



UNIVERSIDADE CATÓLICA PORTUGUESA

Tourists behavior and ecotourism product  
attributes: *the case of the Oporto city*

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attributes: *the case of the Oporto city*

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por

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## RESUMO

O turismo é uma das principais indústrias do mundo e, apesar de os benefícios, também é responsável por muitos problemas, sendo o mais proeminente o impacto negativo sobre o meio ambiente.

Nas últimas décadas, esta questão logrou obter um substancial avanço, atenta a crescente consciência ambiental, tendo o ecoturismo surgido como um substituto do turismo de massa que, por um lado, propõe atenuar os impactos negativos das formas convencionais de turismo e, por outro, manter as vantagens econômicas.

Em sintonia com a tendência global, a cidade do Porto viu um aumento significativo no turismo, quer pelo clima, pela história, características arquitetónicas e recursos naturais. Seguindo a estratégia do governo português, os líderes da cidade e organizações procuram apostar no turismo sustentável, sendo certo que, com as mudanças na procura pelos consumidores, o ecoturismo pode ser o caminho para levá-lo até lá. No entanto, em primeiro lugar, é necessário entender quais os atributos que atraem turistas aos destinos do ecoturismo, a fim de oferecer os produtos de ecoturismo corretos.

Para atingir este objetivo, a nossa investigação incluiu a leitura e interpretação de artigos de revistas, jornais, livros e outros documentos focados no turismo e ecoturismo, bem como a análise estatística de um questionário realizado por nós a turistas da cidade do Porto.

De um modo geral, a maioria dos turistas inquiridos conhece o conceito de ecoturismo, considerando a natureza a principal motivação, seguida pela sustentabilidade ambiental. Antecipando um pouco as nossas conclusões, foi possível percebermos que os turistas consideram o Porto um bom destino para quem procura esta forma de turismo, mas as principais motivações para escolher este destino basearam-se nos atributos histórico e cultural provando a necessidade de estudar os atributos do ecoturismo para oferecer o produto correto.

No entanto, este estudo foi limitado devido ao surto da pandemia de Covid-19, que afetou o número de questionários que puderam ser aplicados.

**Palavras-chave:** ecoturismo, turismo de natureza, Porto, ecoturistas, atributos, natural, cultural, histórico, comunidade

## ABSTRACT

Tourism is one of the major's industries in the world and despite the benefits it offers its also accountable for many problems, being the most prominent the negative impact it has on the environment. In the last decades this issue was brought forward as a result of the a growing environmental conscious and ecotourism appears as a substitute of conventional forms of tourism proposing to attenuate this issue while maintaining the economic benefits.

In concert with the global trend, the city of Oporto as seen a significant increase in tourism either for is climate as well as is history, architectonic and natural features. Following the Portuguese government strategy, this city leaders and tourism organizations aim for a sustainable tourism, and with the changes in consumers demand, ecotourism may be the path to lead it there. Nonetheless, in first place there is a necessity to understand what are the attributes that attract tourists to ecotourism destinations in order to offer the correct ecotourism products.

To accomplish this goal the methods used comprised the examination of articles of magazines and journals, books and other documents that focus on tourism and ecotourism as well as a survey to tourists in Oporto.

In general, the majority of the inquired tourists were familiar with the concept of ecotourism considering nature the principal motivation, followed by environmental sustainability, to choose an ecotourism destination. But, although the majority consider Oporto as good destination for those who seek this form of tourism, the attributes historical and cultural obtain a majority of votes as why Oporto was selected as a destination proving the necessity to study the attributes in order to offer the correct ecotourism product.

However, this study was limited given the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic that impacted the number of questionnaires that were able to be applied.

**Keywords:** Ecotourism, attributes, nature-based tourism, Oporto, ecotourists, natural, cultural, historical, community

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## **ACRONYMS INDEX**

UNWTO – United nation World Tourism Organization

WTTC – World Tourism & Tourism Council

GDP – Gross domestic product

NBT – Nature-based tourism

TIES – The International Ecotourism Society

UNESCO - United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

# **1. INTRODUCTION**

## **1.1 FRAMEWORK**

Tourism as the sum of activities of persons traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business, and other purposes not related with exercising a paid activity has seen, in the last decades, an immense grow and diversification in the World becoming one of the fastest growing economic sectors (1) In Portugal we also witnessed as in the last decades there was a boom in the tourism industry. In 2019, this industry grew 7.5% compared to 2018 equivalent to 22.8 million non-resident tourists, with Spain contributing the most percentage of arrivals (30%). The number of guests was superior in 5.1% to 2017 measure up to 25.2 million (2). Oporto city also present a favorable evolution with an increase of 5.3% in the number of guests comparing to 2017, resulting in an increase of the global income in 14.2% (3).

However, with the growth of this sector became ever more evident that is necessary to assume a position that ensures a sustainable development in order to defend against the negative aspects of tourism and conserve the natural environments (4). As so, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century various models of new forms of tourism emerged in order to contrary mass tourism and give priority to natural and cultural resource. From this tendency, Ecotourism emerged (5).

Given that this form of tourism has been recognized as one of the fastest growing sectors of the industry and the changes in the tourists' demand tourism operators must understand the attributes of this alternative form of tourism in order to be efficient in appealing to tourists with the right ecotourism products (6).

## **1.2 RESEARCH TOPIC**

Tourism in Oporto as seen a major increase in the last decade but given that the tourists, and the local populations, demands are changing in search of a more

environmental conscious forms of tourism's adaptations to tourism products need to be made. To do so we must first understand what attributes attract the tourists so ecotourism products can be designed with the right characteristics.

“What attributes of Ecotourism products attract tourists to Oporto city?”. It intends to understand what those attributes are so companies in this sector, as well as the local government, can implement policies in their business/planning models according to the demands.

However, we also identified other topics: the degree on which the tourists are familiar with the concept of Ecotourism; the level of interaction the subjects had with this form of tourism; their relationship with the environmental cause and what characteristics they search for when planning a trip.

## **1.3 RESEARCH MOTIVATION**

Portugal has seen an increase of the term “eco” associated with tourism in the last decade as the tourist demand took a turn towards more green values resulting in the choice of products that have in consideration the same values (7). Ecotourism presents itself as a viable alternative has is ruled by principles that aim to preserve the natural resources, promote a sustainable economic development and a sensibilization to community aspects with an educational aspect (8). In countries like Australia ecotourism was implemented successfully and is seen as an instrument for environmental protection as well as economic development (9).

Aligned with the national tourism strategy, Oporto city hall implements a philosophy of sustainable growth in relation to not only the environment but also at the cultural and historic level (10). Ecotourism is a feasible instrument to accomplish these goals but there are not many researches as to the viability of its implementation in Oporto and, to do so is necessary to understand what attributes attract tourists to ecotourism destinations in order to provide the correct products. Where pre-selected four attributes (nature, cultural, historical and community) to the construction of this study (6). This study targets are not only for government institutions but also for the others tourism operators.

## **1.4 METHODOLOGY**

Given that this study main objective is to identify the attributes of ecotourism that tourists in Oporto consider most relevant the methodology utilizes a quantitative method. Followed by and approach based on deduction given that a plan was created to test the relation between the attributes of ecotourism and tourists in Oporto. This approach was accompanied with the application of a survey to tourist of this city that was composed by three sections with open and multiple-choice questions.

Beside the methods mentioned above, there was also made a literary review based in books, articles and reports from local government and tourism operators to fundament the conclusions.

## 1.5 THESIS OUTLINE

Divided in five sections, this study is structured as bellow:

- The first sections designated “Introduction” is itself divided in five sub-chapters. First a framework of the study is made, followed by the exposition of the research topic, then the motivation behind this research is presented, trailed by the methodology and ending with the outline of the paper.
- In the second section the literary revision is presented were a theoretical contextualization is made. It begins with a description of the concept of tourism and tourists, gives an introduction to the industry and its impacts and introduces the concept and need of alternative forms of tourism.

In the second part, it introduces the concept of nature-based tourism were ecotourism is inserted. In third place ecotourism is presented: the concept of the term and of ecotourists and the attributes selected for this study. For last, the Oporto city is defined and presented as well as the recent state of tourism in the city.

- The third section approaches the methodology selected and the plan used to build this study. It ends with methodology design where is made a presentation of the sample elements, the methods used and the objectives of the study.
- In the fourth one, the results connected to the research question and other topics encountered are presented and discussed.
- On the last section, the conclusions of the collected data and the literary revision are presented and gaps in the research, as well as possible future investigations are indicated.



## **2. LITERARY REVISION**

### **2.1 TOURISM**

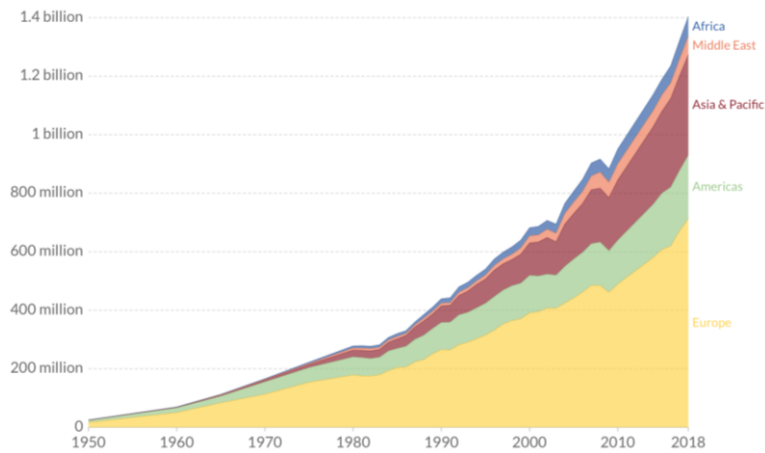
Tourism is evermore a key for progress and a force to be recognize on the world stage. This growing sector, allied with a growing environmental conscience, resulted in an increasing interest in sustainable tourism, where Ecotourism is included. As so, before we talk about Ecotourism, we must first study the sector it inserts in.

#### **2.1.1 THE CONCEPT OF TOURISM**

The definition of tourism is a polarizing theme as different stakeholders (governments, NGOs, local communities, etc.) have different perspectives of what categorizes as tourism. The duration of the trip, the distance from the usual residence place among others, are the usual pawns on this conflict which makes the definition a somewhat challenging matter (11; 12). Taken these facts in account, and for the purpose of this study, it was selected the definition by the UNWTO (2005): *“The activities of persons traveling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business, and other purposes.”*

Travelling for pleasure is a relative recent phenomenon, the common motive used to be necessity (work, religious motives, visit family/friends, etc.) given that travel presented a high cost of travelling and overnight staying plus the difficult, and sometime dangerous, accessibilities. This made travelling for pleasure a rare motivation. Nonetheless, with the rise of the airline industry, this phenomenon has speedily grown to a global level in the post 45 period of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This occurrence was not limited to developed countries, that traditionally provided the demand for world travel, but also emerging economies. As seen in graphic 1, in the 1960s tourism was still an activity were few participated for pleasure and it was mostly

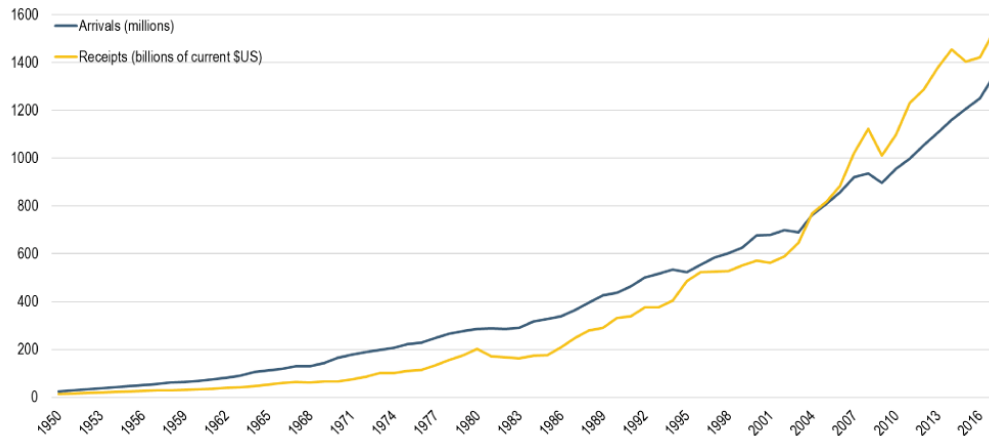
confined to Europe and North America. Only in recent years as tourism became a movement of mass participation (graphic 2) (13).



Graphic 1: International tourist arrivals by world region 1950-2018

Source: (14)

*“The growth in demand for tourism is a reflection of a range of changes that have occurred in society, particularly since the onset of the Industrial Revolution.”* (15)



Graphic 2: International tourist arrivals and receipts, 1950 – 2016

Source: [https://transportgeography.org/?page\\_id=9622](https://transportgeography.org/?page_id=9622)

## 2.1.2 THE TOURISM INDUSTRY

By the year 2017 tourism was the world's third largest export category (fig. 3), after chemicals and fuels and Europe concentrated most international tourist arrivals (50.9%) (12).

*“Export earnings from international tourism are an important source of foreigner revenues for many destinations in the world.” (1)*

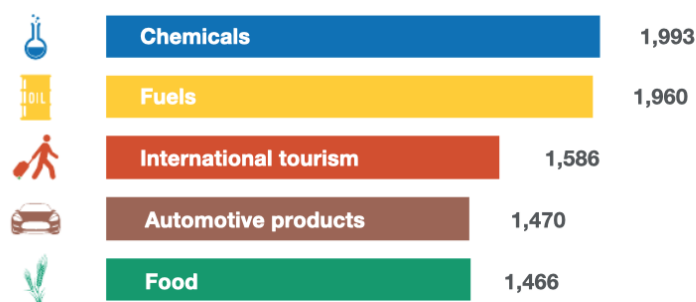


Figure 1: Export earnings by product category, 2017 (USD billion)

Source: (1)

With the development and growth of tourism it began to be referenced as one of the world's largest industries but defining the “tourism industry” presents some challenges given that the vague and dispersed nature of tourism makes difficult to measure tangibly the output. This sector does not produce a product but instead the consumer travels to the product which consists of the natural and cultural resources of the destination. It's a construction of companies, who offer products with primarily service characteristics, with some operating at a global level, e.g. tour operators, hotel chains and airline companies. It can be recapped as a mix that incorporates businesses and companies who aim to provide services to tourists. (11)

## 2.1.3 BENEFITS OF TOURISM

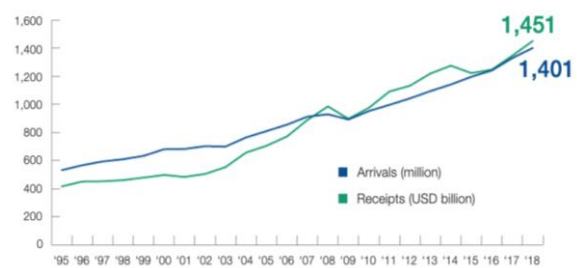
Although the difficulty in define this industry we cannot deny the impact it has in economies around the world. According to provisional data from the World Tourism

Organization, in 2018, on a global level, we saw a growth on arrivals of international tourists comparing to 2017 (+5.6%). Although this growth was 1.4 percentage points less than in 2017 tourism continues to be one of the fastest-growing economic and competitive sectors in the world. In the last two decades, notwithstanding the occasional shocks, this industry continues to expand and demonstrates fast recoveries. Receipts have outperformed the world economy proving that this is a resilient sector and a force to be recon with in economic growth and development with a high impact on the economies (1).



Graphic 4: international tourism receipts and world GDP (% change)

Source: (1)



Graphic 3: international tourist arrival and tourism receipts (% change)

Source: (1)

The role of tourism is also an important when regarding employment, as it provides many jobs but with a large turnover. It employs both trained professionals and workers with low qualifications. Young people and migrant are a large part of the people employed in this industry which results in a shortage of workers with required minimum skills. (16)

“Tourism provides working people with income and experience, and therefore contributes to their social inclusion and personal development.” (1)

According to the WTTC, in 2019 tourism created 330 million jobs which corresponds to 1 in 10 jobs in the world. In Portugal in 2018, the tourism sector was responsible for creating 328 500 jobs and the profits generated contributed for 8.2% of the national GDP (2).

## 2.1.4 TOURIST

While is one of many variables, it's imperative for the stakeholders of the tourism industry to understand the motivations that lead tourists to choose a destination. This allow them to design the tourism products in proportion to the consumer needs. (17)

The UNWTO defines visitor as “a traveler taking a trip to a main destination outside his/her usual environment, for less than a year, for any main purpose (business, leisure or other personal purpose) other than to be employed by a resident entity in the country or place visited”. It is considered a tourist when “a visitor (domestic, inbound or outbound) in the trip includes an overnight stay, or as a same-day visitor (or excursionist) otherwise”. It is also important to mentioned that a tourist is not the same as a traveler and tourism is not the same as travel. A traveler is “someone who moves between different geographic locations, for any purpose and any duration” (18) and travel refers to their activities. “Tourism is therefore a subset of travel and visitors are a subset of travelers” (18) .

Tourists are people and with that came the complexity inherent to the human being influenced by demographics, culture, level of education, beliefs, etc. As a result, different motives and behaviors are display in their interactions with the surroundings of the destinations leading to the classification of tourists in categories (15).

Many studies have been made concerning the motivation of the tourist leading to many types of classifications however, a common classification used in the literature is the one made by the sociologist Cohen (1972). As seen in table 1, he divided tourist in four categories in accord with the grade which they seek familiarity and novelty (19)

Table 1: types of tourism

Source: (19)

The Drifter	Lowest	Highest	Highly adventurous; lives within the local community
The Explorer	Lower	Higher	Travels alone; seeks comfortable accommodations and reliable transportation
The Individual Mass Tourist	Higher	Lower	Not bound to a group; somewhat controlled time and itinerary
The Organized Mass Tourist	Highest	Lowest	Follows a tour guide; follows an itinerary fixed in advance

Furthermore, Cohen also consider the first two types (Table 1) as “non-institutionalized” meaning the tourist is responsible for its own itinerary, in the other hand the other two types relied more upon the tourism industry to organize their journey (“institutionalized”). (15) Though is not possible to insert all tourist it allows to practically organize and understand the tourist’s decisions in a better light. (20)

Nonetheless, we must have in consideration that due to a variety of factors, in time tourists’ motivations may change and this will influence the products offered by the industry. In the last years society as changed and, in this new age of fast information, this variation is quicker leading to radical changes in short periods of time. Tourists are no longer satisfied with sedentary tourism products but increasingly require ones who offer new and unique experiences. (21)

## **2.1.5 ALTERNATIVE FORMS OF TOURISM**

While tourism is seen as having a huge impact in economies by increasing the GDP and offering jobs it is also responsible for a number of problems being the more prominent the impact on the environment as well as the poor distribution of the profits generated by this phenomenon. (5)

Its undeniable that tourism relies upon the natural and cultural resources of the destination environment. The term “environment” is often associated with nature (mountains, rainforests, seas, amid others) but can also be associated with the surroundings of the tourist. In each case is recognized as the key component of tourism since is the part tourist most interact in their destinations. Tourism would not be profitable if people did not have a positive view of the natural and cultural attractions of the pretended destination. However, it’s important to have in consideration that this attraction may be subject to modification as society and fashion changes.

By the 1960s the effects of a profit-oriented tourism in the environment became evermore evident and, with an increasing demand in tourism, the issue began to be highly discussed by stakeholders. “The first breakup of a major oil-tanker, the *Torrey Canyon* in 1967, leading to the release of oil on to the south-west coast of England, caused a high

level of public concern, and highlighted the fact that increased living standards were not free of environmental risk.” (11)

We can resume the negatives environmental impacts caused by an increase of mass tourism in three major affairs:

- The use of natural resources by tourists and for tourists. Local people can have a shortage or even be denied of this resources and tourism development can be responsible for the destruction of natural ecosystems. On this subject can be also mentioned the fact that the use of this resources by the tourism industry may result of the denial to other sectors of the economy.
- The behavior from local people who pretend to profit of tourism as well of tourists. These stakeholders can neglect the environment in order to attend to their needs/objectives.
- Different types of pollution (water, air, noise, etc.) from the local to the global. (15)

In a world evermore afflicted by global warming it begins an era where sustainability and competitiveness have to work together. The way to become more competitive it's through a more efficient use of resources, the conservation of biodiversity and sustainable practices. (1) It became necessary to combat the adverse effects of tourism resulting in the emergence of alternative forms given that the definition and objectives of the tourism industry do not mention sustainability focusing only on the economic benefits. Alternative forms of tourism combine all aspects, economic, social and environmental. This alternative solution to mass tourism was seen as a mean to diminish the negatives effects on the destinations and to their populations while maintaining the positive economic benefits. “These forms of tourism served a more sensitive approach giving priority to natural and cultural resources at the front line of planning and development.” (5)

These new forms of tourism became to appear in the 70s mainly in developing countries but the term “alternative forms of tourism” was replaced by the term “sustainable tourism” given that the principles that reign this concept are of sustainable development. Agreeing with the UNWTO it defines as “*Tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities*”. It must

maintain an equilibrium between the environment, cultural and economic aspects of tourism to assure a prolonged sustainability. Many forms of alternative tourism have surfaced since the birth of the combat to the negative impacts of mass tourism. Influenced by the different motivations to travel that emerged, generating both similar and controversial types of alternative forms of tourism, sometimes ecotourism and sustainable tourism are grasped as synonymous. (16)

## **2.2 NATURE-BASED TOURISM**

*“Tourism primarily concerned with the direct enjoyment of some relatively undisturbed phenomenon of nature” (22)*

It's an accepted fact that tourism that allows interactions with nature has been growing rapidly but the natural environment is finite and comprises the principal source of income not only for nature-based tourism (NBT) but also for other services and sometimes the community and so need to be protected and conserved. Nature-based tourism is viewed as a potential tool of change because allows tourism and conservation to coexist. Stakeholders largely recognize that connects nature conservation with local development since its main directive is the enjoyment of untouched nature. In a global angle it is a substantial part of the rising tourism sector. (23)

Various sorts of motivations lead tourists to seek this type of tourism, e.g. wish to get in touch with nature, to flee the stress of the city or even specific activities (hiking, birdwatching, camping, etc.) but, to be a sustainable form of tourism it must be suitable to the location and shouldn't cause degradation of the natural environment (24). “There is growing recognition of the positive benefits of outdoor recreation and nature-based tourism. Visiting natural settings and being outdoors are widely recognized as important for improving human health and well-being, enhancing social connections, connecting people with their natural and cultural heritage, generating revenues for use in conservation, contributing to local economies, fostering local or indigenous identity, and developing a conservation consciousness” (16)

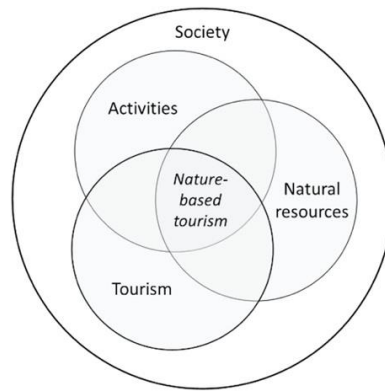


Figure 2: a nature-based tourism framework

Source: Adapted from Fossgard and Stensland (2013)

Knowing the growth this sector as seen in the last years stakeholders invested in turning natural sites into trendy nature-based destinations which brought opportunities but also threats. This can bring not only the destruction of the natural environment but also can impact at a cultural level e.g. moving local/indigenous people from their land and/or negating access to resources in order to use them for tourism purposes. As so, for NBT to reflect the equilibrium between tourism and the environment, and not fall in the trap of focusing on profit, policies must have in consideration the interaction with the local communities as well as the impacts on the environment, in other words it must have in consideration the environmental and social costs of tourism. Sustainable practices are ever more important in today's world in order to promote healthy environments which include the local communities (22).

“The goal is to maintain essential ecological processes and conserve natural heritage and biodiversity, acknowledge the authenticity of host communities and cultural heritage, and encourage tourism activity that results in enduring economic opportunities and poverty reduction strategies.” (16).

Although there is a link between nature-based tourism and ecotourism this are not synonymous, but ecotourism is a subsector of NBT. It comprehends all forms of tourism which rely on the undisturbed natural environment while ecotourism also incorporates an educational and sustainable component. (25)

## 2.3 ECOTOURISM

In the last decades there was a growing attention to environmental awareness and the contribution of tourism to adverse effects in environmental, economic and culture levels. (26). To assure the sustainable progress of the tourism industry, alternative forms of tourism such as Ecotourism is evermore recognized as a solution (27)

This new genre of tourism as became increasingly more popular being promoted as an environmentally conscious alternative to mass tourism. This increase in demand for a more environmentally friendly form of tourism has created an alternative path for the tourism industry (8).

However, there is a miscommunication between the environmental organizations and the industry where the later one focus mainly on the product aspect treating ecotourism as a synonymous of nature-based tourism. (28)

### 2.3.1 DEFINITION OF ECOTOURISM

In 1965, Hetzer W. identified four principles of responsible tourism: minimizing environmental impacts, respecting host cultures, maximizing the benefits to local people, and maximizing tourist satisfaction. Though the origins of the term Ecotourism are hard to track down this is considered one of the first references to the subject (24).

Ecotourism is a specialty segment of the larger nature tourism market and although the concept can be traced back to the late 60s, the first formal introduction of Ecotourism was accredited to Ceballos-Lascuráin (1987) where he defined it as *“travelling to relatively undisturbed or uncontaminated natural areas with the specific objective of studying, admiring, and enjoying the scenery and its wild plants and animals, as well as any existing cultural manifestations (both past and present) found in these area.”* This definition center mainly in the nature-based perspective of ecotourism leaving behind the social and economic benefits. Along the years the definition of ecotourism as suffer some changes, e.g. in the 90s the definitions became to focus also on sustainability (8).

Many perspectives of ecotourism were offered over the years but analyzing diverse recognized definitions (as seen on Table 1), we can conclude that the core quintessence of the concept can be resumed in three dimensions. First and foremost is nature based, without this factor we cannot even considered nature-based tourism let along ecotourism. The second feature associated with this concept is the fact that is an educational segment in which it gives value to learning about the natural and the culture attractions of the destination. In last place the fact that it must be sustainably managed, it must encourage the local economies as well as conservation (24).

<b>Table 2: Definitions of ecotourism</b>	
Source: (24; 29);	
“Ecotourism is ecologically sustainable tourism with a primary focus on experiencing natural areas that fosters environmental and cultural understanding, appreciation and conservation.”	Ecotourism Association of Australia – 1992
“Travel to enjoy the world’s amazing diversity of natural life and human culture without causing damage to either”	Tickell - 1994
“Ecotourism is nature-based tourism that involves education and interpretation of the natural environment and is managed to be ecologically sustainable”	National Ecotourism Strategy of Australia (Allcock et al., 1994)
"Ecotourism is more than books and albums about wildlife, binoculars, more than folk art that is displayed on hotels' walls and restaurants but in fact is a constant struggle to protect landscapes, with supporting peoples' cultural heritage"	Bran, F. et all, 2000
“responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment, sustains the well-being of the local people, and involves interpretation and education”	The International Ecotourism Society – 2015

Given that different stakeholders have different perspectives there is no consensus on the definition. For the purpose of this paper we will consider the one used by the International Association of Ecotourism (TIES, 2015): *“responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment, sustains the well-being of the local people, and involves interpretation and education. Education is meant to be inclusive of both staff and guests. Ecotourism is about uniting conservation, communities, and sustainable travel”*. This definition was selected because is one when the three main principles of the product are present.

The International Ecotourist Society (2015) defined principles for those who desire to enter in this market segment to assure that the emphasis in conservation, education and

community is ensured. (30) The rise of this form of tourism is a reflection of the changes that have occurred in the demand with the growing of an environmental conscious. (11).

### **2.3.2 ECOTOURIST**

With the shift in the demand further away from mass tourism and in the direction of ecotourism a new type of tourist was born. Ecotourists are seen as a particular type of consumer whose motives include the protection of the natural environment, however there is still a difficulty having a consensual definition given the different opinions of the characteristics this type of tourist must present. This is also argued why there is no consensus of the definition of Ecotourism, we hardly can define the market if we cannot define the consumer. (31)

We cannot assume that an ecotourist will be environmentally educated with a minimum impact in the environment and so different categorizations of ecotourists arise. (11)

In 1994, Mackay divided them into 3 types:

1. Big “E”: tourists that are willing to go to new areas and accept the local conditions;
2. Little “E”: the concern of this type of ecotourist focus on the standards of their selected tourism operators;
3. “soft adventure type”: is guided by the wish to visit natural areas but to do so in a free of guilt comfort, that is feeling that the natural area visit is being respected. (32)

Fast forward to 1999, and based in the work of Cleverdon, a more detailed categorization was made which divided them in order of their level of concern with the environment (Fig. 7) (11)

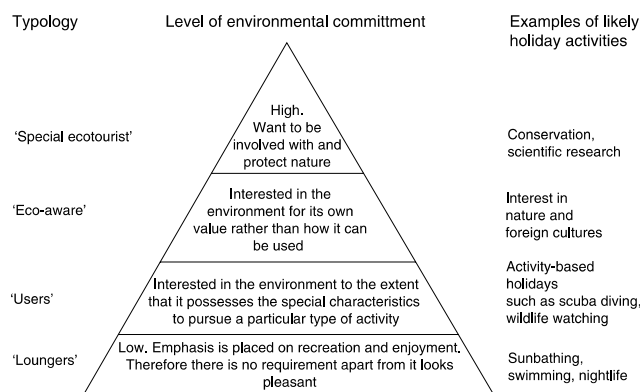


Figure 3: types of tourists based on the level of environmental interest

Source: (11)

Although the many concept and categorizations of ecotourist along the years, is accepted that an ecotourist has to travel to natural areas in the spirit of appreciation and participation with a green conscience. It also has to contribute to the area by supporting the conservation of the area and the welfare of the local population. Yet, this effort must also be done by the tourism operators of the area. (33)

But, as this is not one uniform group their commitment to the environment will be determined by a mix of factors as the possess knowledge of the environmental issues in tourism, their approach to those issues, their incomes, level of education, among others. (11)

In 2017 on a study made by Booking.com, 87% of tourists state their desire to travel sustainably with 39% of those do it so, while 48% reveal they rarely do it. While the extra costs are an obstacle to many tourists, 67% will be willing to spend more 5% in order to guarantee an environmentally friendly trip.

Three main reasons were identified for choosing “eco-friendly places”:  
 reduce environmental impact (40%); have an authentic experience (34%) and feel good about the choice of tourism operators (33%)<sup>1</sup>. On the other hand, the percentage of tourists who

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<sup>1</sup> These percentages result from the 4,768 respondents who stayed in eco-friendly accommodation at least once in 2017 as indicated in the study made by Booking.com

didn't considered this type of alternative form of tourism due to lack of information rested at 39%. (34)

## **2.3.3 THE ATTRIBUTES OF ECOTOURISM**

The growth of ecotourism as attracted the attention not only the tourism industry as governments, academics and even the press which lead to a rise on the number of articles and academic paper on the subject, mostly focus on the debate about the definition of ecotourism and ecotourists. Nevertheless, the attributes of the ecotourism products are vital to the continued growth of the industry because are what attract tourists to ecotourism destinations and so there is a necessity to understand and study them so tourism operators can present the right product. This paper considered five pre-determined dimensions of the ecotourism attributes: nature, culture, sustainability, community and history. (6; 35)

### **2.3.3.1 NATURAL ENVIRONMENT**

Environment can be associated with nature (mountains, rainforests, seas, wildlife and their habitats, amid others) but can also be associated with the surroundings of the tourist (11). All the components of the environment are a crucial component of the tourism industry, but the natural environment is seen as the most important attribute to attract tourists (6).

The expansion of the conventional forms of tourism results in the loss of flora and fauna and there is a need to remove the pressure caused by a high concentration of tourists. Not only because of the negative impact on the natural environment itself but also because any kind of degradation may lead to declines in the demand for that location. (36).

Tourists visit natural settings for a variety of motives from connecting with nature to specific activities (16) and there has been an increase on the search for relatively undisturbed natural environments (37). This can be a attribute of ecotourism given that allows to satisfy the tourists need to visit fairly undisturbed natural areas (6).

### **2.3.3.2 HISTORICAL**

The efforts made by stakeholders in order to protect and manage natural sites must be made equally to protect historical sites and buildings. The relation between heritage and tourism can be used to create stronger connections between historic sites and tourists seeking a quality ecotourism destination (38).

The UNESCO World Heritage Centre defines heritage as “our legacy from the past, what we live with today, and what we pass on to future generations” (4). However, heritage is a complicated concept but tightly settled in historical knowledge and performance, it’s not a product of changes in society but shows and give meaning to them. This concept needs to be understood as a flexible one given that is open to multiple interpretations. In the words of Diane Barthel-Bouchier, heritage is “living history incorporating social processes of both continuity and change” (39; 40).

Heritage tourism explores both tangible (museums, historical sites, etc.) and intangible (daily life and community memory) fragments of the past and nowadays, is recognized as an important part of the tourism industry especially because tourists are diverging from the tourism based on the 3 S (sea, sand and sun) (41).

With this growth, heritage is regularly being reconstructed in order to meet the demands of tourists but, having in account that heritage tourism is related to tourists’ motivations and opinion of the site rather than its attributes and artefacts, there is need to pay attention to this situations and assure that the right image of the past is being conveyed given that the process of commodification that is seen led to the creation of a new atmosphere in which various possibilities and potentials of heritage can coexist for different audiences (39).

Historical heritage is “a complex and multifaceted concept is deeply embedded in both past and present, tradition and modernity, and time and space” (39) and this can be one of the ecotourism attributes given that contributes to the community economic development, empowerment and identity but has to be sustainably managed based in principles like authenticity, conservation and providing learning experiences (42).

### **2.3.3.3 CULTURE**

Cultural tourism is defined as: “A type of tourism activity in which the visitor’s essential motivation is to learn, discover, experience and consume the tangible and

intangible cultural attractions/products in a tourism destination. These attractions/products relate to a set of distinctive material, intellectual, spiritual and emotional features of a society that encompasses arts and architecture, historical and cultural heritage, culinary heritage, literature, music, creative industries and the living cultures with their lifestyles, value systems, beliefs and traditions” (43).

The various manifestations of the past created by humankind consists of our cultural heritage. It includes tangible (art collections, artifacts in museums, historic gardens, etc.) and intangible (musique, dance, rituals, etc.) elements (44).

The desire to participate in cultural tourism activities is the main motivation that the majority tourism choose a destination however the way tourists engage with cultural attractions varies based on factors as the level of education, perception of the site, the meaning it has to them, amid others. So, tourists travelling for similar motives may have very different experience based on their ability to engage the cultural product. On the other hand, cultural tourism can present an opportunity for the local community and tourists form a deeper involvement by providing learning orientated experiences in exchange of superficial or sightseeing experiences (45).

Through the deep involvement of the tourists with the local community this can be considered one of ecotourism attributes (6). “To develop ecotourism without considering local culture is to take the humanity out of ecotourism.” (46)

#### **2.3.3.4 COMMUNITY**

Community based tourism revolves around the involvement of the local community in planning and maintaining of tourism developments (47).

The sense of community can be defined as “the quality of human relationships that makes it possible for people to live together in a healthy and sustainable way” (48) this plays an important role by fostering community support for tourism development and long-term sustainability because, people feel more connected and more motivated to work together when this sense is present (6).

The influx of tourists from different cultures and lifestyles is likely to disturb the lifestyle and culture of the local populations (49) however, ecotourism intention is to understand the needs of the local people with the objective of improving their quality of

life (50). As so it aims to have sensibly encounters with the communities and is planned to redirect benefits directly to the communities contrary to mass tourism were the local communities pay the social and environmental costs but don't reap the benefits. This redistribution is often seen as an incentive for local communities to protect their natural resources (51).

This can be one of the ecotourism attributes given that links conservation with turning benefits to the community but, also as a mean to preserve biodiversity and reduce poverty (52). "It provides job opportunities for the local communities and a market for local products. Encourages cultural sensitivity in guest–host relations and acts as a catalyst for ecologically sustainable development. It enhances wildlife conservation and the equitable sharing of benefits from ecotourism" (50).

## **2.4 OPORTO CITY**

Across the world there is a race to attract tourists. The character and the elements that compose a destination like the architecture, culture, history, climate, among others is what impact most in the tourist decision to choose a city as is destination. This study focusses in Porto city, the second largest city in Portugal and the fourth most populated county with a population of 237 559 (2019) in an area of 41,42 km<sup>2</sup> and divided in seven civil parishes. Known as the city who named a country its famous worldwide for its wine, gastronomy, architecture and historic center which was classified in 1996 as a world heritage site by UNESCO. With his warm summers and rainy winters, it has seen a significant increase in tourism over the years and is rapidly becoming a must-visit. This history filled city boasts many attractions that appeal to a varied range of tourists from the historic sites to a booming nightlife there is a lot to visit and do in this city. In 2001 was declared a European City of Culture. (53) (3) (54)

*“Having witnessed a long history of cultural ebbs, flows and eddies caused by successive waves of occupation, and often surrounded and invaded, but always remaining Invicta (unbowed), the city of Porto (fig. 8) is really a living heritage, one that regenerates and reinvents itself, whilst maintaining its core character, grounded in granite and, thus, unshakeable.” (54)*



Figure 4: coat of arms of Oporto

Source: (69)

## 2.4.1 BRIEF HISTORY

Founded by the Celts on the end of the river Douro this city had various rulers along the ages. On the fourth century was occupied by the Romans who rename it *Portus Calle* which later originated the name of the country. From 456 to 716 the city was ruled by the Visigoths until it was conquered by Muslims, they governed until 868 when it was seized by the Asturian king Afonso III.

Advancing to 1096, king Afonso VI married his daughter Teresa with Henrique the Borgonha and as a dowry gave them the county Portucale of which Porto was the capital. From this marriage resulted the future first king of Portugal, Afonso Henriques. In 1139 he defeated the king of León and established a new kingdom. This was the first step to an independent Portugal. Over the years Portugal became a significant commercial center and the port of Porto was a big contributor. The increase of commercial activity sent this city through a development boom and in the 15<sup>th</sup> century was one of the greatest ship building hubs in the country.

By the 17<sup>th</sup> century the most important sector of the economy of the city was the wine commerce and with the growth it brought began a period of urban development which peaked in the 18<sup>th</sup> century thanks to this styles from the Baroque (e.g. Clérigos tower) to the Neo-classic (e.g. Bolsa palace) are present in this city. Unfortunately, this city was also marked by conflicts. In 1809 Napoleon troops invaded and as the population flee through the Barcas bridge it collapsed causing thousands of deaths. Luckily, the French troops were vanquished, and the bridge was replaced in 1843 by the first iron bridge Dona Maria.

Porto was also the center of a liberal revolution who began in 1820 and spread quickly through the rest of the country and in 1822 a liberal constitution was accepted. However, when king Miguel I assume the throne he rejected and reigned as an absolutist. In 1832 an 18-month siege began in the city were the citizens in Porto rebelled against the monarchy. The liberal forces emerged victorious and the king abdicated the throne due to the habitants who fought bravely and endure the rough conditions of the blockade in order to defend the cause. This is why Porto is known as “the unvanquished city”. With this the liberal constitution was re-established.

In the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> the city began to expand, markets (e.g. Bolhão market), gardens, residential areas were built, gas streetlights were established as well as household water supply and in 1890 the Leixões port was built becoming the second largest port in Portugal. This resulted in an exponential increase of the population as well as an economic growth. Factories began to thrive, roads were improved/constructed, and companies and banks began to settle.

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the Portuguese Republic was established in October 5<sup>th</sup> however, in 1919 in Porto arise an unsuccessful movement to restore the monarchy known as the “Monarchy of the north”. Bearing in mind that Porto is not the capital of Portugal is notable the importance it as to the country especially due to its commercial activities and the rich history it offers.

Nowadays Porto offers visitors a variety of charms and the historical and architectural heritage is a big part of the tourism program (55; 56; 57).

## **2.4.2 TOURISM IN PORTO**

The municipality of Porto its located in the metropolitan area of Porto (Nuts III) of the north region (NUTS II) and the district of Porto and is formed by seven civil parishes: union of the civil parishes of Aldoar, Foz do Douro and Nevogilde, union of the civil parishes of Cedofeita, Santo Ildefonso, Sé, Miragaia, São Nicolau and Vitória, union of the civil parishes of Lordelo do Ouro and Massarelos, Bonfim, Campanhã, Paranhos and Ramalde.

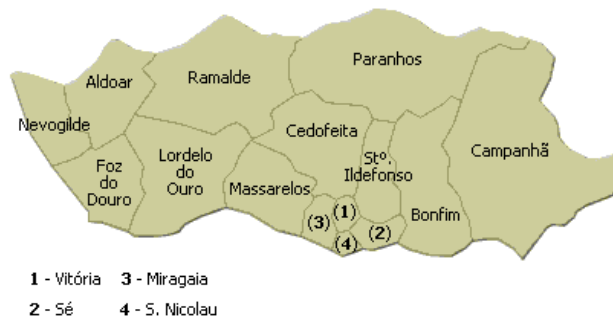


Figure 5: civil parishes of Oporto

Source: (58)

Designated as the main economic, academic and culture hub of the Portuguese north region is architectonic and natural aspects are factors that greatly contribute for the attraction of tourist. (10)

One factor that contribute for the power of attraction of this city is its climate, although colder than the capital Lisbon, Porto as an oceanic climate with an average temperature of 14 degrees Celsius on the winter and 25 in summer. (53) Other attributes are the gastronomy, the wine industry, the patrimony, the landscape among others.

In 2018, the number of overnight stays were 6.2% superior to 2017 this also reflected on the monetary indicators which indicate a favorable evolution (+14.2% comparable to 2017). The positive behavior of tourism in Porto is echoed in the increase of the receipts generated by room (RevPar) which increased in 2018 11.6%, more 3.9€ for room than in 2017. One factor that reveals the growth in this city tourism is the number of passengers that landed in Francisco Sá Carneiro Aeroport given that in 2018 we saw a growth of 11.6%. This shows that this destination is one highly seek, in growth and highly competitive. (3)

Table 3: tourism indicators in Oporto

Source: (3)

Indicadores turísticos	Acumulado 06.2018	Varição 06.2017 - 06.2018
DORMIDAS	3 494.3 (x10 <sup>3</sup> )	+6.2%
HÓSPEDES	1 974.2 (x10 <sup>3</sup> )	+5.3%
TAXA OCUP. CAMA	46.6%	-0.5 p.p.
TAXA OCUP. QUARTO	59.6%	+0.2 p.p.
ESTADA MÉDIA	1.77 noites	0.02 noites
REVPAR	41.1 EUR	+10.5%
PROVEITOS GLOBAIS	211.9 (x10 <sup>6</sup> ) EUR	+14.2%
PROVEITOS DE APOSENTO	160.4 (x10 <sup>6</sup> ) EUR	+15.0%
MOV. AEROPORTUÁRIOS <sup>(1)</sup>	2 774 (x10 <sup>3</sup> )	+11.6%

With this growth came responsibilities to the environment and the community. At the level of organizations and in accordance with the national strategy, in a document entitled “Estratégia de Marketing Turístico do Porto e Norte de Portugal – Horizonte 2015-2020” the main organization for tourism in the region, the organization Porto & Norte, defined measure with the objective to transform the north region, which includes Oporto, in a dynamic and attractive destination without compromising the sustainability of the resources (59).

On the other hand, the city hall as created on December of 2019 the Municipal Council of Tourism in order promote actions that will add value to the territory by regenerating its urban landscape, offer quality lodging but mainly the conservation of the cultural patrimony of the city and the promotion of sustainable strategies (54).

## 3. METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 INVESTIGATION METHODOLOGY

To answer the research question, focused on the Ecotourism attributes in the Oporto city, data was collected and analyzed. This chapter describes the methods used to investigate the research question and justify the procedures applied to understand the problem. It must answer two main questions: “How was the data collected or generated?” and “How was it analyzed?”. (60)

In sum, methodology is “*The theory of how research should be undertaken, including the theoretical and philosophical assumptions upon which research is based and the implications of these for the method or methods adopted.*” (61)

In first place, we must define if it was a quantitative or qualitative approach. A quantitative method refers to the analysis of numeric valuables using techniques such as graphs, questionnaires and statistics to collect the data in order to examine casual connections and tendencies. This method identifies with a philosophy of positivism where the researcher is objective and independent of the data. Ontologically, it assumes an external view of the social actors involved in the investigation. On the other hand, a qualitative method analyzes categorical variables or *all non-numeric data or data that have not been quantified*. In this method the focus is the interpretation of the reality trying to explain the reasons it is so. The researcher is subjective and intertwined with the topic resulting in a subjective ontology dependent of the opinion of the same.

In conclusion, the quantitative method aims to reduce the phenomena to simple elements having in account that only consider reliable observable experiences and, the qualitative focus on interpreting the reality behind a situation and not a *pre-defined, testable hypotheses* (61; 62; 63).

#### 3.1.1 RESEARCH APPROACH

Various strategies and methods are used by each type of methodology. The qualitative approach uses multiple strategies like interviews and case studies while quantitative

approach utilizes experimental research strategies as questionnaires, surveys, structured interviewees and working pre-existing statistical data (64; 61).

But, before we introduce the methodology design, we must decide the approach to use and this can be divided in three type: deduction, induction and abduction. A deduction research approach consists in developing a hypothesis(es), in order to explain casual relationships between variables, based in an existing theory and creating a plan to test it. Often is associated with the quantitative method (65). In order to be scientific rigorous, it must follow a structured methodology that allows the replication and the researcher has to be independent of the reality being studied (61). On the other hand, inductive approach identifies patterns and relationships from the data collect in order to form a theory, but this doesn't mean that when research questions are being developed existing theories are not taken in consideration (66). This approach purpose is to understand the reality in the data and the social context and opinions of the participants in the research. Often is associated with the qualitative method (61).

In last, the abductive approach combines the first mentioned approaches. Adopting a practical standpoint, it begins with the observation of the unknown reality and formulating a theory about that reality. (66) After the collection of data, various testable hypotheses are defined which results on a conceptual model. However, the final theory may be changed by adding new information (61).

The way the research question is asked will be answer in descriptive, exploratory or explanatory answers. An exploratory study is used to understand a reality problem, it asks questions in order to measure occurrences in *a new light* (67). This research uses various methods as interviewing experts on the subject, focus group interviews and even a search of the literature. It's a flexible method given that the direction may change as new perceptions appear (61).

Descriptive research aims to represent an accurate report of the reality being studied as persons, events or situations (67). However, it requires the researcher to have a clear image of the phenomena he wishes to study as well as the methods that will be employed (61).

Last but not least, contrary to the exploratory an explanatory study establishes relations between the variables in order to answer the research question(s) (66).

## 3.2 METHODOLOGY DESIGN

This section serves to discuss and justify the strategies and data collection methods selected for this research.

This study aims to answer the research question “what attributes of ecotourism products attract tourist to the city of Oporto?” and to do so is necessary investigate the characteristics and behavior of the subject without controlling the variables but only observe and measure them therefore, we are faced with a descriptive study case (66).

Taken in consideration that this investigation aims to understand what are the attributes of ecotourism in Oporto that attract tourists, we must define the research method. This investigation focus on the investigation question “What?” which favors a survey approach. The researcher (me) has no control over the reality being studied and purposes to understand the motives of the sample defined (68).

Given that this a survey-based research strategy and there is a need to make extrapolations from the sample it will be a probability sampling. The survey is semi-structures with a majority of multiple choices questions and inside the major objective it also exists other thematic (61).

Inside of the study about the attributes of ecotourism products attract tourist to the city of Oporto there are other objectives as presented in table 4

Objectives	Question(s)	Type of question
Demographic profile of the tourist inquired	1 to 9	Open and multiple choice
Determine if the tourists are familiar with ecotourism	10 and 14	Multiple choice
Interaction degree with ecotourism destinations	11 and 13	Multiple choice

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<sup>2</sup> The questions 11 through 14 were only for the tourists who selected the options “yes” or “somewhat familiar” on questions 10

Evaluate the environmental conscience of the tourists	15 and 16	Multiple choice
Evaluate the consideration for ecotourism in Oporto	12	Multiple choice
Understand why Oporto is preferred by the tourists	18 and 19	Multiple choice and open
Understand what attributes are considered more important in a destination	17	Multiple choice

The survey was collected directly to 31 Oporto tourists that were approached in tourism hotspots in Oporto: Lello library, Oporto *ribeira* and in the *Santa Catarina* street and online to 101 Oporto tourists through Facebook groups focused in tourism in Oporto and Oporto tourists WhatsApp groups.

It was followed a quantitative methodology approaching the data with deduction and representing the reality observed.

## 4. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

This chapter serves to present the results obtained with the questionnaires administrated to tourists in the city of Porto (national and international tourists). The objective is to understand what the attributes of Ecotourism are most valuable for tourists as well as their knowledge about the theme.

### 4.1 RESPONDENTS DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Table 5 presents the descriptive analyses of the demographic profile of the inquired tourists:

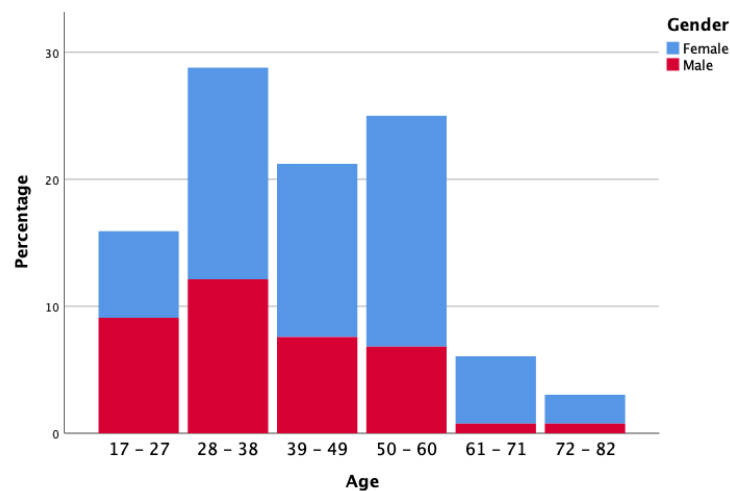
**Table 5: Demographic profile of the tourists**

Sex	
Female	62.9%
Male	37.1%
Age	
17-27	15.9%
28-38	28.8%
39-49	21.2%
50-60	25%
61-71	6.1%
72-82	3%
Country	
Portugal	86.36%
Brazil	8.33%
Peru	0.76%
France	0.76%
Netherlands	2.27%
Austria	0.76%
Spain	0.76%
Level of education	
Bachelor's degree	22%
Basic level	2.3%
Degree level	3.8%
Masters level	65.9%
PhD	6.1%

Marital status	
Divorced	12.12%
Married	51.52%
Single	35.61%
Widow	0.76%
Level of income (annual)	
Up to 8 890€	12.88%
8 890€ - 26 670€	39.39%
26 670€ - 44 450€	23.48%
More than 44 450€	24.24%
Profession (Top 3)	
Teacher	16.67%
Doctor	8.33%
Manager	7.58%

## 4.2 OPORTO TOURISTS' PROFILE

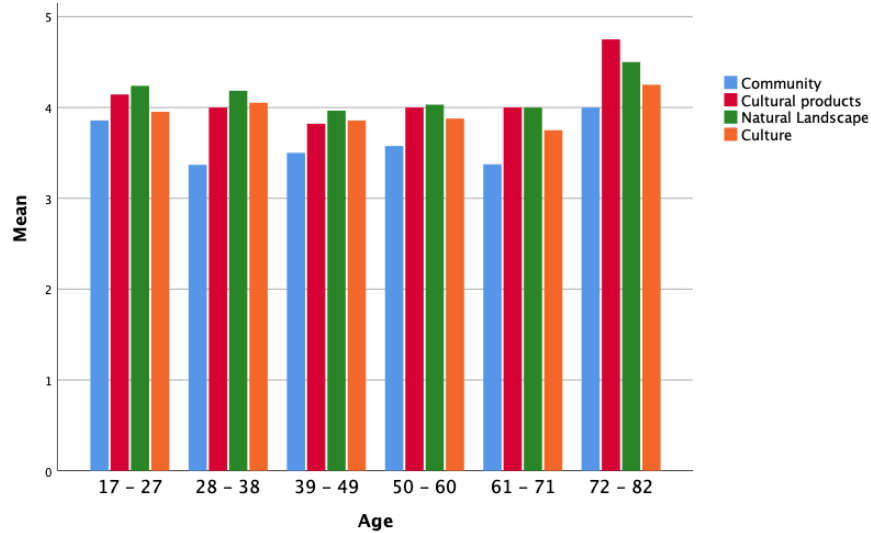
The Oporto tourist profile is diverse with a majority between 28-38 years old, of the female gender (Graphic 5) with 86.36% domestic tourists.



**Graphic 5:** Age by gender

There were pre-selected four characteristics of tourism destinations (culture, natural landscape, cultural products and community) and, based in a Likert scale were 1=irrelevant and 5=very important, tourists were inquired about the importance of which one in is choice of destination. In general, the majority considered culture and community, with 35.61% and 36.36% respectively, at a level 4 and natural landscapes and cultural products at a level 5 (42.42% and 40.91% respectively). However, by examining graphic

6, in average tourists from 28 to 38 years old consider natural landscape the most important characteristics while the class pf the > 60 consider cultural products as museums, art, gastronomy, etc. The least important characteristic for all ages was the community.

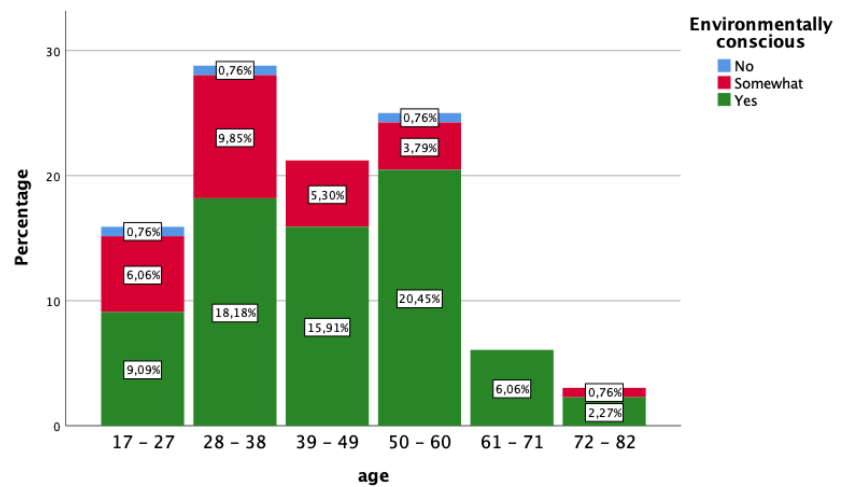


**Graphic 6:** Mean of the importance given to each characteristic by age

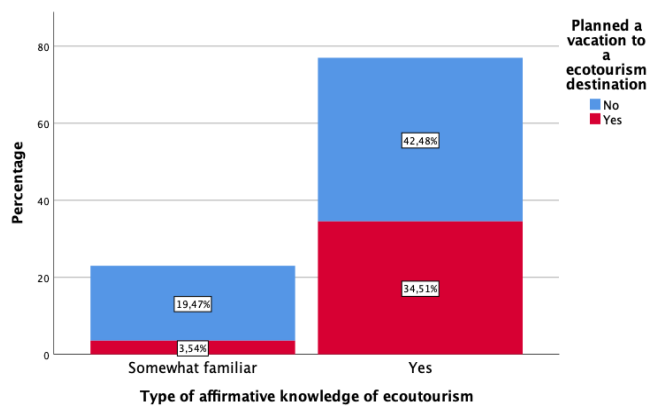
With 97.73% identifying as full or somewhat environmentally conscious the only tourists recognizing that there are not environmentally conscious belong to the age ranges 17-27, 28-38 and 50-60 (graphic 7).

But regardless the data presented above, 98.48% consider important an environmental conscious in tourism with only contradictory opinions on the 17-27 and 39-49 age ranges.

**Graphic 7:**  
Environmentally conscience  
by age

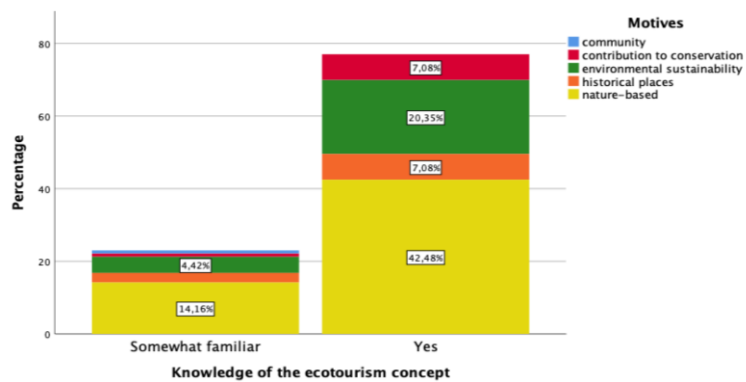


When inquired about their knowledge of concept of ecotourism 65.91% of the inquiries knew what ecotourism is, followed by 19.7% who are somewhat familiar with the notion and 14.39% who don't know. However, as seen in graphic 8, of the 85.61% who have some type of knowledge about ecotourism only 38.05% admitted having planned a trip to ecotourism destinations. This distance can be explained by the fact that 51.79% (of the 85.61%) of tourists admitted that they were willing to pay more for a trip to an ecotourism destination. Yet, 50.76% of the same sample consider Oporto a ecotourism destination.



**Graphic 8:** Tourists familiar with ecotourism that planned a trip to ecotourism destination

Of the sample familiar with the concept of ecotourism, when faced with the question “What motivates you to choose an Ecotourism destination?”, 56.64% selected nature as is principal motivation, followed by 24.77% with environmental sustainability and in last place community with 0.88% as seen in graphic 9.



**Graphic 9:** Motives to choose an ecotourism destination

In relation to the Oporto city, the inquiries were asked to identify their motivations in choosing this city as a destination based in a Likert scale were 1=irrelevant and 5=very important. Has we can see in table 6, the cultural values/products offered by the destination obtained a higher percentage at the level 5 (28.8%) and 4 (36.4%). At a level 4, the learning experiences provided by the history of the region also obtain the higher percentage (36.4%). When focusing on the level 3, the majority selected “natural beauty of landscape” and “to experience the natural resources provided by the region” at 34.8%.

At the lowest level (1), the motive with a higher percentage is the “desire to explore a different culture” with 7.6% yet, 31.8% consider it important (level 4).

**Table 6:** Motives to choose Oporto as a trip destination

	Irrelevant	Somewhat relevant	Moderate	Important	Very important
Desire to explore a different culture	7,6%	9,1%	27,3%	31,8%	24,2%
Cultural values / products will offer an enriched visit	1,5%	5,3%	28,0%	36,4%	28,8%
Learning experience provided by the history / historical structures of the region	2,3%	6,1%	28,0%	36,4%	27,3%
Natural beauty of landscape	2,3%	4,5%	34,8%	30,3%	28,0%
To explore the natural landscapes	3,8%	13,6%	29,5%	34,1%	18,9%
To experience the natural resources provided by the region	4,5%	11,4%	34,8%	31,8%	17,4%
To meet the local community	6,1%	12,1%	27,3%	34,1%	20,5%

In table 7 we connected each one of these motives with an ecotourism attribute which allows to infer that in average historical attributes are most important to the Oporto tourist, followed by cultural ones while the natural is at third place with an average of 21.4%.

**Table 7: Motives to choose Oporto related to the ecotourism attributes**

Motive s	Ecotourism attributes	Mean				
		Irrelevant	Somewhat relevant	Moderate	Important	Very important
Desire to explore a different culture	Cultural	4.55%	7.2%	27.65%	34.1%	26.5%
Cultural values / products will offer an enriched visit						
Learning experience provided by the history / historical structures of the region	Historical	2.3%	6.1%	28%	36.4%	27.3%
Natural beauty of landscape	Natural	3.5%	9.8%	33.03%	32.07%	21.4%
To explore the natural landscapes						
To experience the natural resource provided by the region						
To meet the local community	Community	6.1%	12.1%	27.3%	34.1%	20.5%

### 4.3 ANALYSIS

There is a consensus among the Oporto tourists inquired that is important for the tourism industry to have an environmental conscience. This aligned with an association as environmental conscious is congruent with the changes in behavior and demand that have been visible in the last decades among consumers of tourism products. This is also observable on the choice of characteristics to a pretended destination given that the majority of tourists selected natural landscapes as the most important factor in their choice moving away from the usual offers of the conventional tourism forms.

In view, ecotourism can be the response to this change but, although the majority of tourists in Oporto are familiar with the concept of ecotourism doesn't automatically imply that they will choose this alternative form of tourism. This is visible by the fact that less than half of the tourists familiar with this concept have planned trips among the scope of ecotourism.

A reason for this incongruity can be seen in the fact that more than 50% of the Oporto tourists familiar with the concept are not willing to pay more to experience this

type of tourism. On the other hand, to consider a trip to an ecotourism destination, this same sample consider “nature” the primarily motivation to do so with “community” as the least important reason. As so, tourists may choose to consume nature-based tourism products instead of ecotourism.

Given that the majority of the same sample mention on the paragraphs above consider Oporto a ecotourism destination we can infer that Oporto has a favoritism for the natural attribute of ecotourism.

However, it’s important to ascertain why the total sample choose this city and, relate them with the attributes studied in order to have a complete picture of which aspects are appropriate for the commercialization of ecotourism products in this city.

The motivations related to the historical and cultural attribute where indicated in average as the most important factor in choosing this city which is expectable given its rich history and patrimony.

We can then conclude that when creating an ecotourism product for this city the attributes that normally led tourist to choose an ecotourism destination don’t have necessarily the same hierarchy when applying these products to Oporto city.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

### **5.1 CONCLUSIONS OF THE STUDY**

This study aimed to analyze the evolution of tourism and how this relates to the emerging of alternative forms of tourism in which ecotourism is inserted. This allows to introduce the importance of the attributes of ecotourism as a differencing factor in the constructing of ecotourism products. Nevertheless, the principal objective is the applications of the deductions reached to Oporto.

To acknowledge the conclusions drawn from this study data was collected, from the Oporto tourists, through the application of a survey (in person and online) which conclusions were presented and discuss in chapter 4, as well as a literary revision of articles, books, among other documents.

The intense growth verified in tourism was benefic in many aspects for economies around the world but resulted in a progressive environmental destruction, specially by

pollution and the depletion of natural resources together with the poor distribution of the profits. As the impact made was perceived it began to be suggested alternatives in order to diminish tourism negative impacts, resulting in the emergency of the “green” market. Ecotourism is part of that market, as a subsegment of nature-based tourism and, has been growing at a constant level in the last years cementing its position as an important part of the tourism industry.

As the tourism industry grows in Oporto, together with the changes in demand by tourists and the community, there was a need to implement measures that allow a sustainable growth of tourism in every front. Local officials and organizations strive to do so through the implementation of measure and politics and the promotion of alternative forms of tourism. As the mindset changes the market must adapt and the time has come for Oporto to offer alternatives to conventional forms of tourism.

If tourism operators and local authorities/organizations desire to offer ecotourism products is necessary to first test their viability. This passes through studies focused primarily on the acquaintance of tourists with this concept, their interest in it, the major obstacles and what attributes are most important for those seeking this kind of tourism in Oporto. Although this investigation focused on the attributes other deductions were made that offer assistance.

Oporto tourists in general seem to be informed of what ecotourism is but this doesn't mean that they will automatically choose this form of tourism. Is here where the study of the ecotourism product attributes provides a fundamental part in reaching the ideal recipe to ecotourism products. This is not a guarantee that they will choose them, given that there are other factors that are involved in the selection of a form of tourism like the identification of the tourist with the values of ecotourism and the price given that in many cases this form of alternative tourism brings about extra costs. But offering the right product based on the characteristics that are more alluring to tourist of the location is a step forward that objective.

This study selected four pre-determined attributes of ecotourism (nature, cultural, historical and community) as these characteristics link to the common thread of all the different definitions of ecotourism

As is seen on this study, although the tourists who are familiar with this concept consider the attribute “nature” the main objective when considering ecotourism destinations, the majority of tourists didn't choose Oporto considering that the most

important attribute but instead, the attributes “historical” and “cultural” proving once again that is fundamental to understand which attributes contribute to the choice of a destination.

So, in order to offer a product that is able to lure tourist to ecotourism products in Oporto is necessary to explore the historical and cultural attributes following the guidelines in which ecotourism stands on. This doesn't mean that other attributes must be disregard but that each have their place in the construction of the product.

## **5.2 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

This subchapter attends to the fact that when conducting a study is bound to exist limitations that hinder the same.

In first place, is valuable to mentioned that there is a lack of studies about alternative forms of tourism, or their viability, in Oporto specifically ecotourism (and other sub themes) on which this study focus.

Other limitation to this study was the fact that the majority of tourism in Oporto reached were domestic tourists resulting in a shortage of opinions from international tourists that choose this particular destination.

But, the main limitation to this study was the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic that interfere with the collection of tourist's questionnaires and the online alternative didn't allow to collect the desired number of questionnaires. It also hampered the collection of opinions from the City Hall and tourism operators given the lack of collaboration via electronic means and the impossibility to dislocate personally to the institution.

## **5.3 FURTHER RESEARCH**

Given that the current trend is towards more sustainable forms of tourism there is a need for more studies about the viability of the implementations of alternative forms of tourism in Oporto as well as other Portuguese regions. This would be seen as an added value market tools for tourism operators.

There can also be further studies about this theme that incorporate the opinion of the local population as well as tourism operators and local government.

It's also important to further investigate the opinion of international tourists given the limitations faced in this study.

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# ATTACHMENTS

## ATTACHMENT 1 – SURVEY APPLIED TO THE OPORTO TOURISTS

Section 1 of 3

### Ecotourism in Oporto

The following questionnaire is a part of an investigation being conducted in University Católica do Porto, within the composition of a Master Thesis about the attributes of Ecotourism in Oporto region.  
Is composed of multiple choices and open responses questions. This questionnaire is anonymous, and the obtained results will be used only for academic ends.  
Thank you for your collaboration

A little about  
Description (optional)

1. \*

Female

Male

2. \*

Short answer text

3. \*

Short answer text

4. Level of \*

Basic Level

Degree level

Bachelors degree

Masters degree

PhD

5. Marital \*

- Single
- Married
- Divorced
- Widow

6. \*

Short answer text  
.....

7. Do you have \*

- Yes
- No

8. If Yes, please indicate how many by

Long answer text  
.....

9. Level of income \*

- Up to 8 890€
- 8 890€ - 26 670€
- 26 670€ - 44 450€
- more than 44 450€

After section 1 Continue to next section ▼

## What is Ecotourism?



“Putting tourism on a sustainable path is a major challenge, but one that also presents a significant opportunity” – Klaus Topfer (UNEP Executive Director)

10. Do you know what \*

- Yes
- No
- Somewhat familiar

If you answer no in question 10 please skip to question  
Description (optional)

11. Did you ever plan a vacation in this type of

- Yes
- No

12. Do you think Oporto is a good destination for those who seek this type of

- Yes
- No

13. Will you be willing to pay more to vacation in an Ecotourism

- Yes
- No

14. What motivates you to choose an Ecotourism

- nature-based
- environmental sustainability
- contribution to conservation
- community
- historical places
- Other...

15. Do you consider yourself environmentally \*

- Yes
- No
- Somewhat

16. Do you believe that is important to have a growing ambiental conscious \*

- Yes
- No

17. When you choose a vacation destination what do you consider as more important \*  
in a scale from 1 to 5 (being 1 = irrelevant and 5 = very important)?

	1	2	3	4	5
Culture	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Natural La...	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cultural pr...	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Community	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

After section 2 Continue to next section



Section 3 of 3

## The Oporto region:



Description (optional)

18. Why did you choose Oporto as your vacation destination? Please rank in a scale from 1 to 5 (being 1 = irrelevant and 5 = very important) \*

	1	2	3	4	5
Desire to e...	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cultural val...	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Learning e...	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Natural be...	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To explore ...	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To experie...	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To meet th...	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

19. What are the three main activities you did / are planning to do on this \*

Long answer text

20. If you have any additional comments you are welcome to write

Long answer text