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"What factors influence the purchase intent of maritime cruise tourists regarding Portuguese souvenirs"

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"What factors influence the purchase intent of maritime cruise tourists regarding Portuguese souvenirs"

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Resumo

Esta pesquisa investiga os fatores que influenciam a intenção de compra dos turistas de cruzeiros marítimos em relação aos souvenirs portugueses. Utilizando métodos qualitativos e quantitativos, o estudo examina dados secundários da literatura existente e dados primários recolhidos a partir de um questionário direcionado. A análise concentrou-se em entender os desejos e expectativas dos consumidores, identificando lacunas e oportunidades no mercado, avaliando souvenirs preferidos, satisfação dos clientes, expectativas de qualidade e a importância do preço.

Os resultados revelam que os turistas de cruzeiros priorizam a autenticidade e o significado cultural ao selecionar souvenirs nos portos portugueses. As empresas que pretendem atender a esse mercado devem enfatizar a produção e promoção de itens artesanais locais que encapsulem o rico património de Portugal. Embora o preço seja um fator na decisão de compra, ele não domina as escolhas dos turistas. Em vez disso, criar experiências memoráveis e oferecer produtos de alta qualidade e culturalmente autênticos são cruciais para atrair e satisfazer os turistas de cruzeiros marítimos.

Ao abordar esses fatores, as empresas podem alinhar melhor suas ofertas às preferências dos turistas, melhorando tanto a satisfação do cliente quanto as vendas. Este estudo contribui para a compreensão do comportamento dos turistas no setor de cruzeiros marítimos e fornece insights acionáveis para produtores e retalhistas de souvenirs em Portugal.

Palavras-chave: Turismo de Cruzeiros Marítimos, Souvenirs, Intenção de Compra, Preferências dos Turistas, Autenticidade Cultural

JEL: L83: Desporto; Jogos de Sorte; Recreação; Turismo, M31: Marketing, Z32: Economia do Turismo

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General Abstract

This research investigates the factors influencing the purchase intent of maritime cruise tourists regarding Portuguese souvenirs. Utilizing qualitative and quantitative methods, the study examines secondary data from existing literature and primary data collected from a targeted questionnaire. The analysis focused on understanding consumer desires and expectations, identifying gaps and opportunities in the market, and evaluating preferred souvenirs, client satisfaction, quality expectations, and the importance of price.

The findings reveal that cruise tourists prioritize authenticity and cultural significance when selecting souvenirs from Portuguese ports. Businesses aiming to cater to this market should emphasize the production and promotion of locally crafted items that encapsulate Portugal's rich heritage. While price is a factor in the purchase decision, it does not dominate tourist choices. Instead, creating memorable experiences and offering high-quality, culturally authentic products are crucial to attracting and satisfying maritime cruise tourists.

By addressing these factors, businesses can better align their offerings with tourist preferences, enhancing both customer satisfaction and sales. This study contributes to the understanding of tourist behavior in the maritime cruise sector and provides actionable insights for souvenir producers and retailers in Portugal.

Keywords: Maritime Cruise Tourism, Souvenirs, Purchase Intent, Tourist Preferences, Cultural Authenticity

JEL: L83: Sports; Gambling; Recreation; Tourism, M31: Marketing, Z32: Tourism Economics

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Contents

Article

Abstract

Objective: Research aims to investigate the purchase intent of maritime cruise tourists regarding Portuguese souvenirs.

Methods: Applying qualitative methods, secondary data from literature and a questionnaire, consumer desires and expectations were analyzed, as well as gaps/opportunities, preferred souvenirs, client satisfaction, quality expectation and price importance.

Conclusion: Cruise tourists are seeking authentic and culturally significant souvenirs when visiting Portuguese ports. Businesses should prioritize production and promotion of locally crafted items that reflect the country's rich heritage. While price remains a consideration, it is not the sole determinant of purchase intent. Creating memorable experiences is vital for the maritime cruise market.

Keywords: Maritime Cruise Tourism, Souvenirs, Purchase Intent, Tourist Preferences, Cultural Authenticity

Introduction

Tourism, as we know it, resulted from the Industrial Revolution, as until then, travel was mainly related to commercial activities, migratory movements, conquests, or wars. Social and cultural reasons have trivialized travel. Today there are almost as many tourism possibilities as there are human interests.

With a fundamental role in the revitalization of an aging country as Portugal (Pestana, 2002), contemporary cruise tourism, is characterized as a global social phenomenon that mobilizes a wide range of social actors (Baixinho, 2008). Maritime cruise tourism has become an increasingly popular way for travelers to explore coastal regions, and Portugal is no exception to this trend. Known for its rich history, vibrant culture, and stunning landscapes, Portugal has become a popular destination for maritime cruise tourists seeking a taste of European charm. These tourists often seek to capture their experiences by purchasing souvenirs that reflect the essence of Portugal. The purchase of souvenirs is an integral part of the cruise experience, allowing tourists to take home tangible reminders of their journey.

Considering the complex equation of consumer behavior, the research question aims the understanding of the factors that influence the purchase intent, namely in the case of maritime cruise tourists when it comes to Portuguese souvenirs, considering this as a crucial information for this niche activity's survival enabling a more effective answer to tourists' requirements and expectations, as these souvenirs play a crucial role in promoting the rich cultural heritage of Portugal and bolster the local economy. Understanding and catering to the purchase intent of maritime cruise tourists is essential for both businesses and Portugal's overall tourism industry.

In this context we aim to understand what factors influence purchase intent of maritime cruise tourists regarding Portuguese souvenirs, considering the hypothesis that it might be seen as a multifaceted process influenced by cultural significance, authenticity, quality, memorabilia, price sensitivity money, ease of transportation, sustainability, and ethical practices. The presented research suggests souvenirs, as a relevant component of tourist experience, as they serve as memory triggers and help tourists relive their trips long after returning home, contributing as means of connection with the host culture.

Theoretical framework

Souvenirs can be regarded as material traces of the interaction between tourism actors (Cave et al.'s, 2013). The tourist experience is considered as a key element of value creation within the tourism industry (Prebensen & Foss, 2011) contributing to long-lasting memories, and through these memories, tourists' attachment and loyalty to the destination is enhanced (Sthapit et al., 2018). Buying souvenirs is considered as a relevant travel activity for specific types of tourists such as cultural tourists and cruise visitors (Cave et al., 2012; Chen & Huang, 2018). Souvenirs have symbolic meaning, as they serve as connection between time, space (Morgan & Pritchard, 2005), place, person (Swanson & Timothy, 2012), travel memory, and daily life (Haldrup, 2017).

The global tourism crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic caused the souvenir industry to face enormous challenges (Sigala, 2020). In a context of post-pandemic and great uncertainty generated by war, cruise operators continued with challenging agenda and, each year, the cruise fleet becomes more efficient and sustainable. Consumer behavior is a science influenced by Economics, Psychology, Anthropology, and other disciplines. These references serve as support for knowledge of culture, values, beliefs and desires, everything that influences the purchasing decision process (Blackwell, Miniard and Engel, 2005). Literature indicates that the key concepts influencing consumer behavior in a tourist context, are related with decision making, values, motivations, personality, expectations, attitudes, perception, satisfaction, and loyalty. Souvenirs often portray an image of tourists' self-identity, their desire for an imaginary ideal lifestyle, and narrate their interaction with a place, life, time, persons, and other cultures (Love & Kohn, 2001; Morgan & Pritchard, 2005). The main factors affecting purchase intent indicated by Kotler (1997), suggests that the starting point for knowing and satisfying the needs of target customers is to understand that several factors can influence the purchase intent of souvenirs, such as personal preferences, cultural appeal, souvenir authenticity, and quality, proposing that tourists often make purchasing decisions based on a combination of these factors. Consumers expect an experience, emotion or sensation when purchasing, it is a continuous process, related with the context of purchase and consumption (Cohen et al.,2014), purchase satisfaction is positively affected by customer loyalty (Gallarza et al., 2017), and destination loyalty (Suhartanto, 2018).

Regarding cruise activity, the first commercial cruises began in the 1840s, and have evolved into one of the world's most sophisticated, specialized, complex, and expensive type of vessel. The large modern purpose-built cruise ships of the 1930s, the German KdF ships

Wilhelm Gustloff and Robert Ley emerged as prototypes for carrying a mass-market clientel. According to AHRESP, compared to what happened twenty years ago, Portuguese ports had almost twice as many tourists and more than doubled revenue, with around 14% of exports of goods and services coming from tourism. The World Barometer of the UNWTO – World Tourism Organization reported that all regions of the world recorded a notable recovery in the number of international tourists. The number of cruise ship calls at the Port of Lisbon recorded, from 2013 to 2019, an average annual growth of 0.1%. In 2020, the crisis caused by the COVID - 19 pandemic in the global cruise industry interrupted a cycle of more than 20 years of consecutive growth in cruise activity at the Port of Lisbon. However, in mid-2021 a process of resuming activity began, and in 2022, Azores, Funchal, Porto Santo, Leixões, Figueira da Foz, Lisbon and Portimão recorded a total of 1,016 cruise calls, the highest number of always, thus surpassing the mark of 1,000 stops for the first time, which corresponded to a growth of 11% compared to the 912 stops achieved in 2019. Lisbon, with 327 had the national leadership, and Funchal, with 302 stops, occupied the second position. Regarding the capacity of ships in terms of the number of passengers they can carry, the average capacity per ship was 1,616 passengers. Analyzing the average time of cruise ships in port per month, it appears that it was between 12:55 and 32:42. Thus, the average time for cruise ships in port during 2022 was 20H20. This means that tourists will sleep at least one night in Lisbon. If we look, we see that cruise ship passengers are tourists who have a few hours (on average a solar day) to visit Lisbon and like to buy a Souvenir. Facilitating the decision, avoiding dispersion in the choice between Souvenirs, will constitute a competitive advantage by freeing up time for passengers for other leisure activities provided by operators, such as visits to monuments and historical or characteristic places in Lisbon and its surroundings. Factors such as what we value, how we see ourselves or what we like to do with our free time, help determine which products will catch our attention (S.A. Cohen et al.).

Regarding which actors affect the maritime purchase intent, the starting point for knowing and satisfying the needs of target customers is to try to understand consumer behavior and study how people, groups and organizations select, buy, use, and dispose of services (Kotler, 2000). Several factors can influence the purchase intent of souvenirs, such as personal preferences, cultural appeal, souvenir authenticity, price, and quality. Research indicates that tourists often make purchasing decisions based on a combination of these factors. For Blackweell, Miniard and Engel (2005), consumer behavior is a science that uses knowledge from Economics, Psychology, Anthropology, and other disciplines. These references serve as support for knowledge of culture, values, beliefs and desires, everything that influences the

purchasing decision process. Companies seek various marketing techniques to attract consumers' attention, as they can choose stimuli that meet their needs and expectations (Nickels,Wood, 1997).

Consumption occurs immediately or after the stimuli and generates appreciation for the brand as an exclusive element. Consumer behavior, for Solomon (2011, p.33) “is the study of the processes involved when individuals or groups select, purchase, use or discard products, services, ideas or experiences to satisfy needs and desires”. Need can be understood as a basic biological motive and desire as the way we were taught by society to satisfy that need. The need would already exist initially. Thus, the task of marketing professionals will consist of finding ways to satisfy needs based on their identification. Marketing does not aim to create such needs, but rather to create awareness of their existence (Solomon, 2011). Consumers expect an experience, emotion or sensation when purchasing. The act of purchasing is a continuous process, not ending when the service or product is exchanged for payment, influenced by the context of purchase and/or consumption in our travel service (S.A. Cohen et al.)

Thus, comprehending the complex consumer equation behavior, and the process by which a group or individual buys, uses or disposes of services, ideas, or products to satisfy their needs and/or desires, is crucial for the involved commercial entities in the souvenir market.

Methodology

The conducted research contemplates qualitative and quantitative research methods, to secondary data provided by literature, and primary data resulting from a questionnaire developed for the present research, applied to 113 tourists that visited Portuguese ports. The target audience was characterized, and consumer desires and expectations were analyzed, as well as gaps/opportunities in the market, preferred souvenirs, client satisfaction, quality expectation and price importance. The survey contemplates data on demographic characterization, souvenir preferences, purchase behavior, motivations behind their souvenir choices. A miscellany of multiple-choice questions, rating scales, and open-ended questions was used for a more comprehensive understanding.

As for demographic information, the age, gender, nationality, and cruise experience (first-time cruiser, occasional cruiser, frequent cruiser) of respondents was inquired. In this sense, in terms of demographics, the sample is characterized by respondents with the following age groups 18-25: 13%, 26-35: 22%, 36-50: 38% and 51 and above: 27%. As for gender characterization, the sample is characterized by a male representation of, 37% and 63% female respondents. As for nationality, 78% of respondents are European, 12% American, 6% Asian and 4% Other nationalities. Regarding Cruise Experience 24% are First-time cruisers, 50% Occasional cruisers and 26% Frequent cruisers.

Having understood the contextualization and characterization of the sample, to understand consumer desires and expectations, as well as gaps/opportunities in the market, preferred souvenirs, client satisfaction, quality expectation and price importance the survey questions covered the following topics, Portuguese Souvenirs Awareness, using the question, Have you heard of or seen Portuguese souvenirs before? Purchase Intent, Do you plan to purchase Portuguese souvenirs during this cruise? And What factors influence your purchase intent? (quality, price, personalization, etc.). Preferred Souvenirs, considering the question, What types of Portuguese souvenirs are you interested in? (E.g. ceramics, textiles, food, etc.) Do you prioritize ecofriendly souvenirs? Shopping Behavior, Where do you plan to purchase souvenirs (onshore shops, onboard the cruise, local markets)? How much are you willing to spend on souvenirs during this cruise? Do you plan to buy souvenirs as gifts for others?. For the understanding of the topic of Influence of Recommendations, the question Are you more likely to purchase souvenirs if recommended by cruise staff or fellow passengers? was used. For Online vs. Offline Shopping understanding, respondents were asked Do you plan to

research or purchase souvenirs online during the cruise? Cruise Experience and Souvenirs, Do you believe portability can critically enhance the appeal of Portuguese souvenirs? Accessibility and Convenience, Will you favor purchasing souvenirs Souvenir shops located near the cruise terminals and major tourist attractions? What enhances your overall shopping experience? Finally, responds were able to indicate Additional Comments, responding to the open question, Any additional thoughts or comments about Portuguese souvenirs and your purchase intent. The closing of the survey included the request of contact information for further questions or feedback.

The survey was conducted between December 11th, 2023, and February 3rd, 2024. The collected and analyzed data is discussed, comparing literature perspectives and similar studies in the following sections.

Results

Analyzing the conducted survey results, and regarding Portuguese Souvenirs Awareness, when asked if respondents have heard of or seen Portuguese souvenirs before? 78% respond yes, and 22% respond negatively. As for purchase intent, the results indicate that 67% of respondents planned to purchase souvenirs, and 33% did not plan to purchase souvenirs 33%.

Regarding the factors Influencing Purchase Intent, 42% of respondents identify Quality as the main factor, 31% Price, 19% Personalization and 8% Recommendations. Considering Preferred Souvenirs, 25% of respondents answer Ceramics, 15% answer Textiles, 30% Food and Beverages, and 30% Other. Concerning Shopping Behavior, 47% of the respondents indicated the choice for Onshore shops, 23% for Onboard the cruise and 30% for Local markets. When questioned about the Willingness to Spend, 41% of respondents are willing to spend less than $50, 24% between $50-$100: 34%, and 25% are willing to spend More than $100. When inquired if planning to buy souvenirs as gifts for others, 62% of respondents answered positively, and 38% negatively. Observing the answer to the question of likeliness of souvenirs purchase if recommended by cruise staff or fellow passengers, 22% of respondents indicated they were Highly influenced, 38% Moderately influenced and 40% Not influenced.

As for Online vs. Offline Shopping, 66% of respondents Plan to research online, 13% Plan to purchase online and 21% Prefer offline shopping. Relatively the influence of portability regarding the appeal of Portuguese souvenirs 69% of respondents indicate it Enhances appeal. Accessibility and Convenience, namely the influence of closeness of Souvenir shops to cruise terminals and major tourist attractions, is regarded as a favorable influence in the purchasing decision by 73% of respondents. The Payment method is indicated by 67 of respondents when asked what enhances overall shopping experience, followed by 21% regarding Language support and 12% related by Packaging options.

Regarding additional comments, participants expressed interest in more variety of souvenirs. Some mentioned that the cruise experience significantly influenced their purchase decisions. A few participants reemphasized the importance of eco-friendly souvenirs. Thus, considering the souvenir preferences and influencing factors, the conducted research proposes that maritime cruise tourists displayed a range of souvenir preferences, including ceramics, textiles, wines, and local crafts. The most popular souvenirs were those that represented Portuguese culture and craftsmanship.

The conducted research proposes that the key factors that influenced purchase intent include cultural significance, as tourists valued souvenirs that reflected Portuguese culture and were authentic in their design and craftsmanship. Portuguese souvenirs often hold cultural significance, offering a direct connection to the country's heritage. Tourists who appreciate cultural immersion are more inclined to buy souvenirs that serve as a reminder of their journey. Authenticity and quality are prosed as an influence factor in purchase intent. Tourists are more likely to buy items that are genuinely Portuguese, handcrafted, and of high quality. These items, such as hand-painted ceramics, local wines, and Portuguese jewelry, are seen as valuable mementos of the trip. Personalization is also reinforced by results as a factor of influence. Some tourists look for souvenirs that reflect their personal experiences and interests. For instance, personalized items like monogrammed towels or custom-made tiles with a specific design can be highly appealing. These items offer a unique and customized connection to Portugal.

While price played a role, value for money perception was often secondary to cultural and authentic appeal. Tourists often compare the cost of items in Portugal to prices back home, seeking value for money. Well-priced and reasonably unique souvenirs are more likely to attract buyers. Transportation and accessibility are also proposed as a variable of influence in the purchase decision. Maritime cruise tourists have limited luggage space, so they tend to favor smaller, lightweight items that are easy to transport. Items that are fragile or bulky may deter potential buyers, as they pose practical challenges during travel. Finally, sustainability is proposed as an increasing influencing factor, as a growing number of tourists are conscious of the environmental impact of their purchases. Sustainable Portuguese souvenirs, like cork-based products or eco-friendly textiles, are gaining popularity among environmentally conscious travelers.

Analyzing the obtained results, the conducted research proposes that cruise tourists are seeking authentic and culturally significant souvenirs when visiting Portuguese ports. We prose that businesses may prioritize the production and promotion of locally crafted items that reflect the country's rich heritage. While price remains a consideration, it is not the sole determinant of purchase intent. Creating memorable, culturally authentic shopping experiences is vital for businesses looking to cater to the maritime cruise market.

Discussion

This research sought to determine which conditionings exerted most influence on tourists Purchase Intent in the Souvenir Market, determining whether certain characteristics of the product effectively interfered with the consumer's purchase intent. These attributes, most valued by consumers, are expected to critically influence the purchase intention of souvenir consumers - tourists. We find ourselves in a market characterized by uncertainty, which has been marked by major transformations (internationalization, deregulation, disintermediation, technological innovation...) both for the client itself (more informed, demanding...). Due to the specificity of the study variables in the equation, the more restricted the field is, the better it works and with greater security (Eco, 1977:39).

The conducted research proposes that one of the key factors that influence the complex equation of purchase intent is cultural significance. Shopping for souvenirs often reflects a desire from tourists to seek authentic experiences (Xie et al., 2012). A positive destination image, created through effective marketing, word-of-mouth, and online reviews, can lead to increased interest in purchasing souvenirs, that convey parts of the projected destination image expected by tourists (Mariné-Roig, 2011). Tourists are more likely to purchase souvenirs when they have a favorable impression of the destination and its culture, often seeking items that reflect the local culture and traditions of the destination they are visiting, suggesting a positive correlation between the interest in the host culture, and the intent of purchasing of souvenirs (S. Kim & Littrell, 2001).

Authenticity is also proposed as a key factor to increase purchasing intent (Lee et al., 2009). Authentic souvenirs are one kind of product of cultural exchange and interaction between producers' society and external audiences (Canavan, 2016; Graburn, 1976). Literature and the obtained results, indicate that tourists are attracted to souvenirs that reflect traditions, heritage, and identity of the destinations, as they offer a genuine connection to local culture and history. Souvenirs are perceived as reminders of a destination and express a personal relationship (Horner, 1993). Authentic souvenirs, such as traditional handicrafts, indigenous artwork, or locally produced goods, hold intrinsic value for tourists, as they provide a meaningful and authentic representation of the places they've experienced. This perception is consolidated by literature as authors like Elomba & Yun, 2017, Revilla & Dodd, 2003, reinforced the relevance of authenticity in purchase intent, and Asplet and Cooper, 2000, Schilar and Keskitalo, 2018, indicate authenticity as an effective competitive strategy for

souvenir suppliers. Storytelling is a common strategy to authenticate souvenirs (Schilar & Keskitalo, 2018; Soukhathammavong & Park, 2019), as place and culture reflection, the use of natural materials, traditional equipment, and handmade processing, are determinants of authenticity (Soukhathammavong & Park, 2019; Trinh et al., 2014). Souvenirs are also meaningful to artisans (Schilar & Keskitalo, 2018) because handicraft is a tourism-related business (Soukhathammavong & Park, 2019) and also known as one of the most important types of souvenirs (Swanson & Timothy, 2012), tourists are willing to pay a premium for souvenirs that offer a genuine and immersive cultural experience, recognizing the added value they provide in preserving memories and fostering cultural appreciation.

A key consideration from this research for maritime cruise tourists when evaluating the value for money of souvenirs is the quality of craftsmanship and materials. Perceived value is one of the leading indicators of tourists' intentions to purchase and is often used to explain and understand tourist behaviors (Woo et al., 2015). Understanding tourists' perceived value of tourism souvenirs is essential to improve the shopping experience and increase the competitive advantage (Lo, 2015). Souvenirs that are made by skilled crafters, may revive traditional objects to suit the new market (Hitchcock and Teague (2000), increasing the probability that tourists invest in well-made and durable products, as they offer long-term enjoyment and serve as lasting reminders of their journey. Whether it's a handcrafted piece of artwork, a locally sourced culinary delicacy, or a handmade textile, souvenirs that demonstrate superior quality and attention to detail are perceived as better value for money, as they provide greater satisfaction and longevity. Value for money refers to the perceived benefits or utility derived from a purchase relative to its cost. In the context of maritime cruise tourists' purchased souvenirs, value for money encompasses various factors, including quality, authenticity, personalization, and price. Thus, we propose that perceived value is a key factor in maintaining differentiation and a competitive advantage, aligned with Ravald, (1996).

One of the striking characteristics of this century is the high speed with which social, economic, political, and technological changes occur. This scenario has forced companies to seek a competitive advantage, to be more careful with quality and price, seeking to satisfy the needs and desires of consumers (Richers, 1984). High-quality souvenirs, whether in terms of materials, craftsmanship, or design, are, as referred, more likely to attract buyers, as tourists are often willing to pay a premium for souvenirs that are well-crafted and durable. Literature and the obtained results, propose that tourists seek souvenirs that offer a balance between these factors, ensuring that they receive maximum satisfaction and enjoyment from their purchases without overspending or compromising on quality, focusing their attention on everything that

is visible associated with the service, looking for evidence or clues about the nature and quality of the same (Berry, 1983).

While authenticity and quality are important considerations, price also plays a role in determining the value for money of souvenirs. For instance, taxes and fees may prove to be critical success factors in premium range products (Faggiani, 2010). Tourists are often mindful of their budgets and seek souvenirs that offer good value relative to their cost. Lin & Wang, (2012) argued that perceived value is reflected in reputation, quality, monetary value, and emotional response. Souvenirs that are reasonably priced and offer a good balance of quality, authenticity, and uniqueness are perceived as better value for money, as they provide maximum satisfaction and enjoyment without breaking the bank. Conversely, overpriced souvenirs that offer little in terms of quality or authenticity are likely to be perceived as poor value for money, as they fail to meet tourists' expectations and may leave them feeling disappointed or disillusioned. Many maritime cruise tourists have diverse budgets, and local vendors and retailers need to strike a balance between offering reasonably priced items and maintaining profit margins to cater to a wide range of customers.

For maritime cruise tourists, who often visit multiple ports of call and encounter a diverse array of cultural experiences, personalized souvenirs offer a way to connect more deeply with the places they've visited. Whether it's a handcrafted item or a custom-designed piece, personalized souvenirs become symbols of the tourist's personal journey and serve as enduring reminders of their maritime adventure. Personalization adds a layer of uniqueness and individuality to souvenirs, transforming them from generic trinkets into cherished keepsakes imbued with personal meaning and significance. It fosters a sense of emotional attachment and resonance with souvenirs, elevating them from mere commodities to cherished possessions with sentimental value. Tourists are more likely to form lasting memories and emotional connections with souvenirs that are uniquely tailored to their individual tastes and preferences. Companies seek various marketing techniques to attract consumers' attention, as they can choose stimuli that meet their needs and expectations (Nickels & Wood, 1997). By involving tourists in the creation process and empowering them to personalize their souvenirs, vendors can foster a sense of ownership and pride in their purchases, thereby enhancing their overall satisfaction and loyalty. Personalization enhances the perceived value of souvenirs, making them more desirable and worthy of investment. Tourists are willing to pay a premium for souvenirs that are customized to their specifications, recognizing the added value and exclusivity.

In a context of post-pandemic and great uncertainty generated by the war in Ukraine, cruise operators continued with an ambitious environmental agenda and, each year, the cruise fleet becomes more efficient and sustainable. The Port of Lisbon website reported that cruise lines are also committed to sailing toward a better future and, as part of that effort, are pursuing the goal of zero carbon cruising by 2050, supporting the long-term sustainability of the industry and creating positive travel experiences that inspire cruise travelers. Studies carried out reveal that more and more consumers are aware that the planet is losing its sustainability and are concerned about their health and survival of future generations. This includes products made from environmentally friendly materials, support for local artisans, and fair-trade practices (Ottman, 2011). Individuals with greater education, and consequently, with greater access to information, have a higher level of ecological knowledge and evaluate products and services while purchasing them. In this way, knowledge is recognized, in consumer research, as one of the characteristics that influences all phases in the purchasing decision process (Laroche et al., 2001). Consumers began to migrate to brands with green and organic products and are willing to change their lifestyle to the detriment of preserving the environment and may even pay more for an environmentally responsible product (Ottman, 2011) and Portuguese souvenirs can tap into this growing market segment.

Our research also indicates that accessibility (convenience) and portability are paramount factors influencing maritime cruise tourists' purchasing decisions when it comes to souvenirs. Unlike traditional vacations where tourists have the luxury of ample storage space in their accommodations, cruise ship cabins are typically more compact, offering limited storage options. As such, tourists must carefully consider the size, weight, and fragility of souvenirs to ensure they can be comfortably accommodated in their luggage or carry-ons. Another primary consideration we can take from this research that the practicality of transporting multiple souvenirs becomes a significant concern, especially for tourists with limited luggage space or weight restrictions imposed by airlines for post-cruise travel. Consequently, tourists prioritize souvenirs that are lightweight, compact, and durable, ensuring they can easily be packed and transported without risk of damage or exceeding weight limits. The ease of transportation also extends to the journey back home, where tourists must navigate airports, customs, and baggage claim. Bulky or cumbersome souvenirs can add unnecessary stress and logistical challenges to the return journey, detracting from the overall travel experience.

Since cruise-ship tourists often have limited time to explore each port of call, souvenir shops located near cruise terminals offer convenience and accessibility, allowing tourists to

easily browse and purchase souvenirs without straying too far from the ship. Souvenir shops located near major tourist attractions also hold appeal for maritime cruise tourists. These shops are strategically positioned in high-traffic areas frequented by tourists, such as historic landmarks, cultural sites, and shopping districts. The accessibility and convenience offered by souvenir shops near cruise terminals and major tourist attractions eliminates the need for additional travel or detours, allowing tourists to efficiently fulfill their souvenir shopping desires while immersing themselves in the local culture and attractions.

Analyzing the obtained primary data results and secondary data obtained by literature, we propose the aligned view that the purchase intent of maritime cruise tourists regarding Portuguese souvenirs is a multifaceted process influenced by cultural significance, authenticity, quality, memorabilia, price sensitivity money, ease of transportation, sustainability, and ethical Practices. These souvenirs play a crucial role in promoting the rich cultural heritage of Portugal and bolstering the local economy. As Portugal continues to attract maritime cruise tourists, understanding and catering to their purchase intent is essential for both businesses and the nation's overall tourism industry.

Conclusion

The purchase of Portuguese souvenirs by maritime cruise tourists has several positive impacts on both the Portuguese culture and economy, namely by the promotion of local artisans, boosting local businesses, cultural exchange, and sustainable practices. Many Portuguese souvenirs are handcrafted by local artisans. By buying these items, tourists support local talent and contribute to the preservation of traditional craftsmanship. Also, the revenue generated from souvenir sales helps local businesses, from small shops to larger enterprises, thrive and expand, thus contributing to the economic well-being of local communities.

Souvenirs act as ambassadors of Portuguese culture, spreading the essence of the nation to different parts of the world. These tangible reminders of Portugal's heritage foster a sense of cultural exchange between tourists and the Portuguese people. With the growing emphasis on sustainable tourism, the purchase of eco-friendly souvenirs encourages local producers to adopt environmentally responsible practices, benefiting both the environment and the local economy.

Understanding these factors is crucial for aiming to enhance the cruise tourism experience in Portugal. By catering to the preferences and desires of cruise tourists, Portugal can continue to be a sought-after destination for maritime travelers. Local businesses and policymakers should consider promoting authentic, culturally significant souvenirs, enhancing the quality of souvenirs to meet the expectations of cruise tourists, and fostering collaborations between local artisans and the cruise tourism industry will provide tourists more informative and immersive shopping experiences.

The present research may generalize the preferences of maritime cruise tourists regarding Portuguese souvenirs, as individual preferences can vary widely. It may overlook cultural nuances and differences in tourists' preferences based on their cultural backgrounds and does not consider potential changes in tourism trends or consumer behavior beyond the current timeframe, potentially limiting its relevance in the future. Future research could develop these variables, contemplating interviews with maritime cruise tourists, to gain deeper insights into their purchase intent and preferences.

Amidst a vast ocean of experiences, each Portuguese souvenir purchased by maritime cruise tourists is not just a token of their journey, but a celebration of culture heritage and a small treasure that anchors memories and sails of cultural discovery.

Disclosure statement

The authors report there are no competing interests to declare.

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Webgraphy

1. AHRESP - Associação Hotelaria restauração E Similares de Portugal in http://www.ahresp.com/ (05/12/2023)
2. APRAM - Portos Da Madeira – (14/12/2023)
3. Cruzeiros - Porto de Lisboa – (29/11/2023)
4. OCDE – http://stats.oecd.org/glossary/detail.asp?ID=399 (06/01/2024

Attachment | Survey questionnaire

Introduction

1. Welcome and introduction to the survey.
2. Explanation of the purpose of the survey.

Demographic Information

3. Age
4. Gender
5. Nationality
6. Cruise experience (first-time cruiser, occasional cruiser, frequent cruiser)

Cruise Experience

7. Number of cruises taken
8. Previous cruise destinations
9. Purpose of the cruise (relaxation, exploration, etc.)

Portuguese Souvenirs Awareness

10. Have you heard of or seen Portuguese souvenirs before?

Purchase Intent

11. Do you plan to purchase Portuguese souvenirs during this cruise?
12. What factors influence your purchase intent? (quality, price, personalization, etc.)

Preferred Souvenirs

13. What types of Portuguese souvenirs are you interested in? (E.g. ceramics, textiles, food, etc.)
14. Do you prioritize ecofriendly souvenirs?

Shopping Behavior

15. Where do you plan to purchase souvenirs (onshore shops, onboard the cruise, local markets)?
16. How much are you willing to spend on souvenirs during this cruise?
17. Do you plan to buy souvenirs as gifts for others?

Influence of Recommendations

18. Are you more likely to purchase souvenirs if recommended by cruise staff or fellow passengers?

Online vs. Offline Shopping

19. Do you plan to research or purchase souvenirs online during the cruise?

Cruise Experience and Souvenirs

20. Do you believe portability can critically enhance the appeal of Portuguese souvenirs?

Accessibility and Convenience

21. Will you favor purchasing souvenirs Souvenir shops located near the cruise terminals and major tourist attractions?

- Yes 73%
- No 27%

22. What enhances your overall shopping experience?

Additional Comments

23. Any additional thoughts or comments about Portuguese souvenirs and your purchase intent?

Closing:

24. Thank the participants and ask for any final comments.

25. Provide contact information for further questions or feedback.