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**Contribution of the Destination Weddings for the arise of Events Tourism
The Case of Portugal**

Sofia Arnaut de Mendonça

Master's in Hospitality and Tourism Management

Supervision: Prof. Ph. D Leandro Luís Ferreira Pereira, Assistant Professor, Business
Management Department, ISCTE Business School

Lisboa, 2020

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BUSINESS
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Marketing, Operations, and General Management Department

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Resumo

Apesar de representar uma tendência mundial recente, o turismo de casamentos teve um crescimento de 75% nos últimos anos, mostrando que este mercado, especificamente, o nicho de *destination weddings*, está a revelar ter um desenvolvimento otimista e a tornar-se um tema relevante no turismo de eventos. O principal objetivo do estudo é entender como é que os *destination weddings* contribuem para o incremento do turismo de eventos em Portugal, examinando as táticas utilizadas para um posicionamento internacional; pesquisar a motivação de casais estrangeiros na escolha de Portugal como destino de casamento, compreendendo o seu nível de preferência e perceber como é que a pandemia Covid19 influenciou este nicho de mercado. Foi utilizado um método quantitativo para alcançar os objetivos, sendo que foram elaborados 2 inquéritos distintos, um para casais estrangeiros e outro para fornecedores que fazem parte da indústria. Desta forma, um método de triangulação de dados foi adotado com o objetivo de obter resultados robustos, por meio, do recolhimento de um número mais amplo de dados. Os resultados obtidos mostram principalmente como os *destination weddings* contribuíram para o turismo de eventos.

Palavras chave: Turismo de eventos; Turismo de casamentos; *Destination weddings*

JEL Classification: Z32 - Tourism and development; G14; Event studies J12 – Marriage.

Abstract

Despite representing a recent world trend, wedding tourism felt a growth of 75% the past few years, which shows this market, specifically, the destination weddings niche, is proving to have an optimistic development and becoming a relevant topic in events tourism. The study's main objective analyzes how the destination weddings have contributed for the arise of events tourism in Portugal by examining what tactics are being utilized towards an international positioning; research the motivation of foreign couple's in selecting Portugal as their wedding destination, understanding their preference level and understand how the Covid19 pandemic came to influence this niche market. A quantitative method was used to achieve the objectives, being that 2 distinct surveys were elaborated, to foreign couples and another to vendors that take part in the industry. This way, a data triangulation method was adopted with the goal of obtaining robust results by gathering a broader source of data. The findings drawn mainly state how the destination weddings have contributed to events tourism.

Key words: Events tourism; Wedding tourism; Destination weddings

JEL Classification: Z32 - Tourism and development; G14; Event studies J12 – Marriage.

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1.Introduction

Niche forms of tourism are starting to become more expressive and studied topics for the tourism lenses. One of them, yet little explored, is the wedding tourism market, a relatively recent experience, that has caused positive impacts globally due to the fact that couples often choose to celebrate their wedding abroad. “Wedding tourists travel to get married or participate in the wedding of a relative, friend, or acquaintance” (Rogerson & Wolfaardt, 2016) (Bertella et al., 2018).

In the recent years, the growth of wedding destination market has become more relevant, meaning that the practice of marriage outside the residence area has intensified. Many couples are deciding to host a more intimate celebration, in a special, fun and exotic location are the industry target audience. (Graciano,2019)

Therefore, it is necessary to understand that the destination wedding niche market can carry an influence in energize the events tourism industry, ultimately representing an important role in the enhance of the hosting destination competitiveness and attractiveness. This way and being aware that little research regarding this topic has yet been done in Portugal, the present study intents to understand how the destination weddings contributed for the arise of the events tourism.

In order to accomplish clear conclusions for this study, a sum of objectives was proposed to be achieved. Starting with understanding if the destination weddings market is a niche that is emerging and positively influencing the development of events tourism in Portugal. On a second note, comprehending what strategies the Portuguese companies are making use of to promote themselves and what could, ultimately, be done differently. Another goal is to search how the covid-19 pandemic came to influence the destination weddings. Finally, it is imperative to study what reasons are behind this destination choice and acknowledge the couple’s level of preference.

This dissertation is organized into particular sections. Starting with the introduction section where considerations taking into account the topic and focus are made, as well as, the relevance of the study and its key objectives. The introduction is followed by the literature

review that presents different publications and current knowledge from different authors, leaning over in a variety of topics such as: events industry, events tourism, the events impacts in host communities, destination weddings and the covid-19 pandemic. The research methodology follows the literature review, where, the questions and objectives are defined, the research techniques to be used are unveiled. The next section is the data analysis, where the results from the interviews made to the respondents are presented through SPSS outputs. After presenting the results, the findings need to be discussed to finally present the conclusions, where key findings and results are summarized, and limitations related to the problem statement are introduced.

2.Literature Review

2.1 The Events Industry

Events are occasions seen as chances for people to benefit from entertainment, educational, cultural or enrichment affairs. Social, business and political obligations are, as well, accomplished through the realization of an event. Comparing the literature in events management to other industries, it is safe to claim that the first one is still in an early stage of evolution. (Ardani, 2015).

With the industry expanding and the number of planned events escalating, many authors state that this specific market is gaining a lot of relevance in the modern society. The “number, diversity and popularity” of events has emerged through this period of expansion. (Arcodia & Reid, 2003). It is safe to state that this industry has become in both national and international markets generally accepted, progressively becoming more skillful regarding the professionals involved and lastly with economic profitability. (Barron & Ali-Knight, 2017). The table presented below shows a model where “aging, technology, income, and time” are four determinant factors that have definitely increased the demand of a wider range of events both in the U.S.A and the rest of the globe (Goldblatt, 2000):

Shift	From	To
Demographic	Young	Old
Technological	Low Tech	High Tech
Disposable Income Shifts	Limited	Limitless
Time Shifts	Defined Time	Undefined Time

Table 1 - Aging, Technology, Income, and Time influences

Source: (Goldblatt, 2000)

Statistics conclude that a billion events are approximately held early worldwide, which means a noteworthy impact on the host countries genuine progress indicator (GPI). (Michopoulou & Giuliano, 2018).

Event planners have as their principal ambition to organize events with successful outcomes, and these positive outcomes accrue from pleased participants. (Michopoulou & Giuliano, 2018). “Recognition that the successful management of events [...] requires particular professional skills, knowledge and understanding” is expanding.” (Barron & Ali-Knight, 2017). With this obvious development comes attached the need to have educated, skillful and professional experts with the capacity of creating and organizing professionalized events, since till this date volunteers would have an important role crewing event. (Arcodia & Reid, 2003,). This profession that was in the growing phase in now on a maturity one, but it is important to be aware of the fact that this fast growth comparing to other career choices can cause skepticism and implausibility which means that these professionals should seek continuously to educate themselves in the area. (Goldblatt, 2000)

2.2 Events Tourism

Prior to the year 1987, before the New Zealand Tourist and Publicity Department described it as “an important and rapidly growing segment of international tourism”, the term events tourism was narrowly utilized. (Getz & Page, 2016).

In the year 1989, Getz turned his attention on this topic, stating that the events tourism term could be simply defined as “the systematic development and marketing of special events as tourist attractions.”. This term was used to describe the special events component, establishing itself as an important part of the touristic development and new marketing approaches. (Getz, 2008).



Figure 1 - Event tourism market

Source: (Getz, 2008)

According to the Figure above presented, event tourism takes part in the nexus of tourism and events, so this concept meets in the middle of the tourism management and tourism studies, that aims to develop and promote tourism and understand the tourists; and the concept of event management and event studies that have as main purpose designing, producing and managing events but also recognize planned event experiences. Conjointly, events tourism appears, representing an important market for managers and by developing touristic destinations. (Getz, 2008).

Since the 1980's this industry presented a quick progress, making tourists, globally, spending money, as well as time attending these events and as a result boosting the local economies. Countries are using events as a clever way to amplify their image to market themselves as attractive and well-respected destinations internationally. It is important to keep in mind that the tourists can develop a positive image of the destination through the attendance of the event and consequently that specific event is the drive of the tourist to visit the country. (Mxunyelwa & Kilani, 2020).

In the tourism industry, the event tourism represents one of the areas with more growth because of the fact that events are special instigators for travel. As a result, these events are going to grant the "city's range of tourist attractions, facilitate media coverage for the destination, and promote awareness of the destination for future visitation" (Jago et al., 2003). While discussing this topic it is important to pay attention to the seasonality factor. This factor is still a problem for the host destinations and events can play a great role when it comes to the off-peak seasons. There are great disparities when it comes to the number of visits but also the profit of the touristic attractions and so, new ideas and innovation are needed when it comes to the low seasons. This way, when organizing attractive events, the specific destination has the advantage to become more competitive because they have something more to offer to their clients and, along these lines to, encourage the tourism. (Connell et al., 2015).

To sustain the information presented above, as in a form of an events example, in the ICCA – International congress & convention association - 2019 ranking (Table 2), Lisbon occupies the second place when it comes to all the cities worldwide that are more requested to held conventions, only exceeded by Paris. The majority of these events were held in university institutions, followed by hotels, foundations and congress centers.

ICCA Statistics 2019 – Top 20 Country and city rankings	
1. Paris - 237	1. USA – 934
2.Lisbon – 190	2.Germany – 714
3.Berlin – 176	3.France- 595
4.Barcelona – 156	4.Spain – 578
5.Madrid – 154	5.United Kingdom – 587
6.Vienna – 149	6.Italy – 550
7. Singapore – 148	7.China – 539
8.London – 143	8.Japan – 527
9.Prague – 138	9.Netherlands – 356
10.Tokyo – 131	10.Portugal – 342
11.Buenos Aires – 127	11.Canada – 336
12.Copenhagen – 125	12.Australia – 272
13.Bangkok – 124	13.Republic of Korea – 248
14.Amsterdam - 120	14.Belgium – 237
15.Seoul – 114	15.Sweden – 237
16.Dublin – 109	16.Austria – 231
17.Athens – 107	17.Switzerland – 221
18.Rome – 102	18.Argentina – 214
19.Taipei – 101	19.Poland – 213
20. Sydney - 93	20. Brazil – 209

Table 2 – ICCA Statistics 2019 – Top 20 Country and city rankings

Source: (ICCA - International congress & convention association, 2019)

2.3 The events impact in host communities

“Events are both animators of destination attractiveness but more fundamentally as key marketing propositions in the promotion of places given the increasingly global competitiveness to attract visitor spending.” (Getz, 2016). Events represent one of the driving forces of tourism, nowadays. They perform a fundamental role in the way that they are embodied in the marketing plan of the destinations with the aim to achieve a positive development of the host community. (Ezeuduji, 2015). In effect, events tourism helps the destination work the development of its own brand. (Lu et al., 2019). They are an interesting way to sell the host communities as a “product” that is going to ultimately attract “tourists, industries and investments” but also a clever method to bring people together celebrating their accomplishments. (Yürük et al., 2017).

The importance for a destination to become competitive in the market is progressively gaining relevance. (Ezeuduji, 2015). That is why the level of attractivity of the destination is essential when developing a plan to maintain and strengthen its competitiveness. (Lu et al., 2019). Events have a variable quantity of impacts, being those positive or negative, to the host communities and stakeholders. To minimize the negative ones and to maximize and develop the positives is crucial to have good planning. They are in the most part driven with the scope to reach economical profit but is crucial to be aware and analyze other impacts in the societal, cultural and environmental levels. (Getz, 2016)

2.3.1 Social and cultural impacts:

It is safe to say that all events have, in one way or another, a social and cultural impact on the people that are part of it, it’s stakeholders; at times even in their wide host communities. Bringing to light new ideas, experiences and challenging the population inherent to the community bringing them new possibilities. A sense of community and civic pride represents a positive impact when community events such as fairs or holidays commemorations are performed. Although the economic impacts of this type of events are mainly considered, the social and cultural ones can have a greater influence within the host communities in the long run (Lu et al., 2019).

When mentioning the social and cultural impacts of events it is undeniable that many authors suggest that these represent the outcome of the interactions the tourists, the host communities and the local residents. (Reverté & Pérez, 2017). Events have four positively perceived impacts in both social and cultural areas: “community excitement”, “enhanced community attachment”, “event excitement” and “community pride”. (Inoue & Havard, 2014). Impacts such as “community cohesion”, “group/family togetherness”, “socialization”, “cultural recovery” and “entertainment” can also be seen as positive repercussions of the organization of certain events. (Yolal et al., 2016).

The bigger the event is, the bigger is the risk of having some negative impacts. Mao and Huang (2016) found that “community social pressure, disorder, congestion and environmental and cultural problems.” are three of the negative social impacts. (Yürük, et al., 2017). According to (Colombo, 2016) dissatisfaction, commercialization and intercultural misunderstanding are, as well, considered social-cultural negative impacts. Events management teams should be aware to the fact that difficulties with the residents of a certain community can occur when too many alterations are done in one event to better satisfy the tourists and participants. (Reverté & Pérez, 2017).

Accordant with Getz and meeting the opinion above explained events should represent important moments when developing a community identity but also during urban renewals because they are going to have an indispensable role upbringing the cultural identity of a certain community. (Getz, 2008, p.405).

2.3.2 Environmental impacts

Organizing different and notable types of events is already intrinsic in the western world identity, that is why the interest in the environmental and sustainable aspect of it is continually increasing. (Pagliara et al., 2019). Climate change and the protection of the environment are two topics that have been discussed for a long time but only gained massive International attention in recent years (Dickson & Arcodia, 2010). As well as in other management areas the events industry needs to take into consideration and follow the triple bottom line elements: planet, profit and people. (Henderson, 2011).

All events can have positive and negative impacts in the environment of the host community. Nowadays, when considering organizing an event it is crucial to plan out a study taking into consideration the environmental impact that this specific occasion can have in the venue used for its purpose, even more if the venue on sight is public instead of a location normally used for events only, and therefore present a sustainable solution to reduce to its minimum the possible negative impacts.

Therefore, measuring these impacts can bring a level of awareness of the risks that are linked to hold of a certain event. This will alert the organizational teams to the health threats that the spectators travelling to that specific event might be exposed to but also the population living in the host community (Pagliara et al., 2019). A good events management planning can figure out convenient and relevant ways to recycle the waste surplus created, by adopting approaches that focus on having the least amount environmental impacts. (Dickson & Arcodia, 2010). The sustainability of the event can be affected by the attendees and consumers side – that should support sustainable behavior, but also from the supplier's side – that should present organizational responsibility. (Henderson, 2011). If both parties play their roles, we are able to conclude that the events management team accomplished good planning and the event can be seen as sustainable and environmentally friendly.

We can consider as positive environmental impacts raising awareness for environmental issues, the development of waste land and, lastly, long-term conservation of the area. On the other hand, site damage short and long term, waste and pollution, noise pollution, traffic disruption and congestion and increase in energy demands and other natural resources represent the negative impact that can come from hosting events in a certain locality. (Razaq & Musgrave, 2009)

2.3.3 Economic impacts

It is common knowledge that the planning, management and hosting of a certain event has behind it mainly economic benefits as its main objectives. (Maguire, 2019). Events have a directly positive assessment because of the fact that, nowadays, they are seen as a way of economic activity promotion. (Dwyer et al., 2006). Analysis of the economic impacts should be conducted to persuade and assure that the stakeholders, sponsors, governments and event management teams know that invest public and private money is needed to host a big event. (Diedering & Kwiatkowski, 2015).

The organization of events have the ability of increasing the “destinations competitiveness”; “boost Investment” and “leverage opportunities for further economic growth” (Maguire, 2019) and those are a few of the reasons why countries governors are turning their attention to use events as catalysts to the tourism development, due to the fact that they can deliver both economic benefits and jobs creation.

While bidding in a creation of a new center of conventions or in a new stadium that can receive a numerous amount of people but also to invest on supporting infrastructures, governments are not just thinking about if the event is going to be positive in terms of the profit but also on the indirect spending from attendees in the form of goods and services.

Many host communities seek to better their touristic related activities, in this case, events, due to the fact, that the visitors spending will for sure contribute for their economy, by increasing “demand for goods and services in a number of sectors, increase in local employment opportunities, and increase in local tax revenues” (Hodur & Leistriz 2006).

Table 3 names some positive but also negative possible economic impacts of events:

Positive	Negative
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - New employment opportunities; - Generate increased local revenue; - Ensure economic viability (Destination competitiveness); - Leverage opportunities for entrepreneurs/businesses; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Interruption of normal business; - Increased taxation of goods and services; - Inflated prices of goods and services; - Costly (in the case that events fail)

Table 3 - Economic impacts of events

Adapted from: (Maguire, 2019)

2. 4 Destination weddings

“In almost every culture, the wedding is a significant life event which calls for celebration in a deeply personal and memorable way.”. Couples want to represent themselves through that

special celebration, want people to empathize with their story. The venue choice, the guests and the preparation are crucial and represent the whole base of the wedding. (Breg, 2013).

Wedding tourism can be defined as the group of people who takes a trip or leaves their usual living region to celebrate a special moment of their lives with their loved ones and friends. (Peste et al., 2017). Due to the fact that, nowadays, the migration is increasing at a fast pace and the wedding ceremonies are becoming important symbols of unity upon the families of both brides and grooms that found themselves separated from their beloved ones this celebration will bring together their origins and traditions. (Etemaddar et al. 2018).

In agreement with the previous information given above, wedding tourism can also be marked as all “international trips that are taken by tourists to either get married or celebrate their wedding”. (Kozak & Kozak, 2016). The wedding tourism market also includes other events such as the honeymoons and vows renewals. (Macías Fernández, 2014). A growth of 75% was measured between 2007 and 2012 within the wedding tourism industry (Durinec, 2013) which proves an incredibly positive development globally.

“Destination weddings can be defined as a wedding ceremony that is celebrated outside of the bride and groom’s hometown”. (Del Chiappa & Fortezza, 2015). This type of weddings is considered one-of-a-kind experiences that are brought to their customers by the touristic destinations, offering services and places different from the ordinary, with the main goal to create memorable moments. As stated by the Fairchild bridal group, out of 86% of the couples that actually dreamt of organize a destination wedding only 16% made it a reality. (Settheewongsakun, 2019)

Destination weddings have increasingly become a more popular way of celebrating a union over the past years, due to the fact that brand new ceremony approaches have emerged. (Etemaddar et al., 2018). When comparing the honeymoon and destination wedding concepts, the second one is connotated as a recent world trend. This trend has emerged in the market when the couples got to the conclusion that their honeymoon and wedding ceremony could be combined in a straightforward and financial advantageous way (Vidauskaite, 2015). Segments as civil ceremonies, second marriages and same sex weddings also represent good agents to the increasement the market. (Breg, 2013) This type of celebration represents a recent global trend, a niche in the wedding business that is developing at a fast pace and starting to capture the attention of a diversity of countries.

On one hand and according to (Micallef, 2017) a wedding is supposedly to be a once in a lifetime event experience, where couples go beyond the normal expenses to create a unique event. This might have to do with the norms that are changing in the society that pushes couples to have splendid locations and think of exclusive approaches as for their special day. On the other hand, and according to (Settheewongsakun, 2019) marrying abroad is a way to save money. Several couples who decided to host a destination wedding state that compensates to have a smaller destination wedding than a domestic one. As stated by Chadiha, Leber and Veroff (1998) when a couple wishes to plan out a destination wedding, they have as goal something exotic, intimate, unique, memorable and lastly, more affordable in term of cost. (Peste et al, 2017).

According to the article Bodas de Destino ¿Son para Usted? (Permenter and Bigley, 2000) couples that choose this type of wedding are the following:

- Couples on a small budget and who don't want to have an expensive or elaborate wedding;
- Couples on second nuptials that are looking for something different from the ordinary;
- Couples who celebrate their wedding in a small way. Sometimes, the couple is staying at a resort and their wedding party is held at a neighbor resort, giving everyone privacy.
- Couples that are planning to host a remarkable wedding party and they would like to privatize a certain resort. (Macías Fernández, 2014)

Along these lines it is important for the destinations to develop attractive packages, capable of fulfilling the necessities of the couples interested in this type of wedding because this industry can play a key role in the development of the host countries. Not just the travel agencies should focus on the creation of attractive packages, but also the wedding planning companies and event management agencies, this way they will have the opportunity to self-promote their products and services that can be present in a wedding such as wedding, such as, the décor, music, catering, bachelor parties, photography, video, transfers, accommodation. If the couples require this type of services they will, ultimately, subsidize the local economy through the multiplier effect what means that more revenue is generated to help develop the local economy. (Peste et al. 2017) (Camargo, 2017) (Micallef, 2017)

Apart from the ceremony, the wedding group, most of the times, arranges other activities, due to the fact that they spend more days in the destination. This makes visitors also spend their money on all aspects inherent to a normal trip such as the local shops, change currency, rent-a-cars, restaurants, entertainment or guides. This way they “are contributing for the to the economic value of that region”. (Durinec, 2013).

The Figures below summarize the information presented above by presenting the main drivers and features of the weddings abroad:

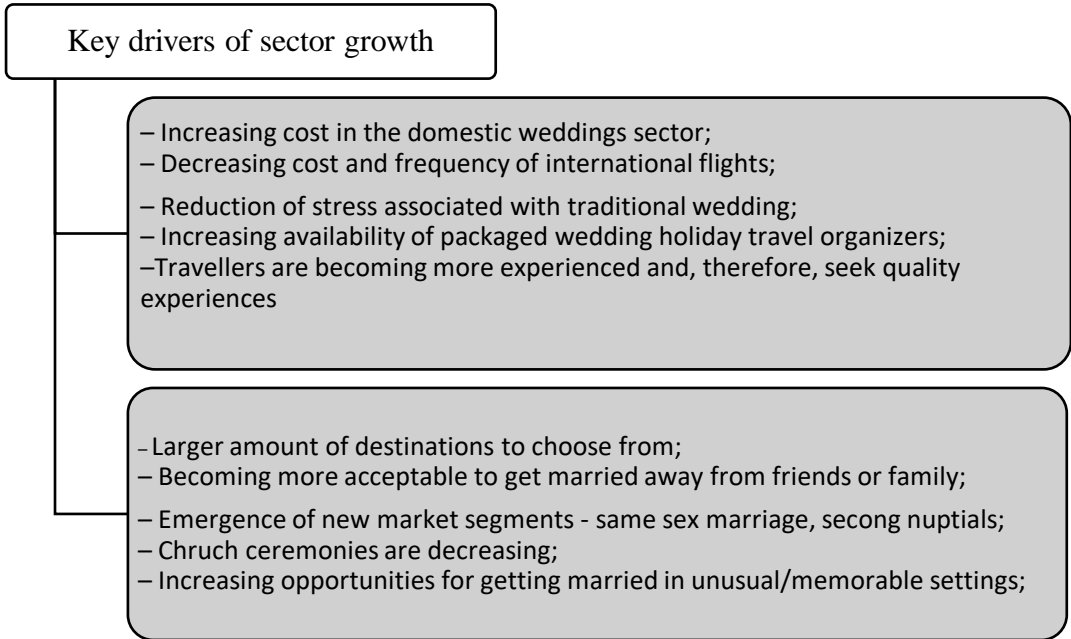


Figure 2 - Key drivers of sector growth

Source: Adapted from (Maguire, 2019)

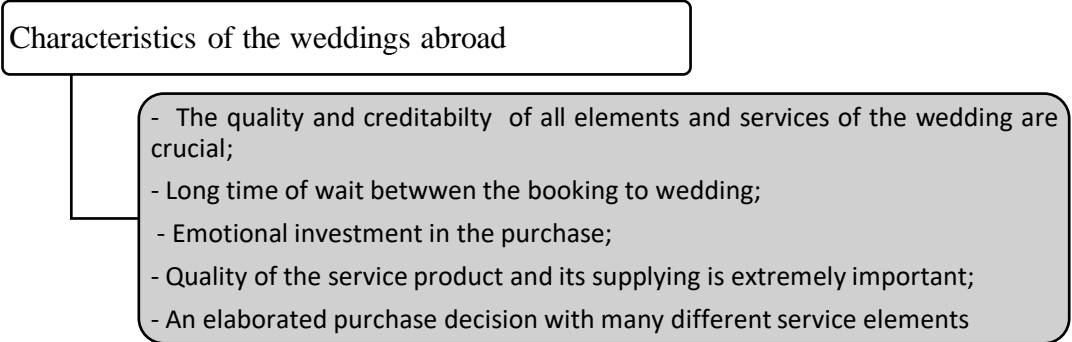


Figure 3 - Characteristics of the weddings abroad

Source: Adapted from (Maguire, 2019)

It is known that this niche area can bring several economic benefits for the destinations but can also have different environmental and social impacts on them. Couples tend to seek natural sights for their celebration yet many of these natural sights are losing their innate beauty due to touristic activities in excess, what will cause land degradation on the long run. Host destinations tend to create new innovative experiences for the potential clients such as underwater weddings or forest/mountain weddings what can cause irreversible damage to the natural environment. Concerning the social impacts nowadays the communities to raise more business tend to adapt their common beliefs to suit the tourist demands, being that this decision can induce the loss of certain traditions. (Settheewongsakun, 2019).

To consolidate the information presented above it is also important to be aware of the Portuguese weddings industry. This industry represents a 900 million euros business in Portugal, which constitute a great weight in the economy. If a decade ago people celebrated more weddings, with a number that reached approximately 50.000 a year (represented in Table 4), nowadays less weddings are held, with an average of 30.000 a year, but couples tend to spend more money on them.

Year	Total	Opposite sex marriages	Same sex marriages
2000	63.752	63.752	-
2001	58.390	58.390	-
2002	56.457	56.457	-
2003	53.735	53.735	-
2004	49.178	49.178	-
2005	48.671	48.671	-
2006	47.857	47.857	-
2007	46.329	46.329	-
2008	43.228	43.228	-
2009	40.391	40.391	-
2010	39.993	39.727	266
2011	36.035	35.711	324
2012	34.423	34.099	324
2013	31.998	31.693	305

2014	31.478	31.170	308
2015	32.393	32.043	350
2016	32.399	31.977	422
2017	33.634	33.111	523
2018	34.637	34.030	607
2019	33.272	32.595	677

Table 4 – Number of weddings in Portugal

Source: INE – wedding statistics, adapted from PorData, 2019

According to António Manuel Brito, Exponoivos manager, a normal wedding ranges between 14.338€ and 37.965€ in term of cost. This numbers are reached easily taking into account twelve basic services: photography and video, honeymoon, wedding dress and the groom’s suit, flowers, invitations, car rentals, gifts for guests, party animation, wedding cake, wedding rings and a ceremony/reception for an average of 100 guests.

The positive growth of this market can be found in the increase of the market requirements when it comes to differentiability and quality of services. Nowadays, the business volume of this industry contributes 0,5% for the country GPD. (Martins Santos, 2019); (Salgueiro, 2020).

2.5 Covid 19 – Pandemic

It is known that the world has already surpassed several pandemics over the last decades. Nevertheless, none of these, had identical consequences for the global economy as the Covid-19 pandemic had. (Hall et al.,2020). The countries leadership implemented “border shutdowns, travel restrictions and quarantine” what carried along apprehensive behaviors towards an imminent economic crisis and, therefore, recession. (Nicola et al. 2020).

It has been acknowledged tourism and hospitality sectors are considered as one of the most susceptible areas when going through a particular crisis and, following this line of thought, the current world pandemic has negatively impacted tourism because of the fact that travelling helps the fast dissemination of the disease. (Hu, 2020)

The MICE and sports tourism industries were major markets getting impacted by the pandemic considering the fact that they represent two tourism subsectors. One of the main goals of the governments while facing this circumstance is to avoid peaks that will inevitably surpass hospitals capacity to receive Covid-19 carriers and, this way, they implemented strategies to dodge human contact and encourage social distancing. This way, multitudinous large events with a considerable number of people as several meetings, conferences, sports competitions, but also, large family gatherings as weddings were restrained. (Hall et al., 2020)

In Portugal, according to the national health care direction, up until September 2020, 69200 cases of Covid-19 were confirmed what meant that restrictions towards weddings celebrations needed to be made. Graça Freitas, the general health director warned that new rules were implemented, whereby, it is not possible to celebrate a wedding, baptism or any other kind of celebration the way that it was done before due to the fact that there are big risks inherent to coexist with other households.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Questions and Objectives

Following up the literature review it is imperative to structure questions that are proceeding to be the base of the research work.

“How the destination weddings are contributing for the arise of the events tourism in Portugal?” represents a starting question of this case study. The main purpose of this dissertation is to fully comprehend how this niche weddings market is evolving, if it is becoming more expressive in Portugal and, therefore understand if its viable to continue to invest in its growth. Actually, as mentioned by (Durinec, 2013) in the literature review this type of ceremonies are not just based in the ceremony itself, but also other touristic aspects as accommodation, car rentals or food and beverage consumptions should be taken into consideration due to value that they can bring as profit for the companies and, ultimately the country and it is valuable to understand if the couples marrying in Portugal are planning activities besides the wedding itself for their guests.

This way, other questions with key research objectives were made to sustain the study. Firstly, and in alignment to the information given by (Durinec, 2013) it is determinant to perceive how Portugal is positioning itself towards this type of weddings by recognizing what tactics are being utilized in terms of good publicity and attractiveness internationally and what could be done differently to better the performance of the market and understand possible competition. As stated in the literature review by (Peste et al., 2017) appealing packages should be created by the hosting destinations to increase the potential interest of couples, and so, is crucial to understand if Portugal is investing in creating them.

On this note and considering the pandemic that the world is overtaking is mandatory to understand how the coronavirus 19 impacted and influenced the destination weddings market in Portugal and what were the instant consequences for the companies, as well, as the couples.

Finally, following this line of thought another question that is relevant and not mentioned in the literature review is concerning the level of preference of the couple´s by choosing Portugal to host their wedding celebration, this being connected to the reasons why Portugal is chosen to host a certain ceremony. This interrogation should be considered to better

understand what the reasons behind the choice are, what truly appeals, set the couples profile and ultimately get to understand why the country was chosen instead of another location.

The conceptual table below summarizes the information given above:

Literature Review Issue	Author reference	Research Question	Research Objective
<p>“Weddings are special events that represent a part of the events tourism and, therefore, the destination weddings are not just based in the wedding ceremony itself, but also, in other touristic facets such as the travelling, guest’s accommodation, catering and entertainment.”</p>	<p>(Durinec, 2013).</p>	<p>How have the destination weddings market have contributed for the arise of the events tourism industry in Portugal? – the evolution of this niche market</p>	<p>Study how this destination weddings market is positively emerged and contributed for the development of events tourism in the Portuguese territory.</p>
<p>“With the development of this type of market host destinations have the opportunity to</p>		<p>How is Portugal Positioning itself towards this type of weddings?</p>	<p>Research what tactics Portugal is using to position internationally towards destination</p>

Not represented in the literature review due to the fact that is a recent topic	-	What makes couples want to celebrate a destination wedding in Portugal?	Research the main reasons why the country is chosen by couples to celebrate their wedding ceremony and ultimately understand their level of preference concerning their choice in Portugal
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Table 5 - Research questions and objectives

Source: (Own elaboration, 2020)

3.2 Research Techniques

After the elaboration of the key questions and determination of the main objectives of the study, the research method that seemed more appropriate to collect data and evidences was the quantitative one. This type of research is objective, and it is commonly used when it is possible to collect “quantifiable measures of variables and inferences from samples of a population”. (Queirós & Almeida, 2017). In this type of studies standardized questionnaires or experiments are tools utilized to gather numerical information (Rutberg & D. Bouikidis, 2018), being that this information is, ultimately, going to be analyzed and fully achieved to interpretation through the use of statistical software, SPSS. (Queirós & Almeida, 2017). Summing up, the goal of analyzing the data collected is to summarize it, so that faithful answers to the research questions could be given, but also, all the facts are very comprehensible. (Ball, 2019).

The quantitative methodology used was the survey. This approach is based in the alignment of certain questions that “reflect the opinions, perceptions and behaviors of a group of individuals” and enables the gathering of data about a certain circumstance (Queirós & Almeida, 2017). The main cause of the choice of the survey was the elevated representation of the population that this method could easily provide.

Two online surveys were elaborated. One of them addressed to the foreign couples that are marrying or married in Portugal. The other addressed to hotels, wedding planning companies and other vendors. Considering the survey to be send to the vendors, this one was made with the goal of obtaining a superior and broader source of information to better understand the phenomenon to be studied, what is commonly named as data triangulation, and what can bring a different robustness to the results (Jentoft & Olsen, 2019) (O'Leary, 2019).

Through the SPSS software, Correlation analysis was also a conceptualization used to undertake the study. The Pearson correlation analysis when accomplished is going to dictate the strength of the linear relation between two different variables (Zhou et al., 2016). The correlation can assume values that range from -1 to +1 meaning that when it assumes a value of +1 it can be concluded that the two variables are perfectly related by a relationship that increases, on the other hand if it assumes a value of -1, it reveals a decreasing relationship between the two variables what are perfectly related. The correlation can be considered strong if the coefficient is superior to 0.8 and considered weak if the coefficient represents a value below 0.5. (Bolboaca & Jäntschi, 2006)

3.3 Description of the Independent, Dependent as samples characterization variables

While developing the surveys and being completely aware of its objectives it was key to define what were the dependent, independent and sample characterization variables of them. On one hand, the survey to be send to the couples has as dependent variable the level of preference of the couple's by choosing to host their wedding in Portugal. As sample characterization variable that is going to lead us to understand the dependent one and its result, we have the couple's characterization, as their age, academic levels and origin country, that is interesting to define a profile. Lastly, but also important, independent variables in the form interrogations concerning the way Portugal was found, if was the only country considered, what were the factors that possibly determined the choice and covid-19 outcomes were thought of to sustain the study.

On the other hand, it is important to understand what tactics of publicity are being used by the vendors to ultimately attract foreign couple's, what can be considered as an independent variable. It is possible to point out the comparison between the total number of weddings and

the number of destination weddings done annually by the companies; if the couple's arrange extra activities for their guests; how many guests the weddings has also as independent variables, with the objective to conclude if this market has a positive impact in the events tourism. In this survey, as sample characterization, we have the vendors classification.

When defining the research instruments was important to integrate it with the research objectives, that can be found in the prototype tables below. They correspond, firstly to the survey directed to the couple's and secondly to the one directed to the vendors.

Couple's survey variables

Research Objectives	Question	Scale	Variables (Dependent/Independent)
Defining the couple's profile – couple's characterization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Age range, - Origin country - Literary abilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Short answer and multiple choice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sample characterization
Considerations about Portugal publicity tactics – What tactics of positioning Portugal is using to attract couple's?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How did the couple's found out Portugal as a potential wedding destination? - Were other destinations considered? If yes specify 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Checkboxes with the possibility to add up more information from the respondents - Multiple choice and short answer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Independent variables
Considerations about the contribution of the destination weddings for a positive impact in the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Foreign guests are staying more days that the ceremony itself to visit? - Do the foreign couples end up spending more 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Multiple choice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Independent variables

<p>Portuguese tourism industry? - How this destination weddings market is positively emerged and contributed for the development of events tourism in the Portuguese territory.</p>	<p>money in their wedding celebration than the Portuguese couples?</p>		
<p>Considerations about the Covid 19 Pandemic - How the pandemic is influencing the market</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Decisions taking into account the couple's decision to cancel or re-schedule the wedding? - Considerations about the feel of safety to still host the wedding in Portugal? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Multiple choice and long text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Independent variables
<p>Considerations about Portugal being the destination choice – Level</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What were the reasons behind the couple's choice for Portugal? - What can become 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Checkboxes with the possibility to add up more information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dependent variables

of preference of the couple's by choosing to host their wedding in Portugal	Portugal more attractive?	from the respondents	
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Table 6 - Couple's survey variables

Source: (Own elaboration, 2020)

Vendors survey variables

Research Objectives	Question	Scale	Variables (Dependent/Independent)
Vendors characterization	- What type of vendor do you represent?	- Multiple choice	- Sample characterization
Considerations about the contribution of the destination weddings for a positive impact in the Portuguese tourism industry? - How this destination weddings market is positively emerged and contributed for the development of events tourism in the Portuguese territory.	- How many weddings are organized annually by the vendors? - How many of those weddings are destination? - In average how many guests do the destination wedding have?	- Short answer - Multiple choice	- Independent Variables

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do the couple's often ask for the organization of extra activities to get to know the country? - Do the foreign couples end up investing more money in their wedding than the national couples? 		
Considerations about the Covid 19 Pandemic - How the pandemic is influencing the market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is the decision of the couple's towards the pandemic? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Multiple choice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Independent variable
Considerations about Portugal's publicity tactics and about Portugal being the destination choice – What tactics of positioning Portugal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do the vendors have special packages for the foreign couples? - What tactics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Multiple choice and checkboxes with the possibility to add up more 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Independent variable

is using to attract couple's and the level of preference of the couple's by choosing to host their wedding in Portugal?	so they use to promote themselves in the market?	information	
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Table 7 - Vendors survey variables

Source: (Own elaboration, 2020)

3. 4 Description of the population, sample, type sample and error

When considering the population for the study, this one was defined by the value of 6401 people, adding the amount of both foreign spouses and the number of couples where one spouse is Portuguese and the other is foreign, considering the year of 2019. The value was calculated taking into account the table that can be found below:

Marriages: total and by the nationality of the spouses

Marriages: total and by the nationality of the spouses	Both spouses are Portuguese:	One spouse Portuguese and the other foreign:	Both spouses foreign:	Total:
2015	27573	3763	1057	32393
2016	27202	4115	1082	32399
2017	27676	4700	1258	33634
2018	28202	5056	1379	34637
2019	26941	4992	1409	33272

Table 8 - Marriages: total and by the nationality of the spouses

Source: INE – (wedding statistics, adapted from: PorData, 2019)

Between the dates of 23th of August and 24th of September the surveys were sent, and 40 answers were validated, which represented the sample of the study. For this research a convenience type sample was considered. This type of sampling represents a common form of non-probability sample where the representation of the population is chosen taking into consideration the accessibility, availability and proximity to the research. (Etikan et al., 2016) (Jager et al., 2017). The sources used to reach out to the couples were social media applications as Instagram and groups directed to destination weddings at Facebook but also email to send to acquaintances.

As already mentioned, a second survey sent to vendors was developed to better sustain and support the information to be obtained by the survey addressed to the couples, this way, a range of hotels were contacted to answer the survey by email being that 28 answers were validated.

When calculating the type sample error, it was considered the population size of 6401 people and a level of confidence of 95% being that, finally, a margin of error of 15,45% was obtained.

3. 5 Description of the pre-test

Before sending the surveys, a pre-test was completed to better understand the quality of them. 2 couples and 2 hotels were contacted to analyze and criticize the clarity of the surveys, elaborated in the google forms platform, and if more questions should be added. The feedback given by the couples, as well as the hotels, was that the survey was perfectly easy to interpret and the fact that was not too long was a positive aspect about it. Nevertheless, one of the hotels mentioned that in their perspective would make sense to add a small definition of destination weddings in the description of the survey.

4. Data Analysis

The statistical analysis involved measures of descriptive statistics (absolute and relative frequencies, mean and respective standard deviations) and inferential statistics. The level of significance for rejecting the null hypothesis was fixed at $\alpha \leq .05$. In this one, the chi-square

independence test, Fisher's test and Pearson correlation analysis was used. The chi-square assumption that there should be no more than 20 % of cells with expected frequencies below 5 were analyzed. In situations where this assumption was not satisfied, the chi-square test was used by Monte Carlo simulation. This statistic analysis was performed using SPSS (Statistical Package for social sciences) version 26.0 for windows.

4.1 Sample Characterization – the couple's profile

When characterizing the sample, a sociodemographic characterization was developed focusing in different aspects such as age, academic qualifications and origin country. Forty couples collaborated in the study. Most of the brides were between 25 and 29 years old (47.5 %) and the grooms between 30 and 34 years (45%). In terms of academic qualifications 72.5 % of the brides have a bachelor's degree, while, the majority of the grooms have the 12th grade. The most represented origin country both in brides (32.5%) and grooms (35%) was the United Kingdom.

Sociodemographic Characterization (N = 40)

	N	%
Bride's age		
25-29 years	19	47,5
30-34 years	9	22,5
≥ 35 years	12	30,0
Groom's age		
25-29 anos	8	20,0
30-34 years	18	45,0
≥ 35 years	14	35,0
Bride's academic qualifications	7	6,8
< 12th Grade	1	2,5
12th Grade	4	10,0
Bachelor's degree	29	72,5
Master's degree	6	15,0
Groom's academic qualifications		
< 12th Grade	2	5,0
12th Grade	15	37,5

Bachelor's Degree	12	30,0
Master's Degree	11	27,5
Bride's Origin country		
UK	13	32,5
Ireland	9	22,5
Portugal	3	7,5
Other european countries	4	10
Rest of the world	11	27,5
Groom's Origin country		
Uk	14	35,0
Ireland	6	15,0
Portugal	7	17,5
Other european countries	7	17,5
Rest of the world	6	15,0

Table 9 - Sociodemographic Characterization

Source: (SPSS output extracted in 2020)

4.2 Results regarding the couple's survey

The respondents had to answer a variety of questions starting with "How the couples have found Portugal as a possible wedding destination?". The most evoked reasons for considering Portugal as a possible destination for the celebration of the wedding were: "We love the country and holiday there every year" (28.8%); "Spoken communication with friends, family or acquaintances" (17,3%) and "We have family in Portugal and love the country" (11,5 %).

How the couples found Portugal as a possible wedding destination

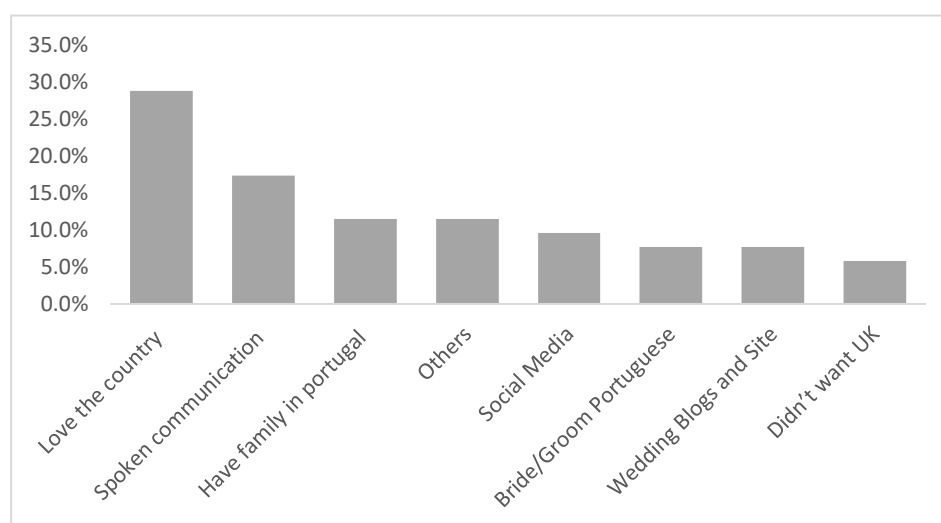
	N	%
We love the country and holiday there every year	15	28,8
Spoken communication with friends, family or acquaintances	9	17,3
We have family in Portugal, and we love the country	6	11,5
Social Media	5	9,6

Weddings Blogs and Sites	4	7,7
Didn't want UK wedding and love Portugal	3	5,8
Groom is Portuguese and family lives there	3	5,8
Bride is Portuguese and wanted to get married in Portugal	1	1,9
Other	6	11,5

Table 10 - How the couples found Portugal as a possible wedding destination

Source: (SPSS output extracted in 2020)

How the couples found Portugal as a possible wedding destination



Graphic 1 - How the couples found Portugal as a possible wedding destination

Source: (SPSS output extracted in 2020)

When analyzing the question regarding the fact that if Portugal was the first destination choice for the majority of the couples (65%) Portugal was the initial destination to host their wedding.

Portugal as the first destination choice

	N	%
No	14	35,0
Yes	26	65,0
Total	40	100,0

Table 11 - Portugal as the first destination choice

Source: (SPSS output extracted in 2020)

The ones that didn't considered Portugal as the only wedding destination, had considered also the following destinations: United Kingdom (33.3%) and Canada or Spain (20%).

Other destination choices

	N	%
United Kingdom	5	33,3
Canada	3	20,0
Spain	3	20,0
Mexico	2	13,3
Other	11	73,3

Table 12 - Other destination choice

Source: (SPSS output extracted in 2020)

When it comes to the causes that have to do with the choice of Portugal the most cited reasons for choosing Portugal to celebrate their wedding celebration were: “Good weather conditions” (21.8%); “Attractive landscaping” (14.7%) and “More intimate celebration” (13.5%).

Determinant factors to choose Portugal to celebrate the wedding

	N	%
Good weather conditions	34	21,8
Attractive landscaping	23	14,7
More intimate celebration	21	13,5
Easy access from other countries (Portugal as a central country)	18	11,5
Looking for an attractive cost	17	10,9
Family origins	14	9,0
Safety	10	6,4
Wedding and honeymoon in one	10	6,4

Nice people (best european country that we've visited)	7	4,5
Other	2	1,3

Table 13 - Determinant factors to choose Portugal to celebrate the wedding

Source: (SPSS output extracted in 2020)

It was important to understand what can make Portugal even more attractive for as a wedding destination and for 30% of the respondents, Portugal could be even more attractive as a wedding destination if special prices or packages were created for foreign couples, but also, if the money transactions were easy to be made.

What could make Portugal even more attractive as a wedding destination

	N	%
Prices reductions or special packages for foreign couples	12	30,0
Ease of transaction payments. It's difficult to wire transfer money to all the vendors.	8	20,0
None	8	20,0
Wider range of advertising actions aimed at foreign couples	5	12,5
Wider range of services	5	12,5
Closer to airport	1	2,5
If vendors had English translation on websites with package costs	1	2,5
Total	40	100,0

Table 14 - What could make Portugal even more attractive as a wedding destination

Source: (SPSS output extracted in 2020)

Most of the budgets that the couple's had considered stayed below the 15,000 euros (32,5%) or in the range between 16000-20000 euros (27,5%). The number of guests per wedding range from 0 to a maximum of 280, with an average of 87 guests. About 30% of the sample had more than 100 guests.

The Couple's Budget

	N	%
<15.000 €	13	32,5
16.000€ - 20.000€	11	27,5
21.000€ - 25.000€	2	5,0
26.000€ - 30.000€	6	15,0
31.000€ - 35.000€	4	10,0
>36.000€	4	10,0
Total	40	100,0

Table 15 - The Couple's Budget

Source: (SPSS output extracted in 2020)

Number of guests invited to the wedding

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
How many guests?	40	0	280	87,00	63,98

Table 16 - Number of guests invited to the wedding

Source: (SPSS output extracted in 2020)

About 85% of the foreign guests to the weddings are coming earlier or staying after the wedding to get to know better the country.

Foreign guests are coming earlier or staying after the wedding to visit Portugal?

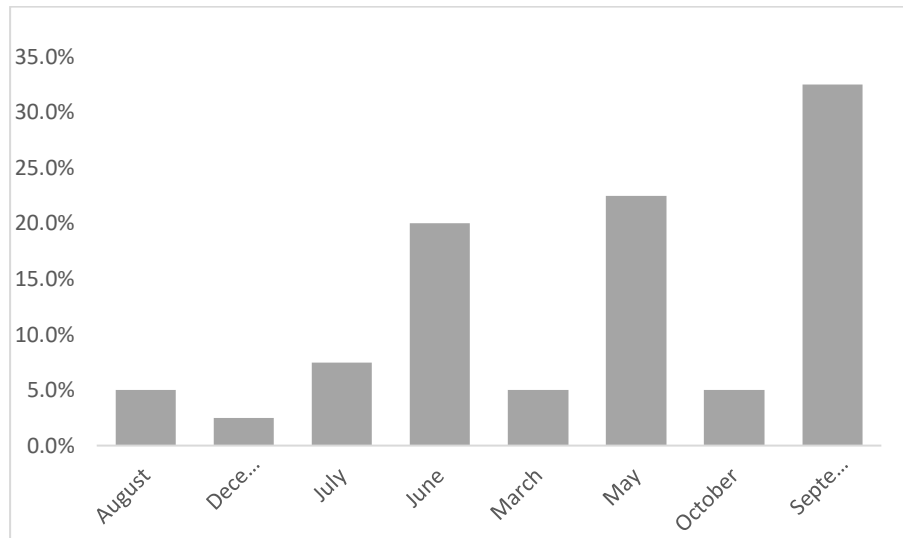
	Frequency	Percent
No	6	15,0
Yes	34	85,0
Total	40	100,0

Table 17 - Foreign guests are coming earlier or staying after the wedding to visit Portugal

Source: (SPSS output extracted in 2020)

The most popular months for the couple’s to host their celebration were September (32,5%), May (22,5%) and June (20%). In terms of regions, the Algarve met most of the preferences (32.5%) followed by Lisbon (27,5%). The most pointed reasons for choosing the Algarve region were: “knowing the region because already had vacation there” (47,8%) or “having friends or family living in the region” (26%).

Most popular months to marry in Portugal



Graphic 2 - Most popular months to marry in Portugal

Source: (SPSS output extracted in 2020)

A very high percentage (85%) of the respondents stated that taking into account the covid-19 pandemic, they canceled or are considered to cancel their wedding, while, 26.5% re-scheduled their wedding for another date. On average, the couples mention that considering the pandemic they postponed the wedding for a period of 9 months.

Considerations concerning the cancelation or re-schedule of the weddings due to Covid-19 Pandemic

	N	%
No	6	15,0
Yes	34	85,0
Total	40	100,0

Table 18 - Considerations concerning the cancelation or re-schedule of the weddings due to Covid-19 Pandemic

Source: (SPSS output extracted in 2020)

Finally, about 60% of the respondent's state that they feel safe to host their wedding in Portugal. As a note, 4 of the 40 respondents didn't answer this question.

Felling of safety in hosting the wedding in Portugal

	N	%
No	14	41,2
Yes	20	58,8
Total	36	100,0

Table 19 - Felling of safety in hosting the wedding in Portugal

Source: (SPSS output extracted in 2020)

Relation between the choice of Portugal as the destination and the bride's age

The choice of Portugal as the first or only destination to celebrate the couple's wedding is relatively similar in the bride's age groups, $\chi^2(2) = 3.148, p = .248$.

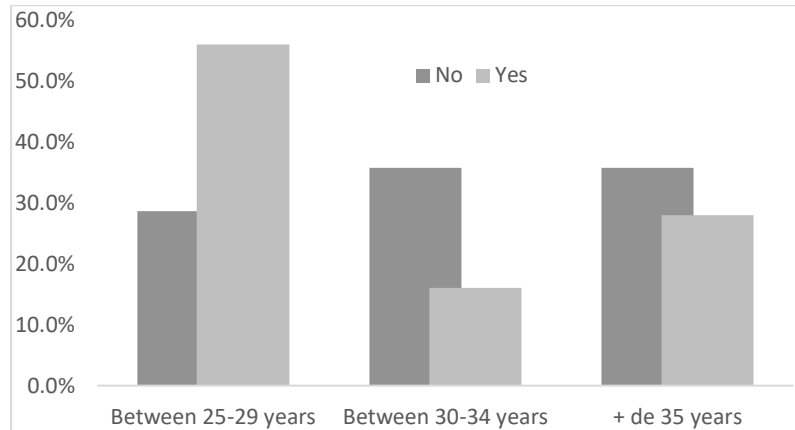
Choice of Portugal as the destination and the bride's age

			First or only destination		Total
			No	Yes	
Between 25-29 years	Freq.		4	14	18
	% first...		28,6%	56,0%	46,2%
Between 30-34 years	Freq.		5	4	9
	% first...		35,7%	16,0%	23,1%
+ de 35 years	Freq.		5	7	12
	% first...		35,7%	28,0%	30,8%
	Freq.		14	25	39
	% first...		100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

Table 20 - Choice of Portugal as the destination and the bride's age

Source: (SPSS output extracted in 2020)

Choice of Portugal as the destination and the bride's age



Graphic 3 - Choice of Portugal as the destination and the bride's age

Source: SPSS output extracted in 2020

Relation between the choice of Portugal as the destination and the bride's academic qualifications

The choice of Portugal as the first or only destination to celebrate the couple's wedding is relatively similar in the bride's academic qualifications, $\chi^2(3) = 2.010, p = .712$.

Choice of Portugal as the destination and the bride's academic qualifications

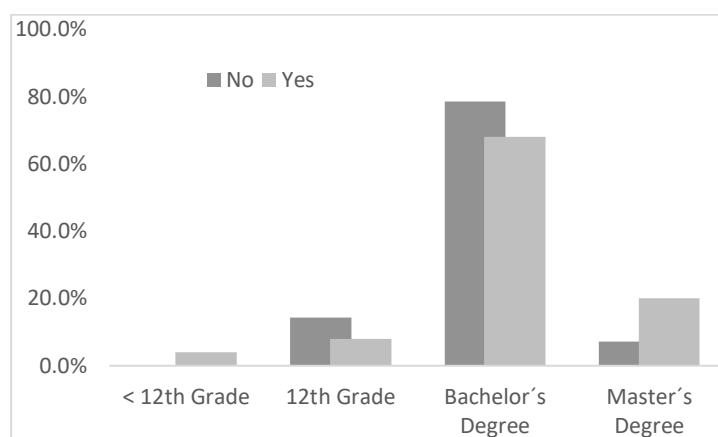
		First or only destination		Total
		No	Yes	
< 12th Grade	Freq.	0	1	1
	% first...	0,0%	4,0%	2,6%
12th Grade	Freq.	2	2	4
	% first...	14,3%	8,0%	10,3%
Bachelor's Degree	Freq.	11	17	28
	% first...	78,6%	68,0%	71,8%
Master's Degree	Freq.	1	5	6
	% first...	7,1%	20,0%	15,4%

Total	Freq.	14	25	39
	% first...	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

Table 21- Choice of Portugal as the destination and the bride's academic qualifications

Source: (SPSS output extracted in 2020)

Choice of Portugal as the destination and the bride's academic qualifications



Graphic 4 - Choice of Portugal as the destination and the bride's academic qualifications

Source: (SPSS output extracted in 2020)

Relation between the choice of Portugal as the destination and the wedding's budget

The choice of Portugal as the first or only destination to celebrate the couple's wedding is relatively similar regardless of the budget available to the wedding, $\chi^2(3) = 2.010, p = .712$.

Choice of Portugal as the destination and the wedding's budget

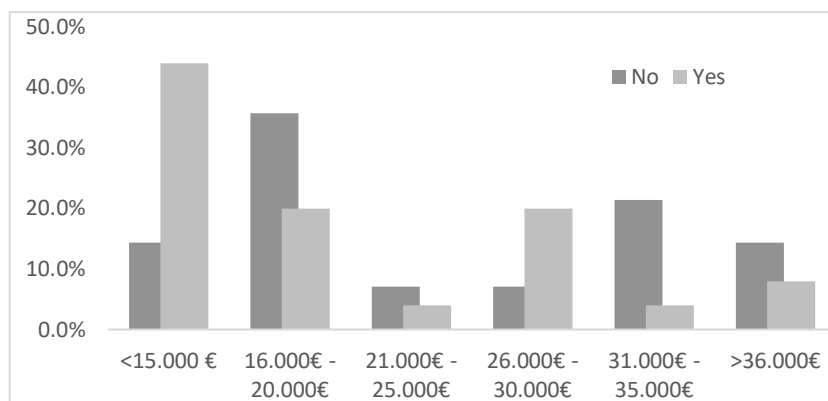
		First or only destination		Total
		No	Yes	
<15.000 €	Freq.	2	11	13
	% first...	14,3%	44,0%	33,3%
16.000€ - 20.000€	Freq.	5	5	10
	% first...	35,7%	20,0%	25,6%
21.000€ - 25.000€	Freq.	1	1	2
	% first...	7,1%	4,0%	5,1%
26.000€ - 30.000€	Freq.	1	5	6

	% first...	7,1%	20,0%	15,4%
31.000€ - 35.000€	Freq.	3	1	4
	% first...	21,4%	4,0%	10,3%
>36.000€	Freq.	2	2	4
	% first...	14,3%	8,0%	10,3%
	Freq.	14	25	39
	% first...	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

Table 22 - Choice of Portugal as the destination and the wedding's budget

Source: (SPSS output extracted in 2020)

Choice of Portugal as the destination and the wedding's budget



Graphic 5 - Choice of Portugal as the destination and the wedding's budget

Source: SPSS output extracted in 2020

4.3 Linear regression regarding the couple's survey

The correlation coefficient between the number of expected guests for the wedding and the budget destined to the wedding is statically significant, positive and high. As the coefficient is positive this means that the higher the budget of the wedding, the higher is going to be the number of expected guests to the wedding ($r = .826, p = .001$).

Correlation between budget and guests invited

	What was the budget that the couple considered?
How many guests are/were invited to your wedding?	,826***

* $p \leq .05$ ** $p \leq .01$ *** $p \leq .001$

Table 23 - Correlation between budget and guests invited

Source: SPSS output extracted in 2020

It is viable to question if the budget that the couples have considered for their wedding has a direct impact in how many guests they have invited.

On one hand is pretty straightforward to conclude that this direct impact exists, because of the fact that on theory if the budget arises is a straight consequence to the number of guests that also increased and it's an issue that a great amount of couples have to deal with while planning their destination wedding because they want to keep their budget lower, as (Macías Fernández, 2014) states a lot of couples decide to host a destination wedding because they have a small budget and don't want anything expensive or elaborate.

On the other hand, other questions and reasons can be brought up. As (Durinec, 2013) states in the literature review, the couples end up organizing other activities for their guests besides the ceremony itself due to the fact that they end up spending more days in the country and, following this line of thought, the information presented can be questioned simply by interrogating that the arise of budget is just not influenced by the increase of the number of guests, other reasons may also be valid, as for example, the organization of an touristic activity.

The correlation coefficient between the age of the bride and the age of the groom is statically significant, positive and high. As the coefficient is positive this means that the higher the age of the bride the higher is the age of the groom. ($r = .720, p = .001$).

Correlation between Bride's age and groom's age

	Bride's Age
Groom's Age	,720***

* $p \leq .05$ ** $p \leq .01$ *** $p \leq .001$

Table 24 - Correlation between Bride's age and groom's age

Source: (SPSS output extracted in 2020)

The disparity of age between brides and grooms is actually a topic with very little research about. Considering the analysis done, the brides are found to be younger than their partners, being that the women are associated with the age group that ranges from 25-29 years and the man to the 30-34 years age group according to our study.

(Allendorf et al, 2017) agrees with these facts, stating that there is still, globally, the tendency for woman to marry earlier than man but on the other hand affirms also that woman and their parents view the early 20's as the right age for women to get married and the man and their parents view the mid and late 20's, ranging from 23-30 as the desirable age range to tie the knot, what doesn't go allow with the information that our study concluded.

The correlation coefficient between "how did you find Portugal as possible wedding destination (wedding blogs and sites)" and "how did you find Portugal as possible wedding destination (internet publicity)" "is statically significant, positive and moderate. As the coefficient is positive, this means that there is the tendency for couples who found Portugal through wedding blogs and sites to have also found Portugal through internet publicity.

Correlation between internet publicity and wedding blogs/sites

	Internet Publicity
Wedding Blogs and Sites	688***

* $p \leq .05$ ** $p \leq .01$ *** $p \leq .001$

Table 25 - Correlation between internet publicity and wedding blogs/sites

Source: (SPSS output extracted in 2020)

It is legitimate to analyze the correlation presented above and it is an actually a current topic, considering the amount of advertisement done on the web nowadays, a crucial tool that can boost the competitiveness in any kind of market. As couples search on the internet for possible weeding destinations, they will much likely end up visiting wedding blogs or sites. On this note, that is why is crucial for Portugal to invest in online publicity towards this type of market and according to (Pochun et al., 2018) always keeping in mind that in this segment the right image can call out several sensations. Wedding images should capture the right emotions such as happiness or excitement that are linked to a celebration context.

4.4 Sample characterization – the vendors profile

From the 28 answers obtained 53.6% referred to a hotel or resort and 42.9% were event’s planning companies. The annual average of weddings organized by those companies were 36, ranging from a minimum of 4 and a maximum of 300. The modal value was 20 annual weddings (21.4%). About 18% could be characterized as destination weddings.

Vendors Characterization

	N	%
type of vendor	1	3,6
Banquet Hall	1	3,6
Event’s Planning Company	12	42,9
Hotel or Resort	15	53,6
Weddings organized (M; SD)	35.6	58.9

Table 26 - Vendor’s Characterization

Source: (SPSS output extracted in 2020)

How many weddings organized by the companies annually

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
In average how many weddings are organized by your company annually?	28	4	300	35,68	58,910
Valid N (listwise)	28				

Table 27 - How many weddings organized by the companies annually

Source: (SPSS output extracted in 2020)

4.5 Results regarding the vendors survey

While considering the question regarding if the companies offered special conditions/packages for foreign couples, almost half of them (46,4%) confirmed that, in the fact, they hold those conditions. This percentage is similar either to the events planning companies or for the hotel's and resort's, Fisher's test, $p = .121$.

Special offers and conditions

	N	%
No	15	53,6
Yes	13	46,4
Total	28	100,0

Table 28 - Special offers and conditions

Source: SPSS output extracted in 2020

When asked about the profile of the couple's that seek to hold a destination wedding in Portugal, most characterize them as demanding with gastronomy (50%), looking for photographable locations (39,3%) and also demanding with the decor (35.7%).

Vendors set the couple's profile

	N	%
Demanding with the gastronomy	14	50,0
Looking for photographable location	11	39,3
Demanding with the décor	10	35,7
Looking for easy ways of transportation for their guests	7	25,0
Looking for organized site tours for their guests	6	21,4
Worried with the environment	6	21,4
Offer a unique experience to their guests	1	3,6

They pretend to combine honeymoon to the wedding	1	3,6
Other	10	35,7

Table 29 - Vendors set the couple's profile

Source: (SPSS output extracted in 2020)

Half of the weddings held by the companies analyzed had between 51 and 100 guests. The distribution of the number is relatively similar to event's planning company or hotel and resort, $\chi^2(4) = 2.025, p = 1.000$.

How many guests have the weddings organized by the vendors?

	N	%
< 50 guests	1	3,6
51 -100 guests	14	50,0
101 - 150 guests	8	28,6
151 - 200 guests	4	14,3
201 - 250 guests	1	3,6
Total	28	100,0

Table 30 - How many guests have the weddings organized by the vendors

Source: (SPSS output extracted in 2020)

When analyzing if the couple's invested in organizing activities for the guests besides the wedding itself 85.7% of the vendors confirmed that they actually do it.

Extra activities besides the wedding

	N	%
No	4	14,3
Yes	24	85,7
Total	28	100,0

Table 31 - Extra activities besides the wedding

Source: (SPSS output extracted in 2020)

When asked if the foreign couple's end up spending more money in the wedding comparing to the Portuguese couple's, it was possible to conclude that 78.6% of the vendor's confirmed that that actually happens.

Money invested in the wedding by foreign couple's

	N	%
No	6	21,4
Yes	22	78,6
Total	28	100,0

Table 32 - Money invested in the wedding by foreign couple's

Source: (SPSS output extracted in 2020)

Social media (67.9%), wedding sites and blogs (57.1%) and events and fairs (46.4%) are the most used methods by the companies to promote themselves in the weddings market. The use of social media apps by the events planning companies or hotels and resorts Fisher's test, $p = ,217$, and from Wedding Sites and blogs Fisher's test, $p = ,696$, is done in a relatively identical way.

Publicity's tools

	N	%
Social Media	19	67,9
Weddings Sites and blogs	16	57,1
Events/Fairs held to promote your services	13	46,4
Magazines	8	28,6

Table 33 - Publicity tools

Source: (SPSS output extracted in 2020)

Finally, the last question made to the vendors was concerning the Covid-19 pandemic. According to the 28 respondents 92.9% of the couples have decided to re-schedule their wedding to another date because of the pandemic.

Covid-19 epidemic

	N	%
Cancel	2	7,1
Re-schedule for this next year	26	92,9
Total	28	100,0

Table 34 - Covid-19 epidemic

Source: (SPSS output extracted in 2020)

4.6 Linear regression regarding the vendor's survey

The correlation coefficient between “How many weddings are organized by the company annually?” and “Relatively to the question above how many of those are destination weddings?” is statically significant, positive and high. As the coefficient is positive, this means that the higher “How many weddings are organized by the company annually?” the higher is going to be “Relatively to the question above how many of those are destination weddings?”. ($r = .929, p = .001$).

Correlation between the number of destination weddings and wedding total

	Relatively to the question above how many of those weddings were destinations weddings?
In average how many weddings are organized by your company annually?	,929***

* $p \leq .05$ ** $p \leq .01$ *** $p \leq .001$

Table 35 - Correlation between the number of destination weddings and wedding total

Source: (SPSS output extracted in 2020)

As mentioned above, 36 weddings are organized annually on average by the wedding market vendors. From this 36, 18% are considered destination weddings, a value that could increase if Portuguese government was more supportive towards the wedding industry itself, that despite being expressive, representing a 900 million business, as mentioned in the literature

review, could rise even more and, this way, have more tools to help the destination wedding niche . As (Ritter et al., 2020) states in its study many international destinations have come to the conclusion that the wedding tourism industry actually functions as a notable patron for the local economies.

There is also a tendency for the vendors that advertise in magazines to characterize the profile of the couples, who are looking for Portugal as a destination to celebrate their wedding, as having concerns about the environment ($r = .576, p = .001$).

Correlation between advertisement in magazines and concerns about the environment

	Advertise in Magazines
Worried with the environment	,576***

* $p \leq .05$ ** $p \leq .01$ *** $p \leq .001$

Table 36- Correlation between advertisement in magazines and concerns about the environment

Source: SPSS output extracted in 2020

Wedding magazines perform an important role, expanding a wedding consuming culture and focusing in transform the bride as the main character and architect of this significant day (Boden, 2001). Up until today, they have done more than show couples what to consume but have also have a part in the creation and expansion of the weddings market, by making efforts to demonstrate the image of a flawless wedding (Lu, 2018).

On this line of thought is important for the vendors to promote themselves in this advertising vehicle but keeping also in mind that the online publicity, being in social media or sites and blogs is also mandatory nowadays. By considering the couples profile as increasingly worried with the environment, these vendors should also do their part and invest in advertise in magazines that have online versions, what is becoming a lot more common nowadays or in magazines with recycled paper pages, this way the potential couples will ultimately feel a lot more trust when hiring them. As mentioned in the literature review a good management in planning can figure out approaches that focus in creating the least amount of environmental impacts (Dickson & Arcodia, 2010) being that nowadays and in agreement to (Settheewongsakun, 2019) some wedding experiences and touristic activities can be the

originators of land degradation. Ultimately, these efforts, will be valued by the couple that currently present sustainability concerns.

There is a tendency for the companies that use social media as tools of publicity to promote their companies in the wedding market to characterize less the profile of their clients as demanding with décor. ($r = -.533, p = .001$).

Correlation between demanding clients with décor and companies that do publicity in social media

	Demanding with the décor
Social Media	-,533***

* $p \leq .05$ ** $p \leq .01$ *** $p \leq .001$

Table 37 - Correlation between demanding clients with décor and companies that do publicity in social media

Source: (SPSS output extracted in 2020)

According to (Peste et al., 2017), mentioned in the literature review, couples are looking for an exotic, memorable and unique celebration, all combined with an affordable cost. In the era were we are currently living, where social media plays an important role when mentioning publicity, vendors should create inspiring and appealing content for their social media apps, showing what they have to offer and how do they differentiate themselves in terms of gastronomy, DJ or décor services, for example, in order to appeal potential clients that are, in fact, looking for that memorable experience. Being that is known that lot of couples look for inspirational scenarios on tools like Instagram or Pinterest for their wedding decoration does the décor has such less expressive importance in the wedding, for the companies that do publicity on social media, at its whole or does actually represent a big part of the couple’s budget? In fact, 35.7% of the vendors actually mention the demand with décor one of the characteristics that set the bride and groom’s profile.

5. Discussion and Findings

In this chapter the results from the data analyzed from the surveys sent to the respondents will be presented. These surveys had as a main goal the collection of data with the objective to answer the proposed research questions.

To the first question “How have the destination weddings market contributed for the arise of the events tourism industry in Portugal?” the wedding destinations niche market represent, as already mentioned, a form of events tourism. With the analysis of the data collected it was possible to conclude that the foreign couples end up inviting, on average, 87 guests, what goes along with the information given by the vendors. Being that, the majority of this couples (85.7%) also organizes extra activities for their guests besides the wedding itself and these same couple’s guests end up spending more days visiting Portugal. The couple’s also end up investing more money than the national couples in their celebration (78.6%) what represents a strength point towards the Portuguese economy. This data is the proof that the government should help this sector with new strategies, such as international publicity or work hand in hand with event organizing companies to elaborate attractive wedding packages, for more visibility towards this niche, to keep their development, because is visible that this market actually contributes positively for the countries touristic sector. This information goes along with the study elaborated by (Durinec 2013) that states that by spending money on aspects inherent to a normal trip such as local shops, change currency, rent-a-cars, restaurants, entertainment or guides the guests are going to benefice the economic value of the hosting regions.

The second question regarding “How is Portugal positioning itself towards this type of weddings”, focusing on what tactics Portugal is using to place itself, it is possible to find, in the first place, that the majority of the couples (28.8%) found Portugal to be a perfect wedding destination due to fact that they already holiday there every year, so most of them already knew the country, followed by spoken communication with friends, family and acquaintances (17.3%), being that the publicity through social media and wedding sites and blogs is less expressive for the foreign couples (9,6% and 7.7% respectively). When crossing this information with the vendor’s survey, the majority of them states that they don’t offer special conditions or packages for this type of weddings (53.7%) and that they promote themselves manly through the internet, using social media apps and weddings sites. (Peste et al. 2017)

(Camargo, 2017) (Micallef, 2017) state that captivating packages should be included in the companies offers because this market can have a expressive role in the developing the Portuguese hosting regions, what is in fact not matching what the majority of the vendors is doing to increase sales.

In the third question concerning “How the Covid-19 pandemic came to influence the wedding destination market?” it is safe to deduce that this pandemic came to influence negatively this niche market due to fact that the majority of the couples inquired cancel or considered to cancel their wedding, being that most of the vendors stated that the soon to be married couples choose to re-schedule their wedding date. This, obviously, has adverse impacts to the economy, since many businesses are involved in a wedding production.

Finally, when it comes to the question that focuses on “What makes couples want to celebrate a destination wedding in Portugal – their level of preference?”, good atmospheric conditions (21.8%), impressive landscape (14,7%) and the sense of an intimate celebration (13,5%) are the most point out reasons. According to the same inquiries Portugal should invest in the improvement of the following points: creation of special packages/price reductions; ease on the transaction payments since it can be quite difficult to wire transfer money to all vendors and have a wider range of advertising actions. When considering these issues to be worked on the vendors should also have present the couples profile that they trace, keeping in mind that they are demanding with gastronomy (50%), looking for photographable locations (39,3%) and demanding with decor (35.7%). This way the level of preference of the couples towards our country could be higher.

6. Conclusions

This study was conducted with the key purpose of understanding how the destination weddings influence the increase of events tourism, focusing in the case of Portugal, in order to come up with possible adjustments that can assist the industry.

As the literature review suggests destination weddings have become in the last years a more common practice to celebrate a wedding on account of new types of ceremonies approaches (Etemaddar et al., 2018), being that in recent years it was noted a growth in the wedding tourism market of about 75% (Durinec, 2013). On this note, there were defined specific goals with the interest to obtain findings that will lead us to the main question regarding the positive emerge of the events tourism in Portugal taking into account the destination weddings niche market.

After the analysis of the obtained data relatively to the topic mentioned above was possible to conclude that the destination weddings market actually contributes positively to the expansion of the events tourism in Portugal by virtue of the fact that most couples tend to arrange extra activities from the wedding itself to its guests and according to the findings the majority of these guests, average 87 per wedding, end up spending more days enjoying the country, what will, inevitably, provoke a positive impact in the hosting region's economies.

Other questions were proposed to better understand the research problematic and what could be done to increase the destination weddings quotation in the market. Firstly, an interrogation regarding the tactics that Portugal is using to promote itself towards this market. From the findings section was possible to conclude that most of the couples got to know Portugal as a possible destination due to the fact that they holiday there every year, followed by spoken communication with family/friends/acquaintances, being that social media and wedding blogs and sites are the third vehicle this knowledge. Also, yet in the tactics thematic, the majority of vendors affirm not to offer special packages or conditions to foreign couples and that their main advertise media are social media and wedding sites. On this note, it is important for Portugal vendors to better position themselves towards the creation of differentiated packages and conditions towards foreign couples, for example, to create special prices for the months that are not too busy and, this way, try to beat seasonality and also by putting their stakes

higher when it comes to internet publicity, by analyzing their biggest competitors, keeping in mind that this publicity method should be more expressive.

Regarding the interrogations considering the Covid19 pandemic, this disease came to have a lot of negative influence in the destination weddings market, due to the fact that, majority of foreign couples decided to postpone or cancel the wedding. There are a lot of direct consequences concerning these cancelations, mainly, because many vendors are related to one single wedding itself and, this way, many businesses are affected because they cannot provide the services, they were counting on doing and, therefore, the income is going to be inexistent. Considering the tourism perspective, since the weddings are canceled there are no opportunities for the guests to invest in touristic activities that also contribute for the events tourism growth, being that the industry will be compromised.

Finally, while analyzing the couple's level of preference it was safe to conclude that bride and groom tend to choose Portugal as for their climate, impressive sites and sense of intimacy but mention that in order for their level of attractiveness increase the country should work on developing special conditions, better the transaction payments and present a wider range of advertisement. Vendors are aware that the couple's tend to sympathize with great gastronomy and décor and locations for memorable photographs. So, on this note and carrying the information presented above more and better publicity should be performed, always focusing in the development of innovative and attractive packages that will definitely bring more foreign couples to Portugal as to celebrate their wedding.

7. Limitations

While developing this study the main limitation found was the fact that the sample concerning the couple's and vendors might not be representative, as a result of the Covid19 pandemic, that represents an external factor to the investigation. This way, the facts found cannot be generalized. Other limitation attached to the study was the fact that little research is done on destination weddings, mainly in Portugal, due to the fact that is a recent topic.

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