totally determine whether they will exhibit sex-type traits, or characteristics that are stereotypically associated with one sex or the other" (Solomon *et al*, 2010:154). To this study, Sexual Orientation, detected through an "observed" behaviour, characterises the people's choice related to which gender they would like to share intimacy, focusing on homosexual partnership. If frontline employees in seaside retailing show any kind of prejudice and discrimination, they are disrespecting the customers

and damaging the business. Even in Tourism references, Ageism is there “masquerade” as theory when the description of elderly has been developed in a prejudiced way (Santos and Sala, 2013).

2.3. Seaside retailing and frontline employees

Retailing in leisure areas is part of the tourism industry, especially in seaside which is almost synonymous of relaxation and fun time. Seaside retailing is the group of activities in seaside areas that involves the process of selling products and services directly to the customer as a way of fulfilling one’s personal needs. Tourism Industry is the set of companies that provides hospitality goods and services to customers in their leisure and discretionary time. Hospitality can be understood as the “act, practice or quality of offering a generous welcome to guests or strangers” (Rabone et al, 2009:163). Leisure market can be segmented according to the geographic environment (Ignarra, 2011) from the offer point-of-view. The tourist’s places are based on (1) seaside (with beaches and harbours) and other summer locations, (2) mountains and other winter sites, (3) water-related places (as sea and river cruising), and (4) urban or countryside areas.

To this study, frontline employees are any kind of people that interact face-to-face with customers in a spatial retail environment, which is a retailer area that includes a physical space (Palmeira, 2014), that can be hotels, restaurants, pubs and bars, and any kind of retail stores: clothes stores, bakery, ice cream kiosks, drugstores, markets, open markets, art crafts shops and malls (Musso & Druica, 2014). In these physical spaces, customers come into contact with frontline employees. One of the important elements of spatial retailer area is the queue management used to organise the process of providing the services to customers. It should be simple and understandable to staff and consumers. Queueing system or waiting line is not only for check out procedures (Allen, 1990). Its concepts can increase productivity in different types of retailing (Little, 2015), for instance (1) to help restaurants and pubs organise the sequence of services when customers arrive in the premises without booking and the sequence of food orders; (2) to improve the services in groceries, bakeries and kiosks through the use of passwords or numbers; and (3) to help the welcoming process and check out in hotels. The frontline staff should provide hospitality in the tourism industry.

If the frontline employees have not been trained to have suitable competences they may develop some bias when supplying a service to customers of a different age, gender, appearance and sex orientation because they are unable to respond with proper emotions, even if these sentiments are not true (Delcourt, Van Riel, & Van Birgelen, 2009; Lovelock & Wright, 2007; Palmeira, Palmeira & Santos, 2012). If the customers perceive prejudiced behaviour against them, probably they would be dissatisfied with the retail business and reduce purchases, causing sales and profits falling. In synthesis, the main concepts of this research can be seen in Table 1:

Table 1 – Main Concepts

Ageism	Prejudice or discrimination against individuals or groups, based on their age.
Discrimination	A clear unfavourable action towards a person or groups considering one’s age (Ageism), and/or gender (Sexism), appearance (Lookism) and/or sex orientation.
Frontline employees	Any kind of people that interact face-to-face with customers.
Hospitality	Act, practice or quality of offering a generous welcome to guests or strangers.
Lookism	Prejudice or discrimination against individuals or groups, based on their appearance (phenotype).
Prejudice	Learned beliefs and values that lead an individual or group of individuals to be biased for or against members of particular group.

Seaside retailing	Group of activities in seaside areas that involves the process of selling products and services directly to the customer as a way of fulfilling one's personal needs.
Sexism	Prejudice or discrimination against individuals or groups, based on their gender.
Sexual Orientation	It characterises the people's choice related to which gender they would like to share intimacy, focusing in homosexual partnership.
Spatial retail environment	Retailer area that includes a physical space where customers come into contact with frontline employees.
Tourism Industry	It is the set of companies that provides hospitality goods and services to customers in their leisure and discretionary time.

Source: adapted from Palmeira (2014) and Rabone et al, (2009).

3. Research Methodology

The methodology includes the nature of the research, and the population and sampling (Gil, 2002; Malhotra, 2012; Mattar, 2007; Siegel and Castellan, 2006; Spiegel, 1971; Wonnacott and Wonnacott, 1981). Considering that the study is a non-random work, it presents research questions (not hypotheses) related to the operational objectives of the study: (1) which are the elements of the travellers' profile? And do demographics (age, gender, and social class) influence the results of customers' perception of prejudice and discrimination in seaside retailing? (2) Which are the seaside locations and the types of face-to-face seaside retailing the tourists usually go during their summer vacations? And (3) are customers' responses similar in both Brazilian and Italian samples related to the perception of prejudice and discrimination against customers concerning to age, gender, appearance and sexual orientation in seaside retailing if there is not a clear queue system?

3.1. Nature of the research

This investigation is a quantitative study (Gil, 2002), based on a survey for data collection. Through the use of comparative analyses between both Brazilian and Italian groups (Creswell, 1998) the results were assessed. Rattam (1998) protocol was used to create social classification, based on the level of education, income, spatial residential area, size of residence and professional occupation. The Rattam social classification Model (Rattam, 1998) is based on the idea that education level, size of residence, and occupation are more important than income in order to format customer behaviour and to classify the social segments in five levels: A, B, C, D and E. Details on the criteria of classification are provided in Appendix 1.

The protocol was used to identify in which segment the respondents were classified. Interaction with the respondents was face-to-face. The interviewer supplied the questionnaires, the respondents answered the questions and they returned the document as soon as they filled in the forms. Simple statistical analyses were used to describe the travellers' profile and some cross tabs analyses to produce their responses. Cross tabs analyses examine the associations between variables, but it does not study their causes (Malhotra, 2012:373). The perception of ASL and SO bias in the chosen face-to-face seaside retailing services were measured on 4-point Likert-type scales (+2 = strongly agree, for positive responses, and -2 = strongly disagree, for negative replies) (Mattar, 2007, pp. 111; Ferguson, 1941). A four-point scale (from 1 to 4) has been used to avoid *hallo* effect when the respondents answer the questionnaires, although the position "zero" appeared in the analyses. The format of Likert scales is adapted from the Fishbein Multiattribute Model scales (Engel, Blackwell & Miniard, 1990). A list of 15 statements (Table 5) has been used to assess the sampling perception showing the level of agreement or disagreement of the different groups, Brazilian and Italian ones. Findings have been compared between the two groups. For this study, scores upper than +0.8 (> +0.8) are viewed as high agreement level thus high perception of prejudice and discrimination. Scores

lower than -0.8 (< -0.8) present higher disagreement therefore low perception of prejudice and discrimination. Neither the SPSS nor the Mann-Whitney tests were used to analyse the data, but they could be applied when working with larger samples (Wonnacott and Wonnacott, 1981). The data collected are organized to meet the objective of this article.

3.2. Population and Sampling

The population of the research is made up of all the Brazilian vacationers of seaside face-to-face retailing services as well as the Italian ones. The samples have been selected by convenience in Curitiba, Parana, Brazil and in Urbino, Marche, Italy, both inland cities. Respondents have been selected within University students' classes from different programmes: in Brazil, they were from the Business School of Federal University of Parana and in Italy, the sample units were from the Foreign Languages Programme of the University of Urbino. Considering the focus of the study is on travellers, the process of collecting data from people in inland cities increases the numbers of respondents that have been in seaside areas as tourists during their summer vacations, not as residents. The number of respondents that had spent their summer vacation in a seaside location was 190 in Brazil, but only 89 in the chosen seaside of Brazilian Southern region, and the sample in Italy was 156, although only 112 in Italian seaside. The focus of the study was on the chosen seaside sampling. Table 2 shows the samples' structure. The survey was conducted after summer vacations in 2014 (March in Brazil and October in Italy).

Table 2 –Sample structure

Sampling	Brazilian Phase		Italian Phase	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
People...				
... travelling to Seaside	101	53.16	44	28.21
... travelling to Chosen Seaside*	89	46.84	112	71.79
Total	190	100.00	156	100.00

* Brazilian Southern Seaside and Italian Seaside
Source: survey, 2014.

Although a random sample is technically more superior to produce precise results that explain the population, some reasons addressed the selection of a sample by convenience (Mattar, 2007): (1) a database to list the population's members and to produce a random sample was not available; (2) the ASL and SO bias are taboos, and potential respondents avoid answering the key-questions of the questionnaire; therefore a face to face interview was necessary in order to support interviewees in answering; and (3) financial and human resources were limited for adopting a random sampling process.

4. Results

The findings of the surveys are presented in three sections: (1) the travellers' profile of chosen face-to-face seaside retailing (social segment, gender and age); (2) types of face-to-face seaside retailing the tourists usually attend during their summer vacations; and (3) Likert Scale's evaluation on perception of prejudice and discrimination of retailers' employees related to age, gender, appearance and sexual orientation of tourists, particularly in cases where there is not a clear queuing system.

4.1. Travellers' profile

From the Brazilian sample of 89 respondents that had spent their summer vacations in Southern Seaside, 86.52% (77/89) are from "B" social segment (medium-high) which is going to be scrutinized from now on. Italian seaside 111 sample units are from segment "B" (39/111) and "C" (medium social segment) (72/111), both groups included in the following analyses, considering that Rattam (1998) model would be appropriate for Brazilian reality, but it would not be completely reliable for Italy. In Table 3, information on the social segments of both chosen seaside groups of vacationers is reported. The social segments have been considered in this research since their social context may influence the way in which prejudice and discrimination in seaside retailing are perceived.

Table 3 – Social Segments from Chosen Seaside (Rattam, 1998)

Social Segments from chosen Seaside	Brazilian Seaside		Italian Seaside*	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
A	4	4.49		
B	77	86.52	39	35.14
C	8	8.99	72	64.86
D	0	0.00	0	0.00
E	0	0.00	0	0.00
TOTAL	89	100.00	111	100.00

Source: survey, 2014.

*1 person has left more than 2 categories without indication.

According to Table 4, in Brazilian units, there is some balance between both genders (51.95% of masculine gender and 48.05% of feminine sampling), one of the characteristics not only from the sample, but also from the population. On the other hand, Italy presents a predominantly number of feminine units in both social segments, "B" (82.05%) and "C" (77.78%). The perceptions of feminine and masculine clusters concerning to prejudice and discrimination are evaluated separately. As regard age, basically the respondents are young, under 30 years old, in both groups: 94.81% in Brazilian sample and 100.00% in both Italian social segments.

Table 4 – Gender and age of social segments from chosen seaside

Gender and age of social segments	Brazilian Seaside		Italian Seaside			
	"B"		"B"		"C"	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
GENDER						
Masculine	40	51.95	7	17.95	16	22.22
Feminine	37	48.05	32	82.05	56	77.78
Total	77	100.00	39	100.00	72	100.00
AGE						
Up to 30 years old	73	94.81	39	100.00	72	100.00
Older than 30 years old	4	5.19	0	0.00	0	0.00
Total	77	100.00	39	100.00	72	100.00

Source: survey, 2014.

4.2. Types of face-to-face seaside retailing

Respondents indicated a large range of types of retail businesses that provide face-to-face services, which they have been to in their last summer vacations. The results can be seen in Table 5. In the Brazilian sample, being in seaside retailing was mainly for shopping (39.48%) and eating (30.04%). The Italian groups showed preference for eating (31.53% for “B” class and 30.41% for “C” class) and fun (drinking - 27.93% for “B” segment and 26.80 for “C”, and partying - 8.11% for “B” and 10.82%). The retailers where customers go more frequently are high-profile products and/or services providers. Clothes are related to self-image, as well as shoes and accessories (Grose, 2012). Restaurants normally are places to see and to be seen, not only for gastronomy issues. So, these retailers are very important to reinforce the social status and it is possible to mention that customers are more willing to judge the frontline employees’ behaviour when they deliver the service.

Table 5 –Types of face-to-face seaside retailing attended by social segments

Types of face-to-face seaside retailing	Brazilian Seaside		Italian Seaside			
	"B"		"B"		"C"	
Multiple Choice	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
SHOPS - Clothes, Bakery, Ice Cream, Drugstore, Market, Open Market, Art crafts, Malls.	92	39.48	19	17.12	31	15.98
RESTAURANTS - Restaurants, Pizzeria, Diners, Food Kiosks.	70	30.04	35	31.53	59	30.41
PUBS and BARS	37	15.88	31	27.93	52	26.80
HOTELS - Hotels, hostels.	24	10.30	17	15.32	31	15.98
OTHERS - "Parties", Night Clubs, Shows.	10	4.29	9	8.11	21	10.82
Total	233	100.00	111	100.00	194	100.00

Source: survey, 2014.

4.3. Likert Scale’s evaluation on perception of prejudice and discrimination

As explained in the methodology section, scores upper than +0.8 (> +0.8) have been considered as high agreement level thus high perception of prejudice and discrimination. Scores lower than -0.8 (< -0.8) present higher disagreement therefore low perception of prejudice and discrimination. Through the analyses of data reported in Table 6, although the majority of respondents had disagreed with the statement 4.1 (“Well-dressed younger women receive face-to-face retail services prior to everybody else if there is not a clear queuing process in the retail spatial environment area”), they presented a highly agreement perception on statement 4.2 (“Frontline male employees are nicer to younger female customers”), which is the reinforcement that they had perceived that ASL have influence on frontline employees’ behaviour.

This second statement is the only one with positive scores showing an agreement perception from all respondents, higher in Brazil than Italy. In statement 4.2, it is also possible to observe that the levels of agreement in Italian sample between feminine and masculine groups of each social segment are similar (78.12% feminine and 85.71% masculine in social class “B” and 59.00% feminine and 43.75% for class “C”). Some statements get the lowest levels of disagreement from all groups, such as, 4.3, 4.5, 4.7, 4.9 and 4.10. The other subjects of the Likert’s Scale do not show results that help to come to conclusions; they just present medium values. There are not too many differences between Brazilian and Italian groups’

responses of the statements 4.4, 4.6, 4.8 and 4.11, only the latter with the Italian masculine of social segment “C”, which presents a high score of disagreement (-1.000), although it is necessary to be cautious to interpret this number, because of the low quantity of respondents.

Table 6 – Perception of prejudice and discrimination (percent of agreement or disagreement responses and avg score of total responses)

Statements	Brazil		Italy			
	Fem B	Masc B	Fem B	Masc B	Fem C	Masc C
4.1 “Well-dressed younger women receive face-to-face retail services prior to everybody else if there is not a clear queuing process in the retail spatial environment area”.	48.65% -0.0541	50.00% 0.0250	93.75% -0.7317	71.43% -0.3636	62.50% -0.4217	50.00% -0.1000
4.2 “Frontline male employees are nicer to younger female customers”.	93.55% 0.8378	70.00% 0.7500	78.12% 0.6098	85.71% 0.4545	59.00% 0.4578	43.75% 0.2000
4.3 “Frontline female employees are nicer to younger male customers”.	-0.3784	-0.1750	-0.5366	0.0000	-0.2530	-0.3500
4.4 “Frontline female employees are nicer to younger female customers”.	-0.5946	-0.4000	-0.2683	-0.6364	-0.3253	-0.4000
4.5 “Frontline female employees are nicer to mature female customers”.	-0.1622	-0.4000	-0.3415	-0.2727	-0.2289	-0.2500
4.6 “Frontline female employees are nicer to middle-aged female customers”.	-0,5676	-0.3000	-0.1220	-0.3636	0.0000	-0.2500
4.7 “Frontline female employees are nicer to mature male customers”.	-0,2973	-0.1500	-0.1463	-0.1818	-0.0120	-0.1000
4.8 “Frontline female employees are nicer to middle-aged male customers”.	-0,5946	-0.0750	-0.5610	-0.4545	-0.0843	-0.1500
4.9 “Frontline male employees treat the mature female customers better than the others”.	-0,2703	0.0250	-0.2195	0.3636	-0.4940	-0.6500
4.10 “Frontline male employees treat the middle-aged female customers better than the others”.	-0,4595	0.0500	-0.2683	-0.0909	-0.3976	-0.3000
4.11 “Frontline male employees treat the mature male customers better than the others”.	-0,7297	-0.5750	-0.6829	-0.4545	-0.6386	87.50% -1.0000
4.12 “Middle-aged female customers are going to be the last to receive face-to-face retail services if there is not a clear queuing system”.	75.68% -0,9189	87.50% -1.500	100.00% -1.2683	100.00% -1.0909	91.07% -0.9518	87.50% -0.9500
4.13. “Male staff provide a better treatment to young male customers”.	89.19% -1,0811	-0.6750	90.62% -0.9512	-0.3636	85.71% -0.8313	100.00% -1.1500
4.14 “Male staff provide a better treatment to middle-aged male customers”.	81.08% -1,0000	-0.6500	81.25% -0.8780	-0.6364	92.86% -0.9157	-0.6500
4.15 “Gays, lesbians and gay-friendly persons, of any age, gender or appearance, are the last to have the face-to-face service, if there is not a clear queuing system”.	72.97% -0.8378	90.00% -1.4000	93.75% -1.1707	57.14% -0.2727	83.93% -0.8554	75.00% -0.8000

Source: survey, 2014.

Even with all the dissimilarities from the samples, being from different countries and realities, Brazilian and Italian responses related to the statement 4.12 (“Middle-aged female customers are going to be the last to receive face-to-face retail services if there is not a clear queuing system”) and 4.15 (“Gays, lesbians and gay-friendly persons, of any age, gender or appearance, are the last to have the face-to-face Retailing service, if there is not a clear queuing system”) show the same trend of highly disagreement level. Considering the Likert scale, the scores are lower than -0.8, the feminine as well as masculine groups show high level of disagreement and low perception of prejudice and discrimination in these matters. The only exception is the Italian masculine group from social segment “B” with a low score, but still a disagreement response, because the result is negative (-0.2727 in the statement 4.15).

The analyses show that in the statements 4.13 (“The male staff provide a better treatment to young male customers”) and 4.14 (“The male staff provide a better treatment to middle-aged male customers”), Brazilian and Italian feminine groups present the same trend of higher disagreement therefore a low perception of prejudice and discrimination, considering the negative scores. The masculine groups present negative medium values, with the exception of the Italian masculine respondents from social segment “C”, which follows the feminine responses in the statement 4.13, although, again, like statement 4.11, it is necessary to be careful due to the low number of respondents in this group. The Likert scales’ results can be visualised in Appendix 2.

5. Conclusions, limitations and future research directions

The results of this study provide information about the perception of prejudice and discrimination in Brazilian and Italian seaside retail businesses due to age, gender, appearance and sexual orientation. The types of face-to-face retailing that the interviewees have attended in their summer vacations were shops, restaurants, pubs, hotels/hostels, parties, shows and night clubs. Likert scales were used to evaluate the perception of Ageism, Sexism, Lookism (ASL) and Sexual Orientation bias (SO) in Brazilian Southern and Italian seaside retailing. Male and female segments, as well as medium and medium-high social segments showed the same trend the way they perceived prejudice and discrimination. Based on the highest negative scores, it seems that they did not believe that either “middle-aged female customers” or “gays, lesbians and gay-friendly persons of any age, gender or appearance” are the ones to be the last to receive face-to-face retailing services if there is not a clear queuing system. For both genders, the statement “the frontline male employees are nicer to younger female customers” presents positive scores, which is the only one with positive scores showing a common perception from all respondents, higher in Brazil than Italy. An overall conclusion can highlight that respondents did not perceive prejudice and discrimination against customers concerning their age, gender, appearance or sexual orientation when the seaside retail businesses provide face-to-face services.

The managerial implications are in the importance of developing training activities for face-to-face employees in order to reduce ASL and SO-related prejudice and discrimination practices against customers and to include these issues in the organization's strategic statements. Moreover, a theoretical contribution of this paper can be drawn for the development of protocols that can be useful to identify and evaluate ASL and SO phenomena in retailing. Its format and its methodology can be used to research different kinds of organisations, especially in the retail and services industries.

This study has some limitations. First, considering that discrimination is a kind of taboo, respondents are reluctant to express their opinion concerning this subject. Therefore direct interviews could be not totally suitable for this subject and other methodologies, such as experiments or observations, could be adopted. Second, the sample was by convenience and was not representative of the population. Considering that perceptions of prejudice and discrimination could be affected by age, culture and social condition of customers, a more representative sample was necessary. Finally, the Rattam model adopted for social segments, which was used in both samples, has been developed for Brazilian society, and it could be not completely suitable for Italian society.

Future research on the field analysed could be addressed to: (1) produce comparative analyses of prejudice and discrimination based on ASL and SO in seaside retailing in different countries; (2) deepen the research on the influence of different social segments, income, professional occupation, level of education on the perception of prejudice and discrimination related to the subjects; (3) compare seaside residents' perception to tourists' perceptions; (4) use local (national) models for social segments classification to avoid possible bias in the results; (5) to analyse how perceived ASL+SO can affect the customer level of purchase intention and loyalty; and (6) to use more quantitative statistical methods for justifying the validity and reliability of the ASL and SO scales.

APPENDIX 1 - Rattam Protocol (Rattam, 1998): criteria for social segments classification

To produce social segments, it is necessary to consolidate the amount of the four categories. The average score of each category has been used in case the respondent did not fill out the proper data for up two categories. Cases with more than two categories without indication, the questionnaire has been withdrawn from the sample.

LEVEL OF EDUCATION - Avg score: 28	
1. Unschoolled, incomplete school level	0
2. Complete school level, incomplete high school level	13
3. Complete high school level, incomplete undergraduate	27
4. Complete undergraduate level, incomplete graduate	40
5. Complete graduate level	56

N. OF BEDROOMS IN HOME RESIDENCE - Avg score: 21	
1	0
2	6
3	15
4	21
5	30
6 or more	42

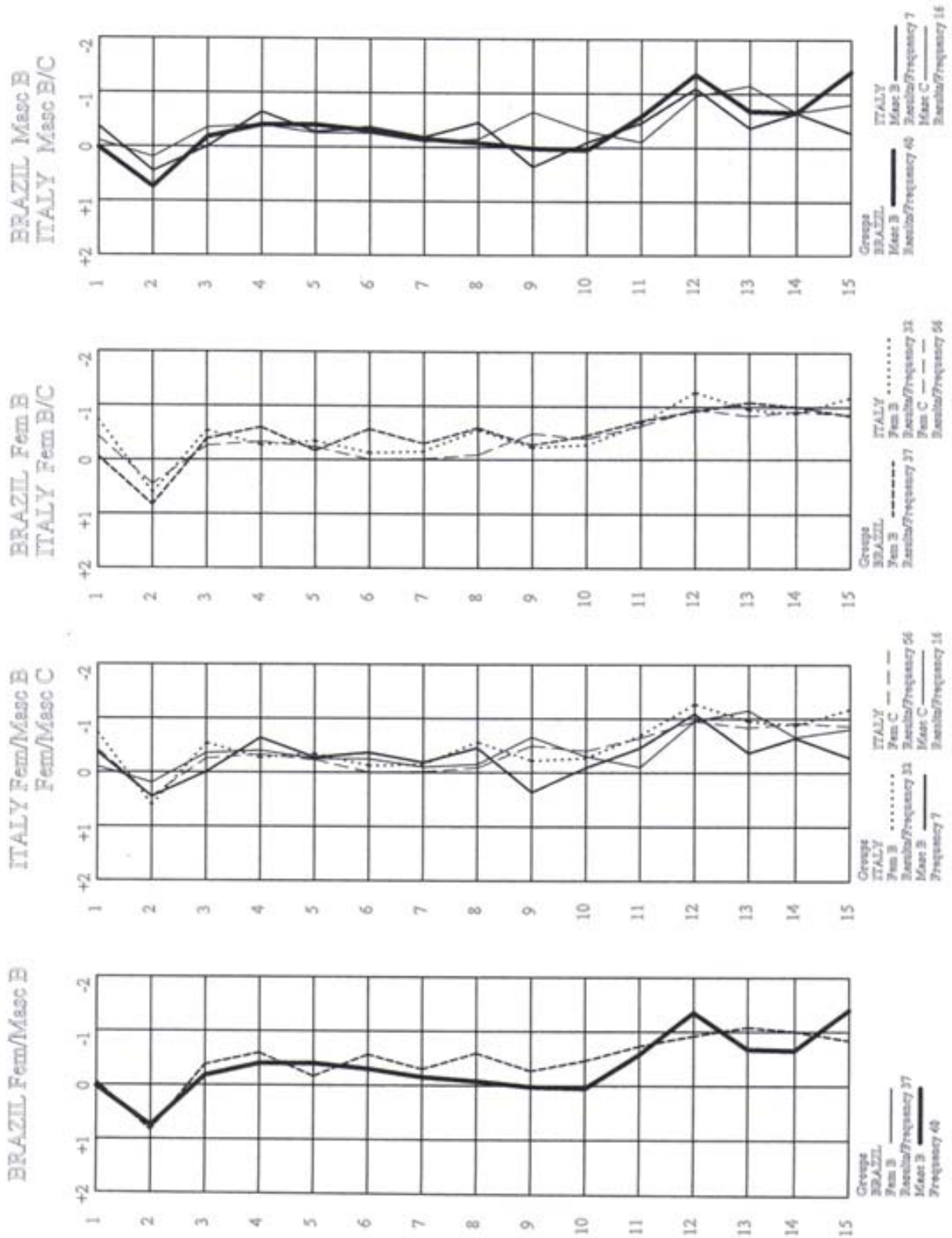
AVERAGE MONTHLY INCOME - Avg score: 7	
1. Up to 500 €	0
2. Over 500 € up to 1000 €	4
3. Over 1000 € up to 1500 €	6
4. Over 1500 € up to 2000 €	8
5. Over 2000 € up to 2500 €	10
6. Over 2500 € up to 3000 €	11
7. Over 3000 € up to 3500 €	12
8. Over 3500 € up to 4000 €	13
9. Over 4000 €	14

JOB OCCUPATION (if retired, job ranking when still working) - Avg score: 14	
1. Housewives, students, unemployed for more than 6 months, unhealthy or disable people and the ones that depend on social services.	0
2. Workers in non-formal activities without a job ranking.	3
3. Blue collars workers/employees with no expertise.	6
4. Blue collars workers/employees with some job expertise.	10
5. White collars workers/employees and micro-business (less than 10 employees) owners.	15
6. Middle level managers.	18
7. Small business owners (companies with 10 up to 100 employees).	21
8. Owners of middle-sized business (companies with more than 100 up to 500 employees), executives of middle-sized companies, lawyers, accountants, and any other liberal or independent professionals, with moderate level of success, and university professors.	24
9. Large companies' owners, CEOs of large companies, high level government staff, lawyers, accountants, and, any other liberal or independent professionals highly succeeded.	28

Total scores for classification

SOCIAL SEGMENTS	SCORES
A. High segment	118 or higher
B. Medium-high segment	67 to 118
C. Medium segment	33 to 66
D. Medium-low segment	16 to 32
E. Low segment	0 to 15

APPENDIX 2 - Likert Scales Seaside Retailing (I will fix the title in the figure)



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