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THE FACTORS INFLUENCING ELECTRONIC TRUST AND PURCHASE
INTENTIONS IN ONLINE BOOKING WEBSITES: A STUDY OF THE
PORTUGUESE CONSUMER

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The Factors Influencing Electronic Trust and Purchase Intentions in Booking Websites:
A Study of the Portuguese Consumer.

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Resumo

Esta dissertação tem como objeto de estudo um tema que tem vindo a assumir cada vez mais importância na sociedade de hoje e que requer investigações constantes e atualizadas: o turismo *online*, e a relação entre os consumidores e os websites que se dedicam à oferta de serviços de reservas de alojamento. Deste modo, pretendeu-se analisar quais os elementos que mais influenciam a confiança eletrónica e as intenções de compra da população portuguesa nestas plataformas. Ao longo deste trabalho foram abordados conceitos como *e-wom*, características dos *websites*, intenções de compra, confiança eletrónica e homofilia (semelhança de atributos).

Investigou-se o papel de algumas características dos *websites*, nomeadamente os comentários de outros consumidores e a qualidade dos *websites*, e de alguns traços de homofilia, como o género e a experiência dos indivíduos nestes websites, na confiança eletrónica e nas intenções de compra que estes apresentam, bem como a influência da própria confiança nas suas decisões de reserva de hotel futuras.

Para melhor compreender este fenómeno, foi utilizada uma metodologia quantitativa por meio de um questionário *online*, divulgado maioritariamente através do Facebook, considerado um importante meio de comunicação. Deste modo, foram obtidas 509 respostas válidas.

Como principais conclusões, podemos referir que o Booking.com é o *site* de eleição dos indivíduos da amostra para pesquisarem e reservarem alojamento, a sua confiança nos sites é claramente influenciada pelo feedback dado por outros consumidores, e a qualidade dos *websites* é o fator que mais influencia quer a confiança eletrónica, quer as intenções de compra destes consumidores.

Palavras-Chave: *Websites* de Reserva de Alojamento; Marketing; Confiança Eletrónica; Intenções de Compra

JEL Classification System: M31 (Marketing) e C12 (Hypothesis Testing)

Abstract

This dissertation aims to study a subject that has become increasingly important in today's society and that requires constant and updated research: the online tourism, and the relationship between consumers and the websites dedicated to the provision of services of accommodation reservations. This way, one intended to analyze which elements influence the most electronic trust and purchase intentions of the Portuguese population in these platforms. Throughout this work, concepts like *e-wom*, website characteristics, purchase intentions, electronic trust and homophily (attribute similarity) were approached.

We investigated the role of certain website characteristics, namely comments from other consumers and the quality of websites, and some homophily traits such as the gender and individuals' experience on these websites, on electronic trust and purchase intentions, as well as the influence of trust in their future hotel booking decisions.

To better understand this phenomenon, a quantitative methodology was used by means of an online questionnaire, mostly divulgated through Facebook, considered an important mean of communication. Thus, 509 valid answers were obtained.

As main conclusions we can state that Booking.com is the website of choice for the sampled individuals to search and book accommodation, their trust in the websites is clearly influenced by the feedback given by previous consumers, and the website quality is the factor that Influences the most both electronic trust and purchasing intentions of these consumers.

Key Words: Online Booking Websites; Marketing; Electronic Trust; Purchase Intentions

JEL Classification System: M31 (Marketing) and C12 (Hypothesis Testing)

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1. Introduction

In the first chapter of this dissertation, the researcher presents the thematic and main theoretical concepts that will be explored throughout the investigation, followed by the definition of the problem and the main research questions inherent to the topic. Before proceeding to the following chapters, the thesis structure will be defined and presented.

1.1 Introduction to the theme

The main subject of this dissertation regarding consumers' behaviour in online booking websites has shown an increase in interest by researchers. This is mainly due to the fact that the success of companies selling these kind of services depends largely on consumers' traits and flexibility in adapting to the new and disruptive technologies. Therefore, more and more investigators have been trying to understand the phenomenon in order to explain how companies can better adjust.

Due to an increase in the use of the internet from informational to entertainment purposes, and as a safer way to pay, it has become more important to approach these websites as relevant communication channels, justifying the choice to investigate them.

The development of the Internet over time has promoted the proliferation of a new communication network in an increasingly globalized world, and the result of this phenomenon is the continuous growth that is showing in the number of Internet users. The emergence of more demanding network users in terms of content and innovation, has led to a diversification in the options and possibilities in this very versatile tool. According to Cheng (2009), network has become the fourth most used communication channel besides newspaper, broadcast and television.

Starting from the very first static web (Web 1.0) up to a more individually-oriented web (Web 3.0) that promotes the use of several portable applications, the World Wide Web (WWW) represents one of the greatest diversifications provided by the network media development, and it is currently the largest global information media worldwide (Nath *et al.*, 2014).

The exponential development of information and communication technologies (ICT) has allowed people to exploit contents and make daily use of the available tools, and it has been fast until digital media became a major source of transactions. Due to the present reality, e-

commerce assumes a key role for many companies and businesses, while it is increasingly a preferable tool by consumers to obtain products and services. The new strategies adopted by companies to reach loyal consumers have direct impacts on their behaviors, and the existing barriers in terms of distance and time are constantly increasing the possibility of new emerging business opportunities (Azevedo & Gomes, 2015), making the researches about consumers' purchasing behaviors in Web 2.0 applications a central tool nowadays.

Electronic trust (e-trust) in online environments is a very important condition for e-commerce transactions and directly influences the relationship between organizations and individuals. Through a more detailed study of how consumer trust mechanisms work, and to understand the factors that most influence this process, it is possible for companies to improve their communications and strategies in social networks over time (Orzil & Andalécio, 2016). According to Vos *et al.* (2014), building trust in online environments represents a key driver for businesses' success, and the implementation of measures able to transmit such feeling to its customers has become a priority for companies that operate in the virtual world. The perceived risks associated to these transactions represent a major inconvenient for most internet users. Thus, situations of discomfort and doubt should be prevented, while ensuring greater safety conditions for potential customers (Vos *et al.*, 2014).

Another focus of this dissertation is related with the tourism and hospitality sector, with special focus in Portugal. According to Turismo de Portugal information regarding the year of 2015, this sector has directly contributed to 5% of the total national Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The low number presented is motivating tourism entities to seek solutions to this reality, therefore, ideals such as innovation and growth are becoming concepts that highly characterize this activity area in the referred country. Furthermore, according to the same source, the last results concerning the first month of 2017 show some signs of improvement comparing with the homologous period, January 2016, and it is possible to observe that revenues from tourism performance have increased by 17.4%.

Moreover, regarding a study published in March 2017 by the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC), the direct contribution of tourist activities in 2016 to national GDP was of 6,4%, with an expected growth for the present year. The total contribution to GDP, which includes indirect and induced impacts on national economy, resulting from tourism-related activities, are significantly relevant, with positive forecasts in following years. The potential

development that can be expected for this sector has strongly motivated the approach of the hospitality field as a significant element for the national economy and the population in general.

Taking into account the importance for companies in achieving customer loyalty and attracting new audiences to their businesses, as well as the massive impact of virtual commerce in several tourism activities, the theme proposed for this dissertation assumes relevance by trying to provide new perspectives from the consumer side to the organizational side. In other words, it intends to deepen the knowledge regarding consumers' online behaviors, and main motivations inherent to electronic trust and their intentions to purchase. To better understand this phenomenon, the researcher will study the impact and importance that personality traits have on the potential consumer, and how previous consumers' recommendations and other website characteristics contribute to a greater or lesser propensity to trust accommodation booking websites and make reservations on such platforms. According to Chen *et al.* (2011), there is a strong evidence supporting that information regarding former customers' experiences has a strong impact on consumers' intentions to purchase.

Currently it is possible to observe several online platforms operating in the tourism and accommodation sector. Booking.com and TripAdvisor are the two booking websites leaders in Portugal, representing important social networks on the provision of customers' feedback and general information regarding hotels and its equals. Airbnb is a recent lodging website dedicated to giving and receiving information on local accommodation, while it comprises general reviews on hosts and houses' conditions. Although these networks represent the main sources of hotel information in the digital media, other similar platforms will be considered during this investigation.

The presence in social media networks and consequent provision of reliable websites assumes greater proportions when referring to accommodation booking websites, once people in general have their first contact with hotels' information and details through these platforms, and end up relying their buying decisions on these websites' advices. Therefore, e-trust and purchase intentions represent big concerns for online business practitioners, and understanding customers' behaviors and motivations behind an online reservation may help e-marketers to make predictions on consumers' hotel choices (Amaro & Duarte, 2015).

Thus, the researcher proposes to analyze some factors that influence trust and purchase intentions in accommodation booking websites, specifically the impact of individuals'

similarity of attributes (homophily), website characteristics and consumers' trust demonstrated in these platforms.

1.2 Definition of the Research Problem

The identified theme of analysis presents some aspects that meet researcher's personal and professional interest. During my academic path, the aim for management subjects aligned with the marketing area has shown to be what most pleases personal tastes. Additionally, and taking advantage from the relation between researcher's generation and constant technological developments, the primer objective of this study was to approach the last evolution and trends on the topics mentioned in the previous subchapter.

Consequently, e-trust and consumers' purchasing behaviours will assume a great importance throughout this dissertation, considering "*online platforms emergency important information sources for an increasingly informed and demanding tourist*" (Lopes, 2015).

Based on trends of using the Internet as a main mean of communication and a key source of business transactions, the researcher proposes to develop an analysis on consumer buying behavior compatible with the matter in question. Therefore, the following main research questions were formulated:

Which factors determine consumers' e-trust in online booking websites?

Which factors determine consumers' purchase intentions in online booking websites?

Are website characteristics important? Will individuals' experience influence their trust and their purchase intentions? Do males and females perceive the same levels of trust? And what is the role of electronic trust in individuals' purchase intentions? Focusing the study on the Portuguese population, these are some of the questions this dissertation intends to address and provide concrete answer, which will support the elaboration of the literature review chapter.

1.3. Thesis Structure

The present subchapter is dedicated to present a brief summary of the entire investigation. Therefore:

Chapter 1: The first chapter of this dissertation refers to the introduction to the main subjects approached. The researcher introduces a brief presentation of theme, as well as the definition of the research problem, and the definition of the project. Thus, this chapter invites the readers to become familiar with the thematic that will be developed throughout the work.

Chapter 2: This chapter aims to collect relevant information regarding the existent literature on the proposed theme, which is translated in the presentation of five main sub-chapters: internet and web evolution, electronic word of mouth (e-WOM), website characteristics, online consumer behavior and tourism in Portugal and its economic perspective.

Chapter 3: The third chapter dedicates itself to the development of the methodological part of this investigation. The researcher explores the main objectives and the models of investigation used, the hypotheses formulated regarding each model and the data methodology that will be applied in the following steps.

Chapter 4: In this chapter, readers may find information concerning the data analysis that characterizes this research, namely the sample characterization, the indicators used to study the predictive variables of each model, the reliability of the proposed constructs, and finally the hypothesis testing.

Chapter 5: The final chapter of this investigation intends to present the main conclusions extracted from the previous chapters. The researcher highlights the most important contributions provided by this work, the limitations found throughout the dissertation, and some investigation opportunities for future researches.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

In the present chapter, a detailed investigation on the existent literature will be presented, addressing the themes and concepts that will guide the entire study. The chapter is divided into five main themes: i) a brief introduction to the internet and web evolution, ii) the exploration of the e-WOM (electronic word-of-mouth) role, highlighting the online booking websites and their importance in Portugal, iii) the influence associated to these websites' characteristics, iv) online consumer behavior, with emphasis on the topic "purchase intentions", one of the main theoretical elements of this work, on the role of electronic trust and homophily (similarity between attributes), and finally v) a brief reference to tourism in Portugal and its economic and social situation.

2.2. Internet and Web Evolution

Back when it was first introduced, the internet has become one of the most revolutionary and influential tools worldwide, due to the globalisation and continuous technological evolutions (Xiang *et al.*, 2015). Meeker (2015) reveals that in 1995, less than 1% of the population worldwide was an internet user, while in the following twenty years, the internet faced a 39% population penetration globally. Xiang *et al.* (2015) describes the internet as a “*platform that facilitates continuous technological innovations, fosters new business practices, and alters the competitive landscape of numerous industry sectors*”.

Along with the Internet, also the World Wide Web (WWW) has passed through a relevant evolution process. Nath *et al.* (2014) states that the WWW “*is the largest global information media through which user can share, read, and writes data through computers connected with internet*”.

According to the mentioned author, the first web version, the Web 1.0, was only directed to computing devices and was characterized as being a static web (or informational web), where internet users were able to read and share information via online, with little communicative and interactional features. Web 1.0 evolved to a type of web where users have access to the available information and the possibility to edit, modify and update contents, the Web 2.0. (Nath *et al.*, 2014)

The interactive system described above has brought important insights regarding not only in the informational and technological field, but also in the communication perspective. The creation of a new communication channel has helped gathering ideas and information worldwide, which allows people to access in an easier and quicker way to others' opinions and find common interests among them, representing a community-oriented system. (Nath *et al.*, 2014)

Moreover, Newman *et al.* (2016) has stated Web 2.0 as “social web”, since it has allowed the development of many connections, enabling people to link and communicate with friends and family, as well as share information and contact with interest groups and companies. Thus, the social web phenomenon was responsible for the first online communication between people globally, creating the opportunity to its users to establish bonds not only with their close groups, but also with brands, social events, among other entities (Newman *et al.*, 2016).

As a continuation of the process of the web evolution, it is important to mention the type of web that will domain the next generation, the Web 3.0 (Nath *et al.*, 2014). This web type has already begun its development in the present days, and consists on an “individual- oriented” web, focused on a greatest dependency on high portable devices, such as smartphones and other electronic gadgets (Nath *et al.*, 2014). Internet and social networks access will reach a larger dimension, and people around the globe will have greater opportunities of linking their relations and maintaining themselves constantly informed. (Newman *et al.*, 2016).

Nevertheless, the internet emergency and the easier access to multimedia information has transformed the global economy and several business segments, such as the hospitality and tourism sector, who have reacted to the technological progress through important investments in online platforms and other communication networks (Pranicevic, 2006), which will be further explored in the following chapters.

2.3. Electronic Word-of-Mouth (e-WOM)

The decision concerning the best approach to promote specific businesses is a growing concern to most organizations, due to the increasingly competitive markets that act nowadays. Stimulate sales of goods and services has recently achieved a different value, since providing high quality services is now a major priority to several businesses (Conceição, 2016).

Concordantly, it is important to make sure the best techniques are applied in order to achieve better performances (Javadi *et al.*, 2012). Therefore, organizations may develop their marketing strategies according to two different types of marketing: the outbound and the inbound marketing. According to Conceição (2016), the outbound marketing method is usually referred as “traditional marketing”, and it is based on “*purchasing advertising space on television, radio, telemarketing among other means of direct supply of a certain product or service*”. This type of advertising is frequently experienced by the present society, and remains one of the main sources of promotion worldwide.

In contrast, Caragher (2013) affirms that “*inbound marketing is about creating and sharing content*”. Focusing on “*creating content specifically designed to appeal to your ideal clients, inbound marketing attracts qualified prospects to your firm and keeps them coming back for more*” Caragher (2013). Thus, this marketing strategy is considerably more attractive to consumers’ eyes, and provides a better vision about specific characteristics of the target population that companies intent to approach.

Goodwin (2013) adds that inbound marketing “*is a more affordable marketing strategy, which is a reason why so many small business owners make use of it*”. This marketing technique includes content sharing, regarding the blog content development and social media interactions (Opreana and Vinerean, 2015). Therefore, the authors concluded that online websites are one the most commons strands regarding inbound strategies present in nowadays’ means of communication.

As previously mentioned, the tourism sector was one of the many that felt the need to respond to online communication advances, through media displays people most frequent. Consequently, online booking websites have emerged to improve and innovate national and international lodging, as well as to facilitate the entire process of choosing and booking a specific type of accommodation (Castro, 2016).

Accordingly, online booking websites represent an electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) source, once information shared by individuals is able to impact and affect other users' behaviors (Steffes and Burgee, 2009).

Brown *et al.* (2007) defines word-of-mouth (WOM) as a “*consumer-dominated channel of marketing communication where the sender is independent of the market*”. The author enhances the access to consumption-related messages that involves “informational value” more than formal advertising techniques provided, where the first ones have a greater capacity to influence individuals' decision making process (Herrero *et al.*, 2015).

The volume of online information and number of users of web displays has been growing through time (Berger and Schwartz, 2011), thus WOM notion went through several changes and developments over the last decade. Accordingly, regarding the contribution and increasing relevance of technological applications, the *e-WOM* concept has emerged.

Electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) can be defined as “*any positive or negative statement made by potential, actual or former customers about a product or company that is made available to a multitude of people and institutions via the internet*” (Hennig-Thurau *et al.*, 2004). This new way of communication allows consumers to use several different platforms to share opinions and information, demonstrating new opportunities related with messages transmission inherent to technological evolution. (Hennig-Thurau *et al.*, 2004)

Moreover, according to the data retrieved from INE (2016), when considering individuals that used the internet on the first three months of the year 2016, with ages between 16 and 74 years old, 83.3% of those individuals used the internet to search information about products and services. Accordingly, information regarding the same age limit and the same period of time for the year 2016 reveals that 84.5% of the internet users access to it on a daily basis. Those high percentages sustain the importance of internet and related websites to organizations' communication, demonstrating that online interactions are an appropriate way to promote several businesses and to engage possible future consumers.

2.3.1. Online Booking Websites as Hotel Marketing Tools

Regarding the information previously mentioned, tourism and hospitality have adopted the internet as a major tool to interact with potential consumers, since it allows them to search on products and services related with the matter, to compare that information across several homonymous websites, and to help them making a final decision and go forward to the reservation process (Law *et al.*, 2009). According to INE statistics, regarding the target population mentioned earlier, almost 1/3 of that sample of internet users used travel accommodation services during the year 2015, enhancing the necessity from organizations to reach individuals throughout those websites.

The Web 2.0 development has contributed to the technological boost in the present society, and consequently more research is needed on the websites field, to enable a deeper understanding on tourism behavior in the digital world. (Leung *et al.*, 2013)

Electronic applications concerning the Web 2.0 technology became a facilitator between organizations and consumers' interactions. With particular focus on the hospitality industry, those tools assume major roles due to the propensity by its users to share their previous experiences through online comments, pictures and opinions. This phenomenon of information creation and sharing by individuals is named as "user-generated content". (Herrero *et al.*, 2015)

Kaplan and Haenlein's (2010) definition of user-generated content (UGC) relies on the available content that is "*created outside of professional routines and practices*", which is able to be produced, modified and consumed by individuals, and "*can be seen as the sum of all ways in which people make use of social media*" (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010).

The study performed by Herrero *et al.* (2015) has revealed the usefulness and importance that potential consumers attribute to UGC. The mentioned authors developed an investigation regarding some UGC characteristics across review websites and hotel interactive websites that were able to influence its users' behavior, and the results retrieved pointed to the conclusion that information value, source credibility and similarity influence the user-generated content on both Web 2.0 applications.

Nevertheless, the authors found that similarity effect is much weaker than the other two, stating that a consumer behavior is more affected by those websites content when consumers believe that such content "*is credible and valuable in terms of usefulness, quantity, timeliness and detail*" (Herrero *et al.*, 2015).

According with the study provided by Chu (2009) concerning consumers' engagement in e-WOM, five social relationship variables were identified: social capital, tie strength, homophily, trust and interpersonal influence. The results from their investigation helped to understand either those determinants were able to influence user's communications through social networking sites, and the author came to the conclusion that e-WOM represents a strong source of online opinion giving, opinion seeking and pass-along behavior regarding four of the five studied variables, whereas no effect was found in concern with tie strength. The psychological association with particular groups of consumers related with online opinion giving and seeking, contributes to a higher perceived influence of purchasing or using same products and brands (Chu, 2009), facilitating users' engagement on those websites, and particularly in e-WOM communications.

Furthermore, Hsu *et al.* (2012) study highlights consumers' perceptions of online WOM marketing in the accommodation field. Performing a case study of TripAdvisor website, the authors obtained evidence that this travel website is a significant venue on the purchasing decision making for consumers, demonstrating that online reviews from other online travelers have significant and positive impact on its readers' choices. The referred investigators performed a solid analysis on the trustworthiness towards positive and negative reviews, explaining that "*negative reviews based on customer preferences serve as implicit referrals to particular market segments*" (Hsu *et al.*, 2012).

Additionally, Hsu *et al.* (2012) came to the conclusion that understanding the real impact of the website on the number of reservations made through it is a difficult task, and total number of reviews and total helpful votes are good indicators to estimate actual bookings.

To conclude this subchapter of the literature review, one must recognize that organizations should consider the most appropriate and effective techniques to communicate with their consumers, and this process is directly related with making the best use of the online tools available (Conceição, 2016).

Therefore, and emphasizing the main conceptual topics on this research, we can conclude that the emergency of online booking websites represents a way to improve the relation between hotels and similar accommodation units and its potential consumers, finding ways of strengthening their bonds, while it may also be a channel to discover new ways of communication and divulgation to the mentioned entities.

2.3.2. Online Booking Websites in Portugal

With respect to technological developments in the communication sector, many businesses are adapting their strategies in order to follow the online evolution phenomenon. The methods described rely on the increasing presence in social media channels and applications, which is recognized as one of the most important tools in the information transmission process worldwide. (Praničević, 2006)

Regarding tourism sector and social media channels, there are several online platforms that allow consumers to search for particular types of accommodation, while having access to previous consumers' experiences and preferences, in order to make better choices for themselves (Herrero *et al.*, 2015).

According to Munar & Jacobsen (2013) research, websites with previous consumers' evaluations occupy the third place regarding consumers' preferences on the search for travel information sources, which encourages hotels and related establishments to increase their availability on such platforms.

While considering the presence of accommodation business in online websites, there are several establishments that we can observe as being the most searched and desired by hotel customers. Hotels, hostels and local apartments, among others, represent the most searched and booked types of accommodation in online platforms like Booking.com, TripAdvisor and Airbnb. This type of renting service is responsible for providing information regarding the host of the room or house, as well as reviews by previous guests who had accommodation experiences on those places. (Castro, 2016)

Concordantly, the accommodation booking websites referred represent the top online platforms regarding the "collecting-information" process and hotel reservation in Portugal (Castro, 2016). Booking.com is a website that allows consumers to gather information according to their trip characteristics and to book directly the chosen accommodation. While using the website, each consumer has access to the evaluation items, since the website provides the opportunity for previous consumers to rate their experience in a 1-10 scale, enabling future consumers to make wiser choices. Another characteristic associated to Booking.com relies on the possibility to rate not only the hotel itself, but also several components inherent to their stay, like the cleanliness, the comfort, the location, commodities, employees, the price-quality relation and wi-fi access.

TripAdvisor is one of the most recognized websites in the gathering information and reservation plan by portuguese consumers. This website has also a strong presence in other HORECA channel entities, like restaurants and cafes, among others. The website is strongly characterized by its evaluation system that continues to attract individuals to participate on it, as evaluations' writers or readers. Evaluation features from TripAdvisor website are a bit different from the Booking.com ones. Since TripAdvisor allows evaluations in every establishments they are associated with, when reading a particular comment from a previous user, a potential consumer has access to the user profile. This profile gathers some personal information, as well as other information like total number of reviews given in the website and the number of reviews provided by specific segments (hotels, restaurants, and others). Another positive aspect regarding this platform is the possibility it gives to consumers to rate specific reviews as "helpful", meaning that those reviews had a positive influence on their experience. This evaluation system confers more credibility to users with the highest number of helpful reviews, providing better information to potential consumers.

Airbnb is a hospitality service with the primer objective of renting local accommodation. In contrast with the mentioned booking websites, the lodging is provided by individuals that intent to rent rooms in their places or entire apartments, during a certain period of time. The reservation is managed directly with the house owner, and trough the website people can access to some place details, by means of photographs and reviews from other guests, regarding the accommodation and its host.

Moreover, evidence obtained from the Marktest Group published in January of 2017, states that Portuguese population follows most new technology strands, mainly with regard to the adoption of social networks for tourist purposes. According to the Bareme Internet 2016 study performed by this source, 22.4% of individuals use digital means to book trips and accommodation, a habit that has been growing in the last five years in Portugal, with particular incidence in the age group between 25 and 34 years.

T.I.C.E. 2012 report provides information regarding the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) in hotel establishments in Portugal, and states that in 2011, 86,6% of total establishments used internet tools to advertise their hosting services, while 74,1% of the referred entities received room reservations through the referred websites. Data from the year 2010 retrieved from the same report states that 79,1% of the mentioned establishments has

its own website, while only 54,5% is present in other tourist directories, as the online booking websites described above.

Regarding technological developments in the mentioned sector, the numbers presented may have suffered significant changes. In fact, and according to Booking.com website (2016), there are more than 16 320 registered accommodation types in Portugal that can be booked through this website, which demonstrates the increasing accession from organizations to this marketing strategy of promoting their establishments (Castro, 2016), while showing awareness of Portuguese consumers' preferences of searching and booking accommodations through online websites.

2.4. Website Characteristics

Online websites are considered central marketing tools to communicate several products and services. (Ldhari and Michaud, 2015). According to Marques *et al.* (2015), websites are fundamental channels that help individuals make their consumption decisions, as they work not only as online catalogues, but also as service providers. The online market is becoming increasingly competitive, once transactions via internet are associated with lower costs for both parts of the relationship and ease of purchase, inviting consumers to take advantage from these facilities. This phenomenon leads to the growing need from companies to present solid websites, able to attract and satisfy their customers in a high level (Marques *et al.*, 2015).

A particular characteristic of shopping in online websites relies on consumers' judgement on the available information on the referred channels (Bilgihan and Bujisic, 2015). Accordingly, the authors state that purchasing decisions made by individuals are based on the *"appearance and website design elements including pictures, virtual tours, graphics, quality information and video clips of the product"*.

Concerning companies' intention of using internet applications as divulgators of their businesses, one must evaluate and determine which factors are able to cause higher impact on their customers, to create a desirable website quality, to trigger the intended feelings and to enable better online experiences (Marques *et al.*, 2015). The investigators affirm that the mentioned measures should translate on organizations' concern of promoting a good website design, ease of navigation, good content in terms of information and images and a great quality of performance.

With regards to the hospitality sector, research has demonstrated that “*website design and Internet marketing features contribute to effective delivery of messages, quality of products and services, and brand image*” (Molina *et al.*, 2015).

Websites characteristics assume a particularly important role in the mentioned sector. Previously mentioned Ldhari and Michaud (2015) in their study on online booking intentions state that “*the positive attitude toward a website is generally associated with several factors which determine the quality of the site*”. Therefore, accommodation websites should be carefully implemented and presented, in order to help their users making wiser choices.

Regarding the promotion of good virtual business environments, Cho *et al.* (2014) proposed a model of website quality based on three important measures: i) system quality, described by the authors as a “*user-friendly system in online shopping and evaluated by consumer perceptions about access convenience, ease of use and reliability*”, ii) information quality, which refers to the information provided by websites to describe certain products and services, and iii) service quality, referring to the degree of satisfaction perceived by the customer concerning website availability on the required information on specific products or services, and the personalized service provided.

An important outcome for this work relies on understanding if website elements are effectively related with consumers’ purchasing decision process. A major contribution is provided by Aladwani (2006), which highlights four website quality dimensions that influence consumers’ purchasing intentions in online websites: i) technical dimension, ii) general content, iii) specific content, and iv) appearance. Technical dimension comprises features like security, ease of navigation, search facilities, site availability, valid links, personalization, speed of page loading, interactivity, and ease of accessing the site. The second component entails characteristics such as content usefulness, completeness, clarity, currency, conciseness, and accuracy. The third dimension, *specific content*, is related with particular characteristics from the business itself, as information regarding firm’s contacts and general information, products and services details, customer policies and customer support. The final component, *appearance*, is related with features like attractiveness, organization, proper use of fonts, proper use of colors, and proper use of multimedia. According to the mentioned author, all four website quality dimensions positively influence consumers’ attitudes towards the website, while indirectly influence individuals’ intention to purchase. Interestingly, technical dimension was found being the only website component capable of influencing purchase intentions both

directly and indirectly, with resort to consumers' attitudes towards the website. In fact, a study developed by Al-Qeisi *et al.* (2014) corroborates the previously mentioned one, where researchers have clearly identified the influence from the four referred dimensions on online consumer behavior.

An online hotel booking investigation conducted by Bilgihan and Bujisic (2015) underlines the existence of two main utilities perceived by internet users while making use of Web 2.0 applications: i) hedonic shopping orientations, related with the pleasure and enjoyment that individuals can obtain from online interactions with the website, and ii) utilitarian shopping orientations, demonstrated through the particular intention of buying a specific good or service. Utilitarian website characteristics include accessibility, ability to search for information in an effective way, and provision of product or service quality information (Bilgihan and Bujisic, 2015). Previous researches on online behaviors focused on shopping intentions suggest that both hedonic and utilitarian characteristics should be taken in consideration while planning a website (Poyry *et al.*, 2012). Bilgihan and Bujisic have concluded that hedonic and utilitarian features are great influencers of online shopping experiences, once consumers perceive both perceptions while making their booking decisions. *“Thus, website features that encompasses both dimensions are likely to perform better”* (Bilgihan and Bujisic, 2015).

Concluding from the studies presented, online shoppers are willing to rely on virtual commerce while demonstrating opening feelings to these new shopping opportunities. However, possible perceived risks associated with these experiences lead consumers to highly pursue the element *security* as a mandatory feature in their transactions (Souza *et al.*, 2007). Accordingly, and taking into consideration Aldwani's (2006) conclusions regarding the technical dimension of website quality, the *security* component is highly related with individuals' intention of buying online.

Therefore, companies are responsible for implementing security measures on their websites in order to minimize the referred risks with online transactions. Thus, less associated risks are synonym of more secure online platforms and higher quality websites, as it reduces several concerns of its customers and fulfills their expectations of obtaining the desired quality service. (Souza *et al.*, 2007)

To conclude this subchapter of the literature review, it became highly demonstrated the proponent role that website characteristics may directly or indirectly play in consumers' shopping intentions. Therefore, the study and inclusion of this element in the proposed model

is a central foundation on understanding online behaviors in the tourist accommodation sector in Portugal.

2.5. Online Consumer Behavior

The growing role assumed by recent developments in the internet and social media in the present society is leading people to leave the offline world behind, to concentrate their preferences and behaviors in online matters. Thus, internet has propelled a new way of doing business: the e-commerce, and online transactions have produced several changes in societies' mind, from how consumers behave and communicate, to how they become aware of products' offer and do their shopping. (Awa *et al.*, 2012)

Therefore, the information availability provided by new communication channels and growing accession verified among its users has increased the need of investigating the thematic concerning the online consumer behavior while performing online buying decisions. (Awa *et al.*, 2012)

Concerning the referred subject, Samara and Morsch (2005) identify consumer behavior as a "*study that aims to know deeply the behavior of people, their needs, their desires and their motivations, trying to understand the process of how, when and why they buy*". Those indicators have developed within the digital world and assumed a different value from the consumer perspective, once the present society is characterized by its online orientation (Nath *et al.*, 2014).

Therefore, it has become fundamental to understand the motivations behind an online shopping intention and how customers' behavior is affected by an *online* presence. In the next subchapter, an online buying behavior research will be conducted, as a fundamental tool to clarify attributes and benefits that consumers associate to an online buying process.

2.5.1. Online Buying Behavior: Consumers' Purchase Intentions

To introduce this topic, a previously mentioned concept requires deeper exploration for a better understanding of the referred thematic, the e-commerce concept. Awa *et al.* (2015) define e-commerce as “*a business innovation involving non-physical and electronic interactions, and maintenance of business relationships through sharing of information and knowledge*”.

According to Cruz (2012), the electronic commerce has brought three main changes in relation to traditional trade: the market scale, the clear differences regarding the communication and interaction between a company and its clients, and the cost reduction concerning the purchasing process, from the first step, the information collection, to the effective buying action.

In a first comparison of online and offline stores, it is possible to verify clear differences regarding communication aspects between the seller and the buyer. Physical stores comprise the great advantage of attracting and engaging consumers through the five senses, while online shoppers have their buying desires reduced to electronical matters: photographs, videos, personal comments, among other aspects. (Cruz, 2012)

However, there are some attributes with respect to online shopping that can be considered as big opportunities to consumers, namely the time saving regarding displacements to stores and the waiting time to pay (Javadi *et al.*, 2012). The same authors state that electronic stores provide free and better information to its users, while having a wide range of products and services. Concordantly, Punjand and Moore (2009) concluded that the possibility to perform an easy search is a main motivation for online shopping.

Online users tend to be more careful while shopping online, once they associate virtual behaviors to higher implicit risks (Bhatnagar *et al.*, 2000). Therefore, the investigators assumed that perceived risks are taken into account while considering buying products or services with online matters. Ifeanyichukwu (2016) confirms in his study regarding online behavior that individuals perform several activities before making a purchase through the Internet, as price and quality comparisons, and evaluation of alternative items, in order to make sure they are making the best possible choices. The same author enhances the importance of the alignment between the online offer and the personal demand, once individuals have particular needs and tastes, which translates into the possibility of online personalization.

Online personalization, or online customization, allows retailers to develop customer-oriented strategies, with the final aim of motivating people to buy certain items (Ho and Bodoff, 2014). Thus, the study of consumers' purchase intentions becomes essential on realizing individuals' motivations in a buying environment. Wu *et al.* (2011) definition of purchase intention states the referred concept as "*the possibility that consumers will plan or be willing to purchase a certain product or service in the future*". Thus, the purchase intention is a critical indicator for organizations as it helps them understanding their customers' particular interests. Accordingly, Saha *et al.* (2012) states that purchase intention studies are responsible for understanding the reason why a consumers buys a particular brand.

According to Pappas *et al.* (2016), there are two different types of perceptions that influence online shopping behavior: cognitive perceptions and affective perceptions. Cognitive perceptions refer to the quality of personalization, messages quality and benefits of personalization. Quality of personalization directs to the degree of efficiency from companies, in the provision of their products, in satisfying their customers' preferences and needs. Messages quality respects to the "*general perception from the consumers of the accuracy and completeness of website information as it relates to products and transactions, when using personalized services*" (Pappas *et al.*, 2016). This component is crucial from the decision-making point of view to potential customers. The third measure, *benefits of personalization*, refers to the positive beliefs and advantages that costumers associate to their experience with personalized services. Regarding affective perceptions, these ones refer to the positive and negative effects extracted from the consumer experience in online services. Curiously, it is possible for customers to experiment both positive and negative feelings towards their online experience regarding the same situation (Kuo & Wu, 2012). A negative feeling may be associated to the lack of products and services offered, while positive affects can be sustained by satisfactory previous experiences, demonstrating high levels of trust from the consumer to the service provider (Pappas *et al.*, 2016).

Another contribution was provided by Dai *et al.* (2014) framework, which developed a model on previous online experiences and involved risks on individuals' purchase intention. According to these researchers, there is a negative relation between consumers' past experiences and product and financial risks. In other words, individuals with more online buying experiences associate future purchase actions, in the same channel, to reduced perceived risks, once they were able to gather prior knowledge and information regarding the mentioned business' processes and performance (Dai *et al.*, 2014).

With respect to online hotel booking websites, the main focus of this dissertation, Lien *et al.* (2015) research indicates that online shopping intentions in those platforms are affected by three different dimensions: brand image, perceived value and price. According to these authors' investigation, four main implications can be extracted: firstly, companies, particularly in the hotel sector, must be aware of customers' perceptions of value. Informed businesses will have better performances on keeping their clients satisfied through promotions and discounts on their websites (*utilitarian value*), while improving their websites characteristics, enabling a richer experience to potential clients (*experiential value*). In second place, the importance of maintaining a consistent brand image, advising organizations to dedicate themselves and put some efforts on the promotion of a solid image of their business. A third conclusion relies on the compatibility between price range and hotel actual rate. It is important to fulfill guests' expectations, thus it is not advisable to practice values incoherent with hotels' classification. A final consideration is related with perceived trust while making hotel booking decisions. Although this variable was found by the authors as not having impact on a consumer intention to buy, when individuals find online information as "accurate and reliable", it is possible to verify a higher degree of trust on the organization (Lien *et al.*, 2015). Therefore, the authors affirm that hotel entities and other institutions should not discard the trust value while planning and improving their communication channels.

To conclude this subchapter, one must highlight the importance of studying consumers' intention of buying in virtual spaces and their relationship with online purchasing processes. Therefore, e-marketers are able to design more appropriate actions to engage regular customers and attract potential ones. (Conceição, 2016)

Once online websites have become important channels for business to consumer (B2C) trades (Javadi *et al.*, 2012), understanding the antecedents behind an online shopping is originating increasing interest among researchers nowadays. In the following subchapters, two fundamental factors will be explored and treated as influential of online consumer behavior, particularly in the online buying process: e-trust and homophily effect (or similarity).

2.5.2. Electronic Trust (e-Trust)

Lien *et al.* (2015) refer to trust as a “*positive belief about the reliability and dependability of a person or an object*”.

Trust begins when an individual experiments a particular service, classifies it as a highly consistent experience, and desires to perform it again (Reichheld and Schefter, 2000). The same authors emphasize the importance of trusting feelings in online matters, once transaction processes occur in uncertain environments, due to the distance and perceived risks associated (Cruz, 2012).

Gefen *et al.* (2003) has classified trust antecedents in four categories: i) knowledge-based trust, focused on developing trust through consumers’ continuous knowledge and experience, ii) cognition-based trust, contrasting with the first category, takes advantage from first impressions to develop trusting feelings, iii) institution-based trust, related with the attribution of trusting feelings to a third entity, and iv) personality-based trust, where individuals’ character defines their level of trust.

Raimondo (2000) in a solid investigation of the element “trust”, has identified three main factors concerning online relations: competency, integrity and benevolence. Competency from companies to fulfill customers’ expectations, integrity as a major determinant defining customers’ personality and principles, and benevolence, where the main objective of a company should be treating its clients as a priority. Accordingly, the feeling of trust is not implementable; this characteristic is highly conditioned to the involved parts’ behavior, and is able to be naturally developed through time (Orzil and Andalécio, 2016).

According to Vos *et al.* (2014), trust is a fundamental factor in the adoption of online stores or websites to perform buying actions. In fact, “*the key for an e-company to achieve long-term success against competitors and thereby to gain competitive advantage is to build consumer “trust”*” (Vos *et al.*,2014).

Regarding online shopping, trust is defined as “*an attitude of confident expectation in an online situation of risk that one’s vulnerabilities will not be exploited*” (Corritore *et al.*, 2003). With respect to e-commerce, the concept of trust must be considered in a different level while comparing with traditional commerce. E-businesses must concentrate their efforts in the acquisition of trust among its customers and in the reduction of risks associated to online shopping (Vos *et al.*, 2014). The same authors highlight that the biggest concern for a virtual

shopper is the fear on the unknown, due to the nature of the transactions that occur in an online environment. Therefore, trust becomes a crucial factor in an online relationship, providing strong insights for the occurrence of shopping via internet.

However, not all online shoppers perceive the same level of trust among virtual environments. Concordantly, Romero *et al.* (2010) identified three different types of Web 2.0 users: the embryonic, the amateur and the expert, and discovered that all three types of individuals manifest different levels of trust in online matters. The authors' framework shows that higher familiarity with Web drives to a higher degree of trust demonstrated towards internet activities. In other words, web users classified as "expert" demonstrate a higher level of trust when comparing with the "amateur" ones, which in turn present more trusting feelings than the "embryonic" ones.

A study provided by Filieri *et al.* (2015) with regards to online trust towards consumer-generated media provides interesting outcomes to the topic framework. Three factors were identified as predicting online trust: information quality, website quality and consumer satisfaction. In addition, the researchers discovered that the level of trust in consumer-generated media increases the availability of following other users' recommendations, demonstrated through online reviews, photographs, videos, among other aspects. These conclusions evidence the impact of developing and promoting a reliable website, while it highlights that previous consumers' experiences are a good indicator to increase (or not) individuals' trust on online purchases.

Cruz (2012), previously mentioned in this research, gathered evidence that e-trust is a great influencer of brand loyalty, and stated that e-trust is highly determined by three key factors: website characteristics, consumer personality and e-satisfaction. The achieved results were collected with regards to Booking.com website, representing positive outcomes for this work, as it is aligned with the chosen object of study: online booking websites in Portugal.

With respect to online hotel booking, some negative feelings may be expected from the guests' side while considering making a reservation, as vulnerability, insecurity and fear of having their expectations failed. When customers make online bookings they anticipate their experience and expect to be served with the promised quality service, and the referred expectation is highly conditioned to the trust feeling they rely on the hotel entity. (Lien *et al.*, 2015)

A study regarding online booking websites provided by Wang *et al.* (2015) confirms other studies' conclusions that e-trust helps predicting online purchase intentions, through the mediation of the relationship between the referred dimension and website quality. People are used to sharing their experiences on the mentioned websites, without controlling who is going to access or believe their information. Thus, this situation requires a certain level of trust among those online platforms participants, since information can be easily misstated (Lu *et al.*, 2010). A great example of prevention from regular consumers to provide false information in online booking websites is present in TripAdvisor website. As it was previously mentioned, this platform points out for having an option named "helpful", giving the opportunity for users to thank previous consumers for its reliable information. This tool attributes credibility to its providers, while creates a trustworthy atmosphere around future consumers.

Although the topic in study represents an increasingly relevant question, Amaro and Duarte (2015) reinforce the lack of existing literature with respect to perceived trust while referring to online purchasing behaviors in the touristic field. When considering the existent bibliography, one must find different opinions and conclusions regarding the matter. For example, in the previously mentioned study provided by Lien *et al.* (2015), the trust dimension has not shown any significant effect on consumers' purchase intentions, while Lu *et al.* (2016) identified a positive relation between trusting beliefs and individuals' online shopping behaviors. Therefore, the contradictory outcomes observed among the given literature lead to the need of deeper investigation around the element "trust" on consumers' intentions of buying in online environments.

2.5.3. Homophily

One fundamental principle concerning communication features is associated with the belief that similarity of characteristics among individuals contributes to effectively promote the transmission of messages (Golub and Jackson (2012). The concept behind this definition is commonly referred as "homophily", and according to the mentioned authors, it is related with "*the tendency of individuals to associate disproportionately with others who are similar to themselves*".

McPherson *et al.* (2001) defines homophily as "*the principle that a contact between similar people occurs at a higher rate than among dissimilar people*". The authors have classified

homophily in eight dimensions in which individuals may have similar behaviors: i) race and ethnicity, ii) sex and gender, iii) age, iv) religion, v) education, occupation and social class, vi) network positions, vii) behavior and viii) attitudes, abilities, beliefs and aspirations.

Homophily is frequently considered on studies regarding influents on consumers' decisions in online platforms, once social media information produces different outcomes while considering individuals attributes and personality traits (Halberstam and Knight, 2016). The influence of individuals presenting similar characteristics and interests on consumers' decisions has been widely investigated in the sense that it might help supporting peer influence and social contagion in networks, particularly in online platforms (Aral *et al.* (2009). The authors found in their research that homophily helps explaining more than 50% of perceived behavioral contagion, reinforcing the importance given to similarity of ones characteristics on individuals' decision-making process.

Following the considered reasoning, while referring that purchase intentions are mediated through the influence of peer groups, we are directing to an effect named as *social influence* (Ma *et al.*, 2010). According to the information provided by these authors, when homophily cases among peer groups' recommendations are identified, organizations are able to segment their potential customers, demonstrating great reliance on social networks and websites to reach their targeted audience (Ma *et al.*, 2010).

The level of similarity between two entities among their behavior in online platforms can be decomposed in two categories: undirected social networks and direct social networks (Abbasi *et al.*, 2014). Accordingly, undirected social networks comprise those channels where both sides of a relationship are responsible for maintaining it alive. Facebook network is an example of the described scenario, once an individual in order to get connected with other person, must send a friend request and wait for the acceptance response from the other side. Online booking websites, the main focus of this study, represent the other dimension identified by the authors, *direct social networks*, where one is the only responsible for the existence of the relationship (Abbasi *et al.*, 2014). Regarding these platforms, information generators through photographs, comments and general evaluations, have no control over the users who identify themselves with their publications. According to the given example, homophily effect is unidirectional and it is only observable from the potential user side, while it is not possible to ensure that the information producer will also find himself similar to its followers (Abbasi *et al.*, 2014).

However, concentrating this investigation on that strand of the homophily effect may be risky, once profiles created on these platforms can be easily manipulated, and people do not know in detail who is on the other side of the given information. For that reason, the present work will contrast with some of the referred studies, and the researcher will study some individuals' attributes and look for patterns of behaviors' similarity between them.

Taking into account that not all consumers perceive the same type and level of experiences in online websites (Dai *et al.*, 2014), it becomes relevant to study the impact of this feature on their future purchase intentions. In fact, these authors identified that consumers' previous online experiences highly impact on their coming decisions, evidencing the presence of homophily traits and the need of understanding the differences between first consumers and regular consumers.

Regarding consumers' online decisions, Zhang *et al.* (2014) clearly identified the existence of a relationship between individuals' gender and their behavior in virtual platforms. Accordingly, the authors discovered that female consumers are more exposed to the content they find on the internet, namely online reviews given by previous consumers, demonstrating greater trust in them, and consequently greater purchase intentions. On the other hand, males present more cautious and selective behaviors regarding the information they trust.

Moreover, Ayeh *et al.* (2013) investigated homophily's influence on three different subjects: perceived trustworthiness, consumer-generated media (CGM) use for travel planning and on the behavioral intention of using CGM for travel planning, formulating sub-hypothesis of positive influence of homophily on those three subjects. The authors found evidence that perceived trustworthiness and the behavioral intention to use consumer-generated media on travelling contexts are positively affected by individuals' similarity, which promotes an atmosphere of familiarity between people and tourism channels, while reinforcing homophily's role in the statute assigned to these websites.

Accordingly, Herrero *et al.* (2015) also gathered information on online consumer behavior in hospitality related websites, and concluded that individuals with similar characteristics tend to pursue similar online choices, evidencing the significant role this factor may assume among internet users.

The achieved results widely contribute to the existing framework with regards to virtual buying decisions, and highlight how imposing and stable the homophily effect may be as a

marketing tool of products and services, as well as a good indicator of peoples' preferences and tastes. Although there is a growing need to study the phenomena associated with the intentions of buying in the virtual world, due to the fundamental role that online transactions assume in our society (Awa *et al.*, 2015), homophily effect has not been widely explored yet from this prespective as a major contribution to explain electronic trust and online purchase behaviors in hotel booking websites.

Hence, and for the same reason that justifies the application of the "e-trust" dimension in our model, also people's similarity effect requires further investigation regarding individuals' online decisions, which led to the inclusion of this variable in the study.

2.6. Tourism in Portugal and the Economic Perspective: A Brief Review

Portugal is a country that has recently faced a great period of recession, with significant impact on the tourism and hospitality sector. The period between 2000 -2010 was defined by Veiga (2014) has a "lost decade", since the crisis phenomenon has contributed to the stagnation of tourism revenues in Portugal, and no growth of the sector during this decade was verified. Portugal is currently in a better position and recovering its economical standards, and due to the continuous adaptations during unstable periods, several business sectors were forced to change their communication strategies. Nowadays, we are in the presence of a more reestablished society, thus it is important to understand the country economical context and characteristics of the actual touristic sector. (Veiga, 2014)

The economic recovery started in 2013, where Portugal reached its best results ever regarding the tourism performance, conquering the eighth position as the most valuable tourism brand, according to the BrandFinance Nation Brands 2013 (Veiga, 2014).

While considering some economic statistics retrieved from the report of Banco de Portugal (Bank of Portugal), there is an expected increase in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in Portugal from the value of the year 2016 to the following years' values, showing opposite results from the European Union, that is facing a decreasing tendency in the mentioned years. Consumption levels were also affected by the economic context, although some recovery and stabilization are expected for the next years. Regarding inflation levels, they are expected to increase and stabilize at the estimated value for the European Union (1.5), which may have direct impact on Portugal purchasing levels.

Regarding the previously mentioned report, the unemployment levels present a declining tendency in recent years, although they are still in high standards, resulting in the continuous moving from unemployed people to other countries, looking for better working conditions. However, the next few years will be of better employment situations at national level, with the provision of more professional opportunities and significant reductions in the unemployment rate.

The presented signs represent positive indicators concerning the tourism in Portugal, whose sector highly contributes to most countries' economic stability. According to 2015 INE (Instituto Nacional de Estatística) report regarding the mentioned sector in Portugal, it is possible to notice that in that year, Portugal received about 1 184 million people from foreign countries, overcoming the previous year with 4.4% more tourists. The number of trips made by Portuguese people ascended to 19.1 million, where 90% of these trips were made within national territory, while the other 10% were comprised within foreign destinations. The observed numbers overcame the previous year's results, also better than the ones achieved in 2013, demonstrating the positive tendency and growing that tourism is facing in Portugal.

Those improvements are a signal of the decreasing effect that the economic crisis is having on the population worldwide, since the number of trips and the overnight stays, among other aspects that have been studied, have recently increased. People are showing greater willingness and capacity to travel and to meet the expenses it entails, justifying a deeper analysis when it comes to communication and marketing strategies.

3. Methodology

3.1. Introduction

The previous chapter comprises the theoretical framework regarding the actual role of the Internet and online websites as fundamental communication tools, making reference to the main elements that characterize and influence individuals' behaviors on such platforms.

After completing this procedure, the following chapter comprises the hypotheses of study formulated based on the referred theoretical approach, as well as the methodology adopted to test them. According to Prodanov *et al.* (2013), a hypothesis is “*the assumption we make, in an attempt to explain what we do not know and what we want to demonstrate, testing variables that may or may not legitimize what we want to explain or discover*”.

Thus, the analysis of the existent literature points to the direction that accommodation websites' characteristics have a positive influence on purchase intentions, and that some individuals' sociodemographic characteristics also determine their behaviors in the mentioned platforms. Therefore, the main goal of this work is to understand the factors that influence and determine consumers' purchase intentions in online booking websites in Portugal.

Hence, the present chapter intends to approach the two models design for this investigation, as well as the hypotheses of study that underlie each of them. The following subchapters present in detail the objectives aligned with the proposed models, variables definition and their relation trough the elaboration of ten different assumptions. To conclude this chapter, a framework regarding the data methodology will be explored, were the researcher justifies her options concerning the data collection method and sampling process approached in the present study.

3.2 Objectives and Proposed Models of Investigation

Once the literature review is properly structured, and according to the information provided on the previous chapter, the main goal of this research relies is to answer to the following questions:

Which factors determine consumers' e-trust in online booking websites?

Which factors determine consumers' purchase intentions in online booking websites?

From the previous analysis of the work done in the literature review, it was possible to identify three main variables that may possibly exert an influence on consumers' purchase intentions in online booking websites. The mentioned variables are the following:

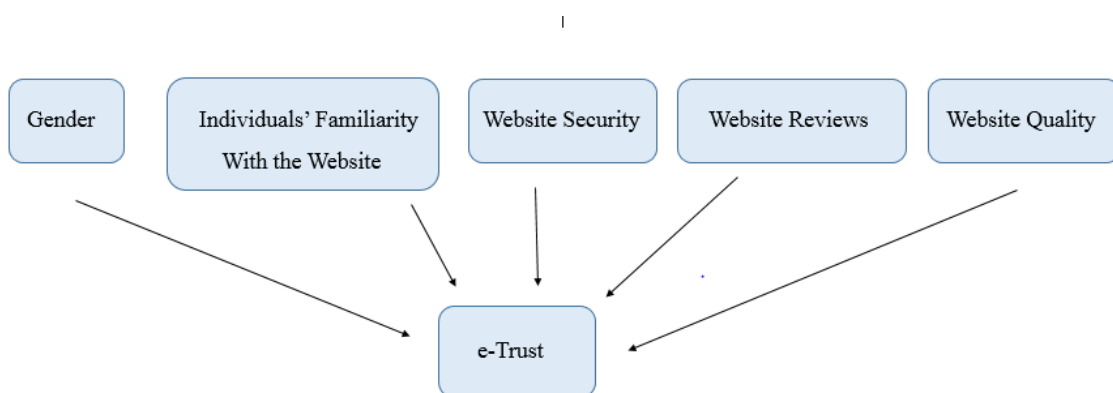
- **Website characteristics**, which will be decomposed in several components, where website security, general reviews and website quality are predictors of electronic trust and consumers' negative reviews, website design and website quality are perceived to influence individuals' purchase intentions.
- **Homophily**, where researcher will investigate individuals' attributes such as gender and familiarity with their favourite website, and that function as predictors of e-trust, and consumers' experience as function of purchase intentions.
- **E-Trust**, which is perceived to influence consumers' purchase intentions and be influenced by some website characteristics and some homophily dimensions.

From the questions above, and supported by the literature review, some hypothesis of research were formulated and will be presented in the next section.

3.3 Research Models and Hypothesis Formulation

The investigation will be decomposed in two different models, in order to facilitate its understanding and the study of the correspondent hypotheses. The first model is presented below.

Figure 1 - Model 1 of Investigation: Predictors of e-Trust in Online Booking Websites



This model approaches the influence of consumers' gender and familiarity with their favourite website, as well as of website security, reviews and quality on individuals' trust in online booking websites.

Some personal characteristics can be considered when explaining perceived e-trust in the referred platforms. Individuals' gender is one of the indicators where we can observe behavior differences. Zhang *et al.* (2014) and Castro (2016) investigated that males and females tend to pursue different levels of trust in online networks, so H1) was formulated.

H1) Males and females perceive different levels of trust in online booking websites.

Previous studies revealed that the experience demonstrated in online websites highly influences the trust associated to those platforms. The level of trust can vary according to individuals' familiarity with these channels, and Romero *et al.* research (2010) shows that different types of Web 2.0 users have different feelings of trust, leading to H2).

H2) Individuals' familiarity with online booking websites influences their perceived e-Trust.

Taking into account the influence of some website characteristics on consumers' e-trust, and according to the information previously provided, one of the biggest conditioners that sometimes prevents a person from exploring digital content and buying in online platforms is the lack of security (Vos *et al.*, 2014), referring that security in these channels highly contributes to an increase of the trust pursued on the Internet. Therefore, e-trust is responsible for reducing individuals' concerns in online channels (Souza *et al.*, 2007), which justifies H3).

H3) Website security influences consumers' perceived e-Trust in online booking websites.

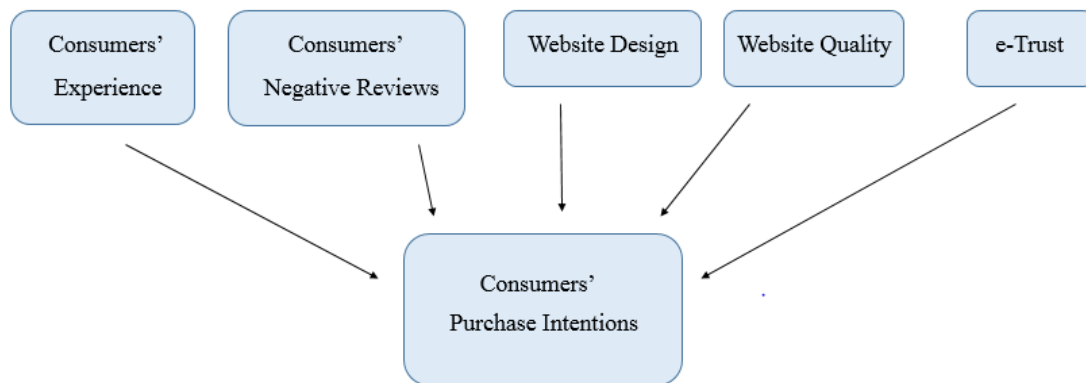
Along with security, also website information and quality are good predictors of individuals' electronic trust. According to Filieri *et al.* research (2015), these factors are directly related to the trusting feelings associated to online websites. Regarding the possibility of providing false information through online reviews (Lu *et al.*, 2010), individuals' perceived security becomes strongly conditioned, influencing the trust perceived, and consequently, the website quality also becomes compromised. Thus, two more hypotheses were defined.

H4) Website reviews influence consumers' perceived e-Trust in online booking websites.

H5) Website quality influences consumers' perceived e-Trust in online booking websites.

In order to investigate the predictors of *Purchase Intentions* determinants, a second model was designed and is presented below:

Figure 2 - Model 2 of Investigation: Predictors of Consumers' Purchase Intentions in Online Booking Websites



The presented model investigates the impact of individuals' experience, previous consumers' experiences, some website characteristics as website design and website quality and e-trust in consumers' purchase intentions in online booking websites.

According to the previous chapter, homophily has been investigated as one big contributor of purchase intentions' explanations. Previously mentioned McPherson *et al.* (2001) identified individuals' network positions as one of the many homophily dimensions capable of characterizing consumers' behaviours, thus it is expected that respondents with different online experiences pursue different shopping intentions. In fact, Dai *et al.* (2014) have concluded that previous personal experiences influence individuals' future purchase intentions Therefore, H6 was formulated.

H6) *Individuals' experience in online booking websites influence their future purchase intentions.*

The next three hypothesis intend to analyze some websites' features effect on consumers' purchasing decisions. Several mentioned authors (Aladwani, 2006; Al-Qeisi *et al.*, 2014; Bilgihan and Bujisic, 2015) highlighted the influence that some website characteristics may have in online shopping, and three main elements showed to be more important in the explanation of future purchase intentions.

H7) analyses the direct impact of the information provided in booking websites, through the study of the influence of consumers' negative evaluations on their decision of purchasing accommodation in online environments. Hsu *et al.* (2012) and Castro (2016) have concluded about the positive relation between consumers' negative reviews and the impact they have on future consumers. So, H7 was formulated as follows.

H7) *Previous consumers' negative reviews influence consumers' purchase intentions in online booking websites.*

Molina *et al.* (2015) has stated the advantages associated to the importance of website design in the tourism field, while Bilghihan and Bujisic (2015) confirm that this element clearly influences individuals' online decisions. The positive impact of website quality on online booking intentions was also demonstrated by Ldhari and Michaud (2015), enhancing its' role on individuals' attitudes towards the website. Concordantly, Aladwani (2006) has proved that website quality clearly impacts on purchasing intentions, contributing to the elaboration of this model. Hence, the influence of website components will also be investigated through the two mentioned dimensions.

H8) *Website design influences consumers' purchase intentions in online booking websites.*

H9) *Website quality influence consumers' purchase intentions in online booking websites.*

Vos *et al.* (2014) have highly explored trust role in online environments, concluding that it is significantly associated to successful transactions, while Lien *et al.* (2015) and Wang *et al.* (2015) confirmed the positive influence of individuals' trusting feelings and their purchase intentions in virtual channels. Thus, the following hypothesis was formulated:

H10) *E-Trust influences consumers' purchase intentions in online booking websites.*

The hypotheses previously structured have the main objective of answering to the two main hypothesis' question: "*Which factors determine consumers' e-trust in online booking websites?*" and "*Which factors determine consumers' purchase intentions in online booking websites?*". We intend with this dissertation and the two proposed models to provide clear evidences on consumers' online behaviors in accommodation booking websites.

This research also tries to provide new outcomes on the subject, and contribute to the improvement of the relationship between portuguese consumers who seek online

accommodation and the platforms responsible for the provision of the required information, once we are in the presence of a field that requires continuous study and updating.

3.4 Data Collection

3.4.1. Description of the Method of Data Collection

The data collection method considered for this investigation was defined as a quantitative approach, through the elaboration of an online questionnaire in Google Forms. According to Prodanov *et al.* (2013: 69-71), there are two different research approaches that can be explored in an investigation: qualitative research and quantitative research. The method applied in this phase of the study was a quantitative approach, which allows to achieve bigger samples through questionnaires and other means of data collection. The method described is frequently used when the researcher intends to study a particular subject and to understand people's behavior on that matter (Prodanov *et al.*, 2013: 57). The choice of this type of methodology was due to the intention of gathering the highest number of responses in a short period of time. Some other advantages can be associated to this method of data collection and were experimented by the investigator, as the lack of monetary resources in the collection period and the possibility of quantifying the answers so they can later be analyzed through descriptive statistics and hypothesis tests (Prodanov *et al.*, 2013: 58).

Firstly, a pre-test of the questionnaire was done with 10 individuals with the required characteristics to answer the questionnaire. According to Brito Gonçalves *et al.* (2015), "*a pilot test of it's (a questionnaire) function is imperative to validate it as an instrument for further research*". Therefore, the investigator did not intend to analyze this information, but to complete and improve the questionnaire from possible errors. After the pre-test, linguistic and presentation improvements were implemented in the questionnaire. The introduction of two filter questions, one of them determinant for the correct completion of the questionnaire, was also essential and resulted from the comments collected before the final questionnaire was published.

3.4.1.1 The Sample

Regarding the data collection, the investigator worked with a sample that comprised the desired characteristics to be able to respond to the questionnaire. While “*a population (or research universe) is the totality of individuals that have the same characteristics defined for a given study*” (Prodanov *et al.*, 2013: 98), a sample is considered “*part of the population or universe, selected according to a rule or plan. It refers to the subset of the universe or population, through which we establish or estimate the characteristics of this universe or population.*” (Prodanov *et al.*, 2013: 98).

According to the mentioned authors, a sample can be categorized as probabilistic or non-probabilistic. The method applied in this study was a nonprobability sampling technique, through a convenience sampling method, which is characterized by the previous selection of the elements that are intended to answer the questionnaire, and thus are chosen to represent the population (Prodanov *et al.*, 2013: 98). The advantages pointed to this sampling technique correspond to some limitations felted in this period, once this method corresponds to a low-cost strategy of gathering the maximum number of responses in a short and defined period of time, while it also confers some stratification to the sample, allowing it to cover all areas included on the questionnaire (Prodanov *et al.*, 2013: 99). Concerning the use of a non-probabilistic sample, respondents' approach through convenience is an appropriate method for this study, and allows to reach diversity among respondents and take conclusions on consumers' motivations behind their purchase intentions on accommodation booking sites in Portugal.

However, some restrictions were imposed in order to obtain a more reliable and adequate sample to the needs of the study. Therefore, for an individual to take part of the sample, he was expected to be of Portuguese nationality and had already visited a reservation booking website at least once. This way, it was ensured that the answers obtained were as realistic as possible, as well as credible and applicable for statistical inference. The conduction of the questionnaire in Portuguese language was also a facilitator to ensure that all respondents were Portuguese native speakers.

In the period of time considered, a total of 575 responses were collected. However, after a first analysis of the answers, 66 individuals were excluded from the sample. The majority of the cases were related with the filter question “Have you ever visited an online booking website?”, were respondents with a negative answer were immediately taken to the final page of the questionnaire. Regarding the eighth question that intended to ask people about their

favorite website, 7 individuals with invalid answers were also excluded from the study, once there was an open ended option for those who did not identify with the given options. Therefore, the sample retrieved for this investigation consists of 509 valid responses.

3.4.1.2. The Questionnaire

The previously referred online questionnaire used for the data collection was available for being answered between the 20th of April of 2017 and the 2nd of May of 2017. The main communication channel used for this goal was the Facebook, considering the high propensity of individuals to have a Facebook account. However, the researcher took advantage from other means of divulgation, as via e-mail. The main objective of this massive diffusion was to gather the maximum number of valid responses, as already mentioned, and with that aim, the researcher began by sending the questionnaire to close people, such as family and friends, and asked them to send it to a group of people of their trust, ensuring that they would respond to the questionnaire. Thus, a high amount of answers (575) was collected in approximately 12 days, which led to the closure of the questionnaire after that period of time.

It is important to highlight that the questionnaire was completed anonymously. According to Phellas *et al.* (2011), the inexistence of an interviewer, as well as of questions that contain detailed personal information, can safeguard the respondents and their responses. This ensures greater sincerity and transparency in the answers obtained, since it is not possible to associate the results with the person who produced them.

The questionnaire was subdivided into 4 main sections. The first section corresponds to some general personal information, allowing to characterize the sample in sociodemographic groups. Section II intended to understand our respondents' experiences and profile in online booking websites, as well as their favorite accommodation website. The third section was destined to the characterization of individuals' favorite website according to its design, ease of use, content, security, quality and trustworthiness. In section IV, respondents were invited to mark their future purchase intentions in the same channel.

It is also important to mention that the elaboration of some parts of section III were adapted from other studies. Statements regarding *website design* topic were retrieved from Cruz' (2012) study, while the ones concerning the *ease of use* were adapted from Alshibly's (2014) framework. Sentences referring to the *website information* and *security* came from Koo's

(2006) investigation, and the ones used to characterize websites' quality were inspired by the work provided by Chang *et al.* (2014). Finally, the research conducted by Romero et al. (2013) was the main contribution for the elements regarding consumers' *trust*.

The format of the questions adopted throughout the questionnaire was adapted to the researcher needs and the type of intended answers. The first two sections were mainly composed by multiple choice questions, and a short open ended question regarding respondents' age. Section III comprises an ordinal scale (Likert scale) ranging from 1 to 5 (were 1 corresponds to a total disagreement, 2 corresponds to a partial disagreement, 3 is used for neutral opinions, 4 for partial agreements and 5 represents the maximum level of agreement), while Section IV is characterized by an ordinal scale in percentage form (0-100), where the closer to 100 is the value chosen, the more likely that person is to make a future reservation on her preferred accommodation booking website. The final version of the online questionnaire can be found in Appendix 1.

4. Data Analysis

4.1 Introduction

After the presentation of the two sub models of study and the associated hypotheses of investigation, as well as of the methodology approached for a most appropriated study, the fourth chapter of this thesis entails the results correspondent to the descriptive analysis of the individuals that constitute our sample and presents the tests performed to examine each of the hypotheses previously formulated.

All data analysis was achieved using the SPSS Software, version 23, authorized and licensed by ISCTE Business School. Mainly graphs and descriptive tables were used for the first part of the analysis, and the hypothesis tests were treated through multiple linear regressions, the most proper approach to the models' structure.

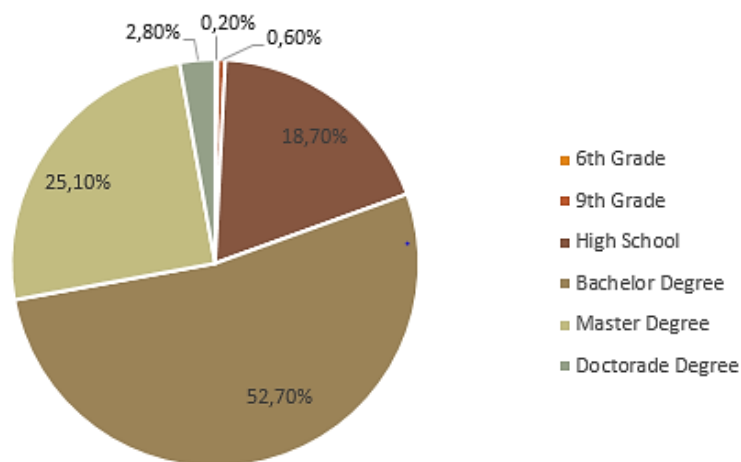
Hence, the chapter begins with a sociodemographic description of the questionnaire respondents, showing then the graphs corresponding to the indicators used to study the four dimensions that make up the website characteristics. The construct of composite variables led to the need of ascertaining their relevance, through the performance of the Cronbach's Alpha, also presented, and finally, the already mentioned multiple linear regressions that answer to the assumptions elaborated in the previous chapter.

4.2 Sample Characterization

The sample of this study consists in a total of 509 individuals, where the majority of the respondents are female (58.5%). Furthermore, the minimum age verified in the sample was 16 years old, while the oldest person participating in the questionnaire was 82 years old. The average age verified was 30 years old (SD= 12.2). Moreover, 70% of the cases are under that age, concluding that we are in the presence of a much younger than older sample.

Regarding individuals' educational qualifications, Chart 1 shows that the majority of the sample has a bachelor degree (52.7%), while individuals with a master degree represent the second largest group, with approximately 25%. It is also worth noting the low representativeness of individuals with education levels below high school (0.8%) and individuals with a doctorate degree (2.8%). However, it was possible to reach several different qualification across the sample, representing a good outcome for this research.

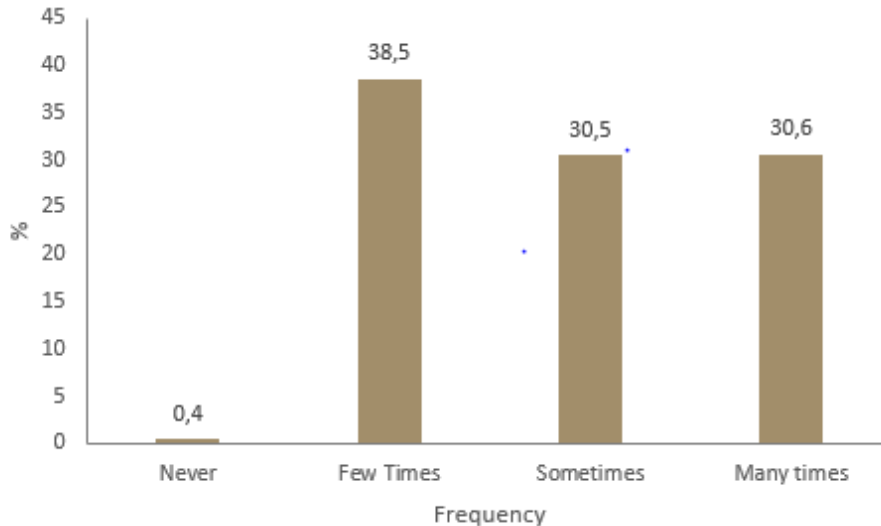
Chart 1 - Educational Qualifications



After completing the sociodemographic characterization of the sample, other fundamental aspect of the questionnaire was to inquire individuals about their experience in accommodation booking websites. As previously mentioned, only the responses from those who had stated that they have already visited the websites in question were considered (n=509).

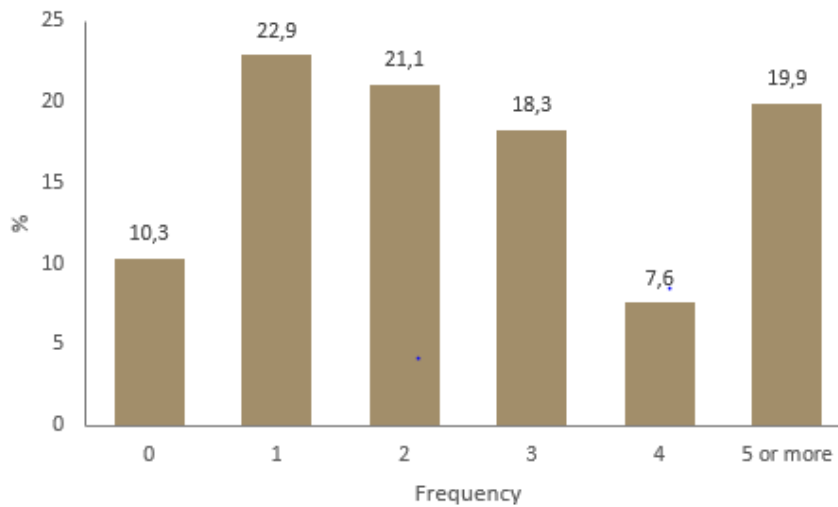
The next question intended to find out how often they visited these platforms last year, and the answer can be found in Graphic 1. People were given average numbers, where “Few Times” represents between 0 (zero) and 5 times, “Sometimes” corresponds to 5 to 10 visits, and “Many Times” was chosen by those individuals who visited booking websites more than 10 times last year. According to the following chart, only 0.4% (2 individuals) affirmed that they did not frequent any accommodation website in the past year. On the other hand, the majority of the respondents (38.5%) has visited the mentioned websites only for a few times, while the remaining individuals had an almost equal frequency of visits.

Graphic 1 - Frequency of Visit



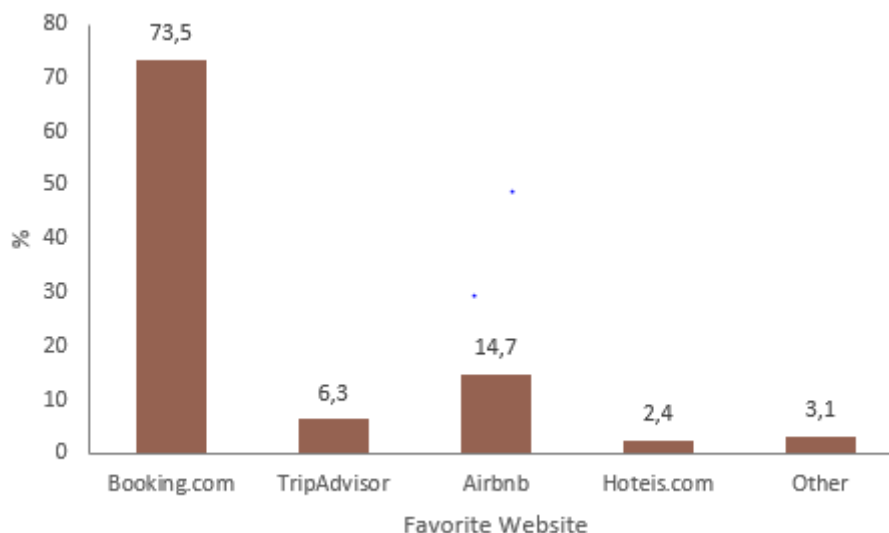
When asked about their reservation habits, about 86% of the sample admitted having already made reservations through the websites under study, showing awareness and openness towards the information available on those platforms. From those who had a positive answer, and according to Graphic 2 which translates the number of reservations made in the previous year, we can observe particular tendency in terms of frequency of reservation, as that more than half of the participants (54%) had made no more than 2 reservations last year. The information provided helps to conclude that the highest percentage of answers (22.9%) is related with 1 reservation made last year, while almost 20% of the respondents has made 5 or more reservations in the considered year. Moreover, the percentage of people that did not make any reservation last year is only 10.3%, which leads us to conclude that our sample presents regular habits of using accommodation websites to make rooms' reservations.

Graphic 2 - Frequency of Reservation



Considering individuals' preferences in relation to online booking websites (Graphic 3), there is a clear choice of the website Booking.com, representing the website that 73.5% of the sample prefers and uses when looking for an accommodation in Portugal. In spite of the huge percentage difference between Booking.com and the following websites, TripAdvisor and Airbnb complete the group of the three most appreciated websites among the sample, confirming the information provided in the literature review subchapter.

Graphic 3 - Favourite Website



4.3. Homophily

The two models presented englobe the study of three different variables related with homophily behaviors. *E-Trust* is perceived to be influenced by individuals' *Gender* and *Frequency of Visit* to their favourite website, while *Frequency of Reservation*, which will be studied through the number of reservations made by the respondents, is used to predict *Purchase Intentions*. The three mentioned variables were measured through the information exposed in the previous sub-chapter.

4.4. Website Characteristics

According to the literature review, some website characteristics are perceived to influence consumers' e-trust and purchase intentions. To study *e-Trust*, researcher will approach *Website Security*, *Website Reviews* and *Website Quality*, while *Purchase Intentions* will be investigated though *Consumers' Negative Reviews*, *Website Design* and *Website Quality*. Three of the five components (website design, security and quality) were evaluated through different indicators, which will be present below.

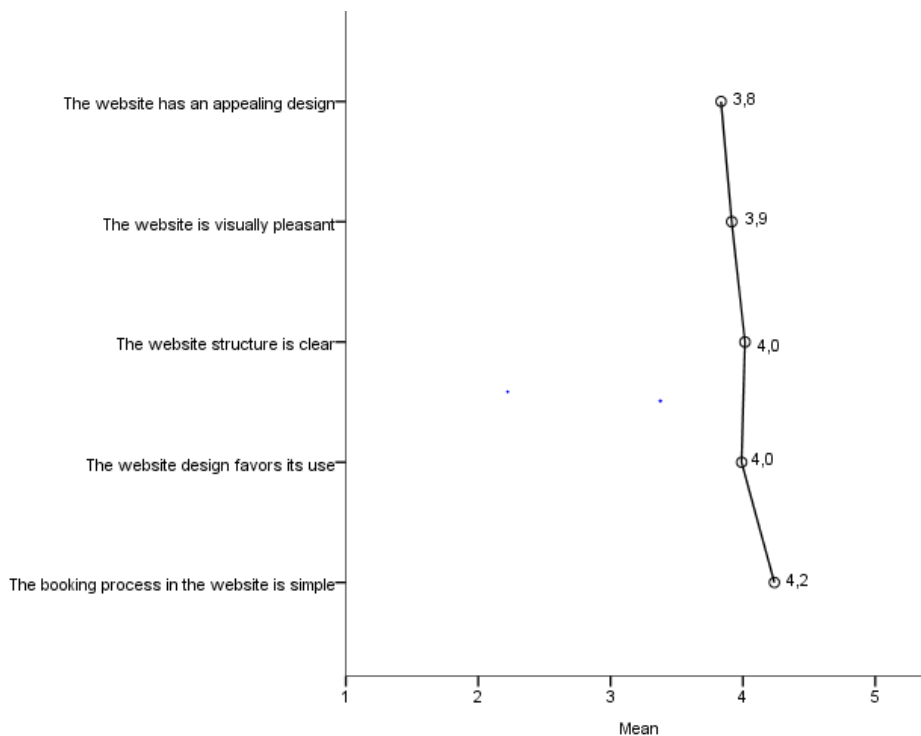
On the other hand, *Website Reviews* were investigated through the sentence "I believe previous consumers' evaluations are sincere and honest", to test the degree of importance attributed to online reviews, and *Consumers' Negative Reviews* were investigated through the questionnaire sentence "If I find an accommodation with negative evaluations, my intention of booking in that place".

Respondents answered to the several indicators on a five-point Likert Scale (1=Totally disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neither agree nor disagree, 4=Agree, 5=Totally agree).

4.3.1 Website Design

Website design was measured through five different items: “The booking process in the website is simple”, “The website design favors its use”, “The website structure is clear”, “The website is visually pleasant” and “The website has an appealing design”. The mean values for each sentence can be observed in the following graph:

Graphic 4 - Website Design Indicators



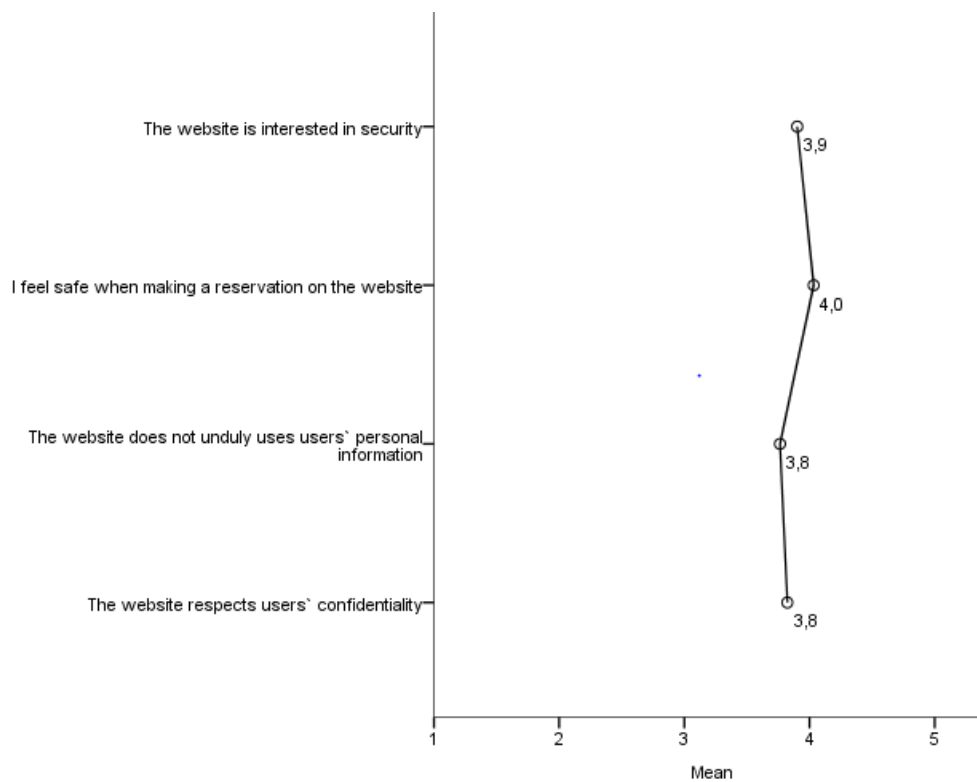
From Graphic 4 it is possible to conclude that all five indicators are above the central value (3) and very consistent around the value 4, which means that, in general, consumers have a good impression of their favorite website when it comes to its design and structure.

4.3.2. Website Security

As a fundamental characteristic of websites' operations, perceived security was measured through four sentences: "The website respects users' confidentiality", "The website does not unduly uses users' personal information", "I feel safe when making a reservation on the website" and "The website is interested in security".

Through the analyzes of Graphic 5, it is possible to conclude that security is highly appreciated among the questionnaire respondents, with mean values close to 4, demonstrating that it is observable an atmosphere of security towards the website and in the moment of making a reservation.

Graphic 5 - Website Security Indicators

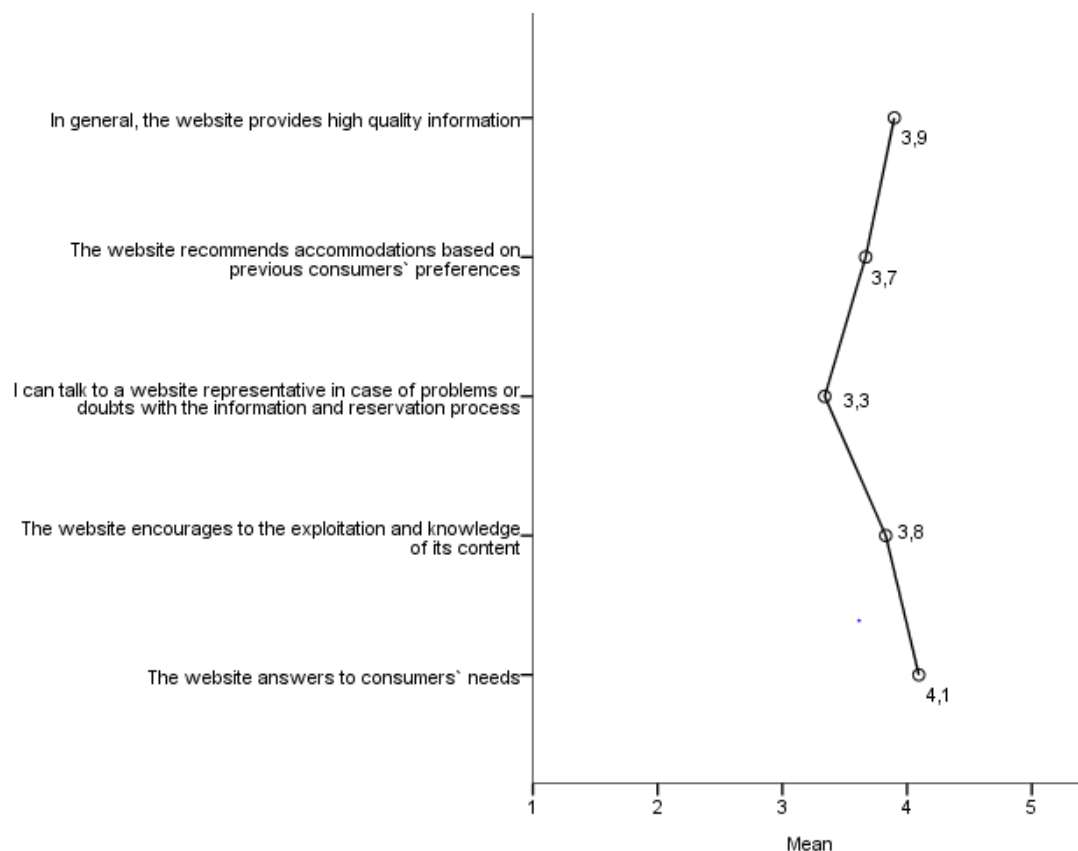


4.3.3. Website Quality

In order to understand consumers' perceptions on their favorite website quality, five different items were presented to our sample. "The website answers to consumers' needs", "The website encourages to the exploitation and knowledge of its content", "I can talk to a website representative in case of problems or doubts with the information and reservation process", "The website recommends accommodations based on previous consumers' preferences" and "In general, the website provides high quality information".

Graphic 6 highly enhances the role of the website in peoples' decisions and behaviors, once individuals, on average, agree that their favorite website fulfills their needs and expectations (4.1 points). However, the mean value attributed to the third indicator on the graph leads us to the conclusion that some respondents are not aware of the existence of a representative on their website, which may be a sign that they never got reservation problems, thus they never felt the need of one.

Graphic 6 - Website Quality Indicators

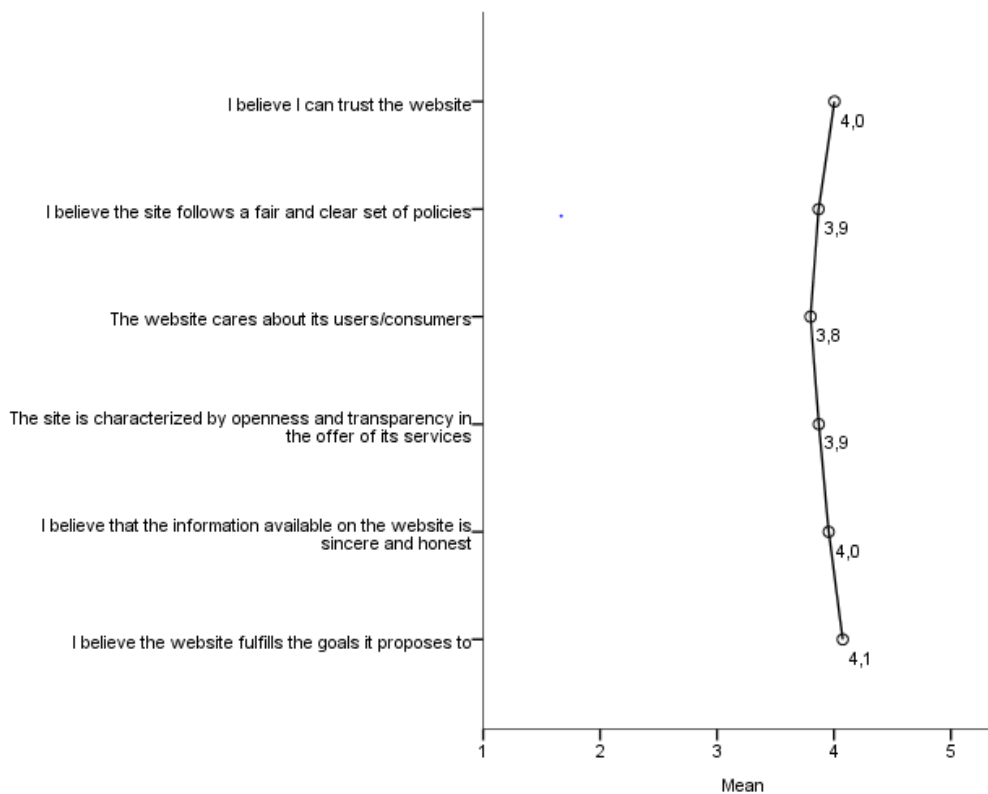


4.5. Electronic Trust (e-Trust)

The level of trust pursued by the sample respondents towards their favorite accommodation-booking website was measured by six different indicators, namely “I believe the website fulfills the goals it proposes to”, “I believe that the information available on the website is sincere and honest”, “The site is characterized by openness and transparency in the offer of its services”, “The website cares about its users/consumers”, “I believe the site follows a fair and clear set of policies” and “I believe I can trust the website”. The results can be found in Graphic 7.

Through the analysis of the mean values of each indicator, which are all very close to 4, Graphic 7 allows to conclude that participants present high levels of trust towards their favourite online booking website.

Graphic 7 - E-Trust Indicators



4.6. Reliability of the *constructs*

The previously presented indicators were used to measure four constructs, or composite variables (Website Design, Website Security, Website Quality and e-Trust), which justifies the analysis of the internal consistency through the calculation of Cronbach's Alpha. According to Tavakol and Dennick (2011), this coefficient of reliability translates the degree to which a group of indicators or items measure the same concept, with values' ranging between 0 and 1, where higher values (closer to 1) represent higher correlations. Alpha's values can be observed in Table 1.

Table 1 - Mean, Std. Deviation and Cronbach's Alpha of the Composite Variables

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation	Cronbach's Alpha
Website Design	4.0	0.65	0.868
Website Security	3.9	0.71	0.866
Website Quality	3.8	0.57	0.783
Trust	3.9	0.63	0.924

The composite variables presented were obtained by calculating the arithmetic mean of the corresponding indicators, and through the analysis of Table 1 it is possible to verify that all five Cronbach's Alphas are greater than 0.78, which confirms the internal consistency of these constructs. According to the same table, the mean values of these variables range between 3.8 and 4.0, corresponding to relatively high values. This information indicates that Portuguese consumers highly value the design ($M=4.0$) of their favorite website, as well as the security involved in an accommodation booking website ($M=3.9$), while they are a little less concerned with its quality ($M=3.8$). The consumers also valued positively the trust towards these platforms ($M=3.9$).

4.7. Hypotheses Testing

4.7.1. Model 1 of Investigation

In this subchapter, researcher will present the results referring to the two models previously described, as well as to the formulated hypotheses of that support them.

The first model of investigation comprises the determinants of *e-Trust*. According to the theoretical framework, some *Homophily* and *Website Characteristics* components influence individuals' trust in online booking websites. The results from this analysis are presented below, in Table 2.

Table 2 - Predictors of E-Trust

	β	Beta	Rpart ²
Gender (female)	-0.077*	-0.060*	0.4
Frequency of Visit	-0.001	-0.001	0.0
Website Security	0.205***	0.233***	3.5
Website Reviews	0.096***	0.119***	1.2
Website Quality	0.627***	0.573***	22.3
Constant	0.446**		
Total Model		<i>F</i> (5,503)	156.435
		R ² Adj.	0.605***

* $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$ *** $p < 0.001$

The linear regression model is significant ($F(5,503) = 156.435, p=0.000$), and reveals and good quality, since it explains 61.6% ($R^2=0.616$) of the variation of electronic trust.

As can be seen in Table 2, it expected that all variables influence consumers' e-trust, namely those associated to the *Website Characteristics* (*Security*: Beta=0.205, $p=0.000$; *Reviews*: Beta=0.096, $p=0.000$; *Quality*: Beta=0.627, $p=0.000$). The most important one is the *Website Quality* ($Rpart^2=0.2234$), that explains the highest percentage of variation of electronic trust (about 22%).

Regarding the components associated to homophily behaviors, individuals' *Gender* (Beta= 0.077, $p= 0.033$) significantly influences their trust on accommodation websites, with men having more confidence than women, while the effect of the *Frequency of Visit* was not important (Beta=-0.001, $p= 0.966$), contrary to the expected results.

The effect of the two variables associated to *Homophily* on e-trust is negative, which means that increasing visits in booking websites, keeping the remaining variables constant, leads to a very small decrease (0.001 units) in consumers' e-trust. Regarding the *Gender*, the results from the table indicate that keeping all variables constant, men trust more in online booking websites than women.

Looking at the variables associated to *Website Characteristics*, it is observable that the three variables are positively related with e-trust, meaning that individuals' that value more their favourite website security, reviews and quality, individually and keeping the other variables constant, are individuals' with higher levels of trust on those platforms.

4.7.2. Model 2 of Investigation

In the second model, we intend to investigate if individuals' experience in online booking websites, some website characteristics and e-trust are capable of predicting consumers' purchase intentions. Hence, a multiple linear regression was used to test this hypotheses, and Table 3 presents the achieved results.

Table 3 - Predictors of Consumers' Purchase Intentions

	β	Beta	Rpart ²
Number of Reservations	1.224*	0.090*	0.8
Consumers' Negative Reviews	2.742*	0.104*	1.0
Website Design	3.768*	0.113*	0.0
Website Quality	9.347***	0.245***	2.5
Trust	5.084*	0.145***	0.9
Constant	-7.4343		
Total Model		$F(5,431)$	29.384
		R ² Adj.	0.246***

* $p < 0.05$ *** $p < 0.001$

The linear regression model is significant ($F(5,431) = 29.384, p = 0.000$), but only explains about 25% ($R^2_{adj} = 0.246$) of the variation of consumers' purchase intentions.

According to the information provided, the variables *Number of Reservations* (Beta= 0.090, $p=0.035$), *Consumers' Negative Reviews* (Beta= 0.104, $p= 0.018$), *Website Design* (Beta= 0.113, $p= 0.027$), *Website Quality* (Beta= 0.245, $p=0.000$) and *Trust* (Beta= 0.145, $p=0.028$) are all statistically significant on the prediction of *Purchase Intentions*.

The effect of the five variables on the dependent variable is positive, so the highest the number of reservations, the highest consumers' purchase intentions, keeping all the other variables constant. The same reasoning can be applied to the remaining four variables (biggest perceptions of consumers' negative reviews, website design, website quality and trust, individually and keeping the other variables constant, represent biggest intentions of purchase in online booking websites).

Regarding the referred effect, the variable with the highest impact, although a weak one, is the Website Quality which has the largest contribution to the R^2 ($R^2_{part} = 0.025$); a unit increase on the perception of the website quality represents an increase of more than 9 percentage points on individuals' purchase intentions ($\beta = 9.347$).

4.8. Results Discussion

The previously presented results had the main objective of studying the determinants of consumers' purchase intentions in online booking websites, particularly the influence of individuals' experience on those websites, some website characteristics and e-trust in individuals' purchase intentions, and the influence of some homophily elements and some website characteristics in electronic trust.

The present subchapter aims to respond to the research hypotheses formulated, based on the results obtained in the data analysis.

The *t-tests* performed and their respective significance allow to identify if there is a significant linear relationship between the independent variable and the dependent one. The Beta coefficients show the strength and the direction of the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable, as already demonstrated. Thus, the validation of the hypotheses is directly related to the statistical significance of each test (the significance level was set as $p < 0.05$), taking into account the correspondent regression coefficient.

4.8.1. E-Trust Determinants

H1 predicts a relation between individuals' gender and e-trust. Accordingly, the statistical analysis demonstrates that this variable is significant ($\beta = 0.077$, $p = 0.033$), indicating that males trust more in online booking websites than females. Therefore, respondents' gender influences their e-trust, so H1 is validated.

H2 predicts a positive relation between individuals' familiarity with their favourite website, through the analysis of the number of visits made in the previous year, and their perceived trust in the same platform. The achieved results indicate that this variable is not statistically significant. Therefore, we don't validate H2.

H3 predicts a positive relation between the security in online websites and the trust perceived in the same channels. According to the statistical analysis, this relation is verified ($\beta = 0.205$, $p = 0.000$), and respondents with higher perceived security have higher feelings of trust toward the mentioned websites. Therefore, we validate H3.

H4 predicts a positive relation between previous consumers' reviews and the trust demonstrated. The results highlight that website reviews influence people's trust ($\beta=0.096$, $p=0.000$) in accommodation websites, thus individuals that believe in prior consumers' experiences evidence higher levels of trust. This analysis leads to the conclusion that we can validate H4.

H5 predicts a positive relation between website quality and perceived e-trust in online booking websites. Analysing the multiple linear regression, not only the website quality significantly predicts individuals' e-trust ($\beta= 0.627$, $p= 0.000$), as it also turned out to be the most important variable to explain the variation of electronic trust (R^2 adj= 0.224). Respondents that value more their favourite website quality, perceive higher levels of trust, which confirms the validation of H5.

4.8.2. Purchase Intentions Determinants

H6 predicts a positive relation between individuals' experience in online booking websites, measured by the number of reservations made in the previous year, and their intention of buying an accommodation in the future. This hypothesis is validated, once its t-test is statistically significant and regression coefficient was positive ($\beta= 1.224$, $p=0.035$). Accordingly, individuals with more reservations made have higher future purchase intentions in those channels.

H7 predicts an influence of people's negative reviews in booking websites on individuals' purchase intentions. Observing the results, the t-test is statistically significant ($\beta= 2.742$, $p= 0.018$), which means that people that value more previous consumers' negative evaluations have higher purchase intentions on their favourite website, and H7 is validated.

H8 predicts a positive relation between website design and respondents' intentions of purchasing in online accommodation platforms. Results show that this variable is statistically significant and that the effect is positive ($\beta= 3.768$, $p= 0.027$). Therefore, individuals with higher website design perceptions have higher purchase intentions on their favourite website, and H8 is validated.

H9 predicts a positive relation between website quality and individuals' purchase intentions. Accordingly, this variable represents the most important variable for this model, taking into

account its beta value ($\beta= 9.347$, $p= 0.000$), so consumers that value more their favourite website quality have higher intentions of purchasing there in the future. Thus, H9 is validated.

H10 predicts a positive relation between individuals' electronic trust on their website of election and their intentions of purchasing there in the future. The analysis made indicates that e-trust is an important predictor of purchase intentions ($\beta= 5.084$, $p=0.028$), showing that individuals that trust more on their favourite accommodation platform have higher intentions of buying there in the future, and H10 is validated.

4.9. Summary of the Hypotheses Tested

Hypotheses		Validation
H1	Males and females perceive different levels of trust in online booking websites.	Validated
H2	Individuals' familiarity with online booking websites influences their perceived e-Trust.	Not Validated
H3	Website security influences consumers' perceived e-Trust in online booking websites.	Validated
H4	Website reviews influence consumers' perceived e-Trust in online booking websites.	Validated
H5	Website quality influences consumers' perceived e-Trust in online booking websites.	Validated
H6	Individuals' experience in online booking websites influence their future purchase intentions.	Validated
H7	Previous consumers' negative reviews influence consumers' purchase intentions in online booking websites.	Validated
H8	Website design influences consumers' purchase intentions in online booking websites.	Validated
H9	Website quality influence consumers' purchase intentions in online booking websites.	Validated
H10	E-Trust influences consumers' purchase intentions in online booking websites.	Validated

5. Conclusions

5.1. Introduction

The present chapter aims to present the main conclusions retrieved from this investigation from a theoretical and practical approach, as well as some limitations found during the study and some guidance lines for future research. Hence, the first sub-chapter comprises the main conclusions from the empirical study, sub-chapter 5.2 presents the theoretical and practical contributions of this dissertation, 5.3 approaches the greatest limitations felt throughout the work, and sub-chapter 5.4 highlights some suggestions for further investigations.

5.2. Main Conclusions

This dissertation had the main propose of studying the Portuguese population behavior regarding the trust perceived in online booking websites, as well as their purchase intentions on those channels. Therefore, a detailed literature review on the theme was conducted, having its focus on five main subjects, namely the technological evolution of the internet and the web, the origin and role of the electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM), the importance of the website characteristics, the online consumer behavior focusing on consumers' purchase intentions, and the economic and social context concerning the tourism in Portugal. Thus, it was possible to formulate two models of investigation. The model that corresponds to the *E-Trust* predictors comprises three website characteristics and two indicators related with the homophily effect. In order to investigate respondents' *Purchase Intentions*, also a five-variable model was design, where one variable is associated with *homophily*, three variables with *website characteristics*, and the previously mentioned *E-Trust*.

The study of the collected variables was accomplished through a quantitative approach by means of an online questionnaire to individuals with Portuguese nationality that had visited accommodation booking websites at least once. A total of 509 valid answers were obtained, characterized by individuals with ages between 16 and 82 years old, and a biggest feminine presence among the respondents (58.5%). The great majority of the respondents affirmed to have visit at least once a booking website in the previous year (99.6%), however more than 10% of those individuals did not make any room reservation on the same period, and almost 20% made 5 or more reservations. It is worth mentioning that more than 80% of participants

attended university, and that 73% of the sample elects Booking.com as their favorite accommodation booking website.

Taking into account the variables under study and the answers given in the questionnaire, the respondents appear to have a good perception on the design and structure of their favourite website, they feel safe about making a reservation on the website and they highly value the quality of the information and content provided. Individuals also appear to demonstrate high levels of trust towards the website they elected.

Regarding the mentioned variables, which were measured through sets of statements, it was necessary to create composite variables to determine if the statements used for each variable were capable of measuring the same concept, and the results showed a great level of internal consistency, with all values greater than 0.78. After this procedure, two multiple linear regressions were made for each dependent variable.

The first model regarding *E-Trust* predictors demonstrated that the only variable that does not impact on consumers' e-trust is the frequency they visit their favourite booking website, while showing that individuals' gender ($\beta= 0.077, p= 0.033$) influences the level of perceived trust on the website, indicating that men tend to trust more than women. The three elements used to ascertain the role of *Website Characteristics* in this model positively affect the trust on the referred platforms, evidencing that website security ($\beta= 0.205, p= 0.000$), online reviews ($\beta=0.096, p= 0.000$) and website quality ($\beta= 0.627, p= 0.000$) are all capable of explaining and predicting electronic trust in online booking websites, in which the last one represents the most important indicator ($R_{part^2}= 0.2234$) of the model.

The second model refers to the determinants of *Purchase Intentions*, and the analysis conducted revealed that all five variables studied influence an individual intention of booking an accommodation on his favourite reservation website. Moreover, the number of reservations made ($\beta= 1.224, p=0.035$) impacts on future purchase intentions, as well as previous consumers' negative reviews ($\beta= 2.742, p= 0.018$). According to the provided results, the design ($\beta= 3.768, p= 0.027$) and the quality ($\beta= 9.347, p= 0.000$) of a website positively impacts on individuals' decision of purchasing. The previously studied variable, e-trust ($\beta= 5.084, p=0.028$), was also incorporated in this model, and has revealed to influence respondents' intentions of buying online accommodation, demonstrating that people that pursue higher levels of trust towards their preferred website have higher intentions of purchasing on the same channel in the future.

5.3. Theoretical and Practical Contributions

This dissertation was elaborated in the scope of the study of some great topics related to the Marketing area, namely the social networks subject, which is characterized by the virtual communication dominated by consumers, and the online consumer behavior, responsible for the investigation of individuals' needs and motivations that lead them to buy in virtual channels. Although we are in the presence of concepts that have increasingly aroused researchers' interest lately, these ideas are also recent marketing topics that lack bibliography and scientific data, as well as practical investigations. Therefore, this research intended to provide important insights on the main factors influencing Portuguese consumers' trust and future purchase intentions in accommodation booking websites.

Considering that the increasing use of the digital world and social networks in the search for information is a reality in our society, it is of great importance for marketers to know that they should bet on this type of channels and technologies to reach consumers in a more effective way. Taking into consideration the websites related with accommodation search and reservation, it becomes relevant for organizations to value the feedback given by previous consumers (e-WOM), because once they are available on the internet, they will be quickly consumed, eventually influencing individuals' future booking decisions. Thus, this investigation demonstrates that online reviews, particularly the negative ones, highly influence individuals' trust and intention of purchase accommodation in future through websites, proving that these type of information can easily work as a marketing tools for hotels and similar entities.

While considering the previous information regarding Portuguese online behaviors, some actions can be taken in order to improve booking websites in the future. Considering that social opinion clearly impacts sales through websites, it would be of great importance for websites if they could segment the information provided on the posted reviews, highlighting some particular details that could facilitate future consumers' knowledge on those accommodations. For instance, some places provide better experiences for people who travel in family, while some others may be better for solo travelers. Thus, segmenting some of the information given by prior users avoids that individuals spend too much time reading information that does not fit their needs, while at the same time, they are gathering information on others' preferences.

Therefore, the main practical contributions of this dissertation are the clear understanding of how the Portuguese population is influenced by accommodation reservation websites, and how this relationship affects the trust deposited in these platforms and individuals' buying behavior.

This way, organizations are able to value specific website items that impact on consumers' motivations, and implement the right strategies in order to improve their performance and business.

One important conclusion to be retrieved from this work is related with the role assumed by the website quality in people's behavior. According to this investigation, this is the element that influences individuals the most while referring to trust and future purchase intentions in tourism websites. Therefore, the entities responsible for websites' implementation should seek to focus on consumers' needs in order to present concrete and useful information to their decisions. Given the value Portuguese people attribute to other consumers' feedback, it is important that websites highlight the preferences of those who book and later evaluate the hotels, as previously mentioned. This way, the whole process of information search is facilitated, resulting in a greater propensity to trust the website, and also to make reservations.

The researcher has also identified some behavioral patterns concerning the respondents. The fact that men and women present different levels of trust on accommodation websites can be considered a relevant theoretical contribution. One other meaningful information is related with the fact that individuals with more online experiences have higher future purchase intentions. This information is precious to websites' marketers, because considering this situation, they can focus their work on the application of measures that could lead individuals to make their first purchase, as special promotions for first-time users.

Although it is not possible to generalize these results to the Portuguese population, some important insights were brought through the sample used, which should be considered in the implementation of future consumer-oriented strategies. However, this research intended to provide more recent information that is required for future studies regarding this subject.

5.4. Limitations of the Study

During this investigation, the researcher came across some limitations that condition the obtained results. The exploitation of these restrictions allows future studies to prevent the same constraints and present better outcomes.

The first limitation refers to the sample used in the empirical study. It was considered a non-probabilistic process through a convenience sampling method, meaning that the achieved results are not able to be extrapolated to the universe. In fact, it only reports on the individuals

included in the sample. However, the researcher considers that the dimension of the sample and the great variety obtained in terms of gender, age, educational qualifications and experience in booking websites is close to the universe, allowing to assign quality to it.

A second limitation is related with the conditions for individuals to be part of the sample. Since it was required at least one visit to an online website, more than 10% of the total respondents could not participate in the study. Other limitation is due to the fact that the question that intended to understand what individuals' favourite website was had the chance of being an open ended question if respondents did not identify themselves with the given options. This situation led to some of the participants making typing mistakes, and the researcher was forced to exclude them from the study.

A fourth limitation found during this work is related with the variables used in both models. Hence, not all variables that explain consumers' electronic trust and purchase intentions were investigated, meaning that it is not possible to affirm that all the factors influencing these two indicators in online booking websites were addressed.

Other limitation of this study concerns the thematic of this dissertation which was focused on online tourism. Although it is a subject of great importance from the economic point of view, due to its growing potential, it is not possible to extrapolate these results to other sectors of activity. Thus, its interpretation is conditioned to the theme considered. In relation to the approach of the presence of tourist platforms in peoples' lives, since it is still a recent subject from the academic point of view, some difficulties were felt in the search for bibliography in scientific articles and academic journals, which led the researcher to redefine some of her lines of investigation.

Although a large number of accommodation booking websites were considered in the empirical study, it is worth mentioning that not all existing websites were taken into account, which represents a limitation of this work. In fact, there was a greater affluence to the Booking.com website, meaning that the interpretation of these results by the other websites studied should be done in a cautious way.

To conclude this subchapter, the researcher identified a final limitation regarding the statistical analysis considered. The exclusive use of multiple linear regressions in this investigation left aside other types of tests, namely the estimation of the effect of mediating variables allowing to infer about the indirect effect of the variables studied in the dependent

variables (e-trust and purchase intentions), which could have produced different results on the matter.

5.5. Suggestions for Future Investigations

In this subchapter the researcher will make use of some of the limitations previously mentioned to present some suggestions for future investigations on these subjects.

Taking into account the type of variables used to explain consumers' e-trust and purchase intentions, it would be interesting the development of an investigation with different predictive variables, as consumers' satisfaction, brand image or price. Other hypothesis of investigation would be maintaining the variables explored but focusing the research on a single online booking website, since this research approaches a set of websites that represent consumers' preferences. Similar to this analysis, the creation of a study dedicated to a different country could also provide important outcomes.

Another interesting line of study would be to do a comparative research with *offline* consumers, in order to find out which variables influence the one and the other, as well as the best techniques that marketers should use to captivate and communicate with them.

Taking into account several other growing sectors of activity, and according to the previously mentioned limitation regarding the investigation on online tourism, the analysis of other sectors apart from this one does also represent a hypothesis of study.

Another contribution could be achieved through a different statistical approach, as was also explained in the previous sub-chapter. Conducting in-depth interviews with particular consumers, or analyzing the statistical information through mediating variables is essential for better understanding some processes behind certain consumer behaviors, contributing to the existence of more informed organizations also capable of meeting consumers' demands.

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7. Attachments

7.1. Attachment 1 – Online Questionnaire

A utilização dos sites de reserva de alojamento pelos consumidores em Portugal

Este questionário foi elaborado no âmbito de uma tese de mestrado do Msc in Management , do ISCTE Business School, e tem como principal objetivo estudar os fatores que mais condicionam e influenciam as intenções de compra dos consumidores portugueses em sites de reserva de alojamento, razão pela qual o questionário será conduzido em língua portuguesa. É um questionário que está dividido em 4 secções, e demora aproximadamente 5 minutos a fazer. A participação é fundamental para o sucesso deste estudo. Muito obrigada pela sua colaboração!

Secção I – Caracterização Sociodemográfica

Nesta secção, pretende-se que cada pessoa escolha apenas uma opção em cada uma das seguintes perguntas, com excepção na questão 2, que é de resposta aberta (quantitativa).

1. Género *

Masculino

Feminino

2. Idade (em anos) *

Texto de resposta curta
.....

3. Nível de escolaridade *

- Ensino Básico 1º Ciclo (4º ano)
- Ensino Básico 2º ciclo (6º ano)
- Ensino Básico 3º ciclo (9º ano)
- Ensino Secundário (12º ano)
- Licenciatura ou Bacharelato
- Mestrado
- Doutoramento
- Outra opção...

4. Já visitou sites de reserva de alojamento? *

- Sim
- Não

Secção II - Experiência em Sites de Reserva de Alojamento

Nesta secção, pretende-se que cada pessoa escolha apenas uma opção em cada uma das seguintes perguntas.

5. Com que frequência visitou sites de reserva de alojamento no último ano? *

- Nunca
- Poucas vezes (0 a 5 vezes)
- Algumas vezes (6 a 10 vezes)
- Muitas vezes (Mais de 10 vezes)

6. Já efetuou alguma reserva em sites de reserva de alojamento? *

- Sim
- Não

7. Quantas reservas efetuou em sites de reserva de alojamento no último ano? *

- 0 (zero)
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 ou mais

8. Escolhendo apenas um, qual é o seu site de reserva de alojamento de eleição? *

- Booking.com
- TripAdvisor
- Airbnb
- Expedia
- Hoteis.com
- Outra opção...

Secção III - Caracterização dos Sites

Utilizando uma escala de 1 a 5 (1=discordo totalmente, 2=discordo, 3=não concordo nem discordo, 4=concordo, 5=concordo totalmente) pedimos-lhe que indique o seu grau de concordância com cada uma das seguintes afirmações, tendo por base a escolha do site de reserva de alojamento que fez na questão anterior.

Pergunta *

	1	2	3	4	5
O processo de reserva/compra de hotel no site é simples.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
O design do site favorece o seu uso.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A estrutura do site é clara.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
O site é visualmente agradável.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
O site tem um design apelativo.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
O site é de fácil pesquisa para pessoas que não estão familiarizadas com o mesmo.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
É fácil perceber quais os passos a seguir numa compra/reserva de hotel no site.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
As interações com o site são fáceis e compreensíveis.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
É fácil compreender os componentes do site.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
O site apresenta informações fiáveis.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
O site apresenta informações precisas e relevantes.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
O site apresenta informações detalhadas.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
O site apresenta informações comparativas.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
O site apresenta as informações que espero encontrar.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

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	1	2	3	4	5
Quando pretendo fazer uma compra/reserva de alojamento no site, procuro avaliações de outros consumidores.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Acredito que as avaliações de outros consumidores são sinceras e honestas.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Em situações de dúvida, baseio as minhas decisões de reserva/compra de alojamento no site nas avaliações de outros consumidores.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sinto-me mais confortável se fizer uma reserva/compra de alojamento que tem avaliações positivas.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Se encontrar um alojamento que tenha avaliações negativas, a minha intenção em fazer uma reserva/compra do mesmo é menor.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
O site respeita a confidencialidade dos dados do utilizador.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
O site não utiliza indevidamente as informações pessoais do utilizador.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sinto-me seguro ao efectuar uma reserva/compra de alojamento no site.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
O site tem interesse pela segurança.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

	1	2	3	4	5
O site responde às necessidades dos consumidores.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
O site apela à exploração e conhecimento dos seus conteúdos.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Posso falar com um representante no site no caso de ter algum problema ou dúvida com a minha reserva/compra de alojamento.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
O site recomenda alojamentos com base nas preferências de outros consumidores.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Em geral, o site fornece informações de grande qualidade.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Acredito que o site cumpre os objetivos a que se propõe.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Acredito que a informação disponível no site é sincera e honesta.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
O site é caracterizado pela abertura e transparência na oferta dos seus serviços.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
O site preocupa-se com os seus utilizadores/consumidores.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Acredito que o site é regido por um conjunto de políticas justas e claras.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Acredito que posso confiar no site.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Secção IV - Intenção de Compra

Indique numa escala de 0-100 (em 0= nada provável e 100=de certeza) a probabilidade de, numa próxima oportunidade, fazer uma compra/reserva de alojamento no site utilizado nas respostas anteriores.

Pergunta *

	0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100
Probabilidade	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>