

Key determinants of customer satisfaction in tourism and hospitality

Tese de Doutoramento

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Doutoramento em

Ciências Económicas e Empresariais



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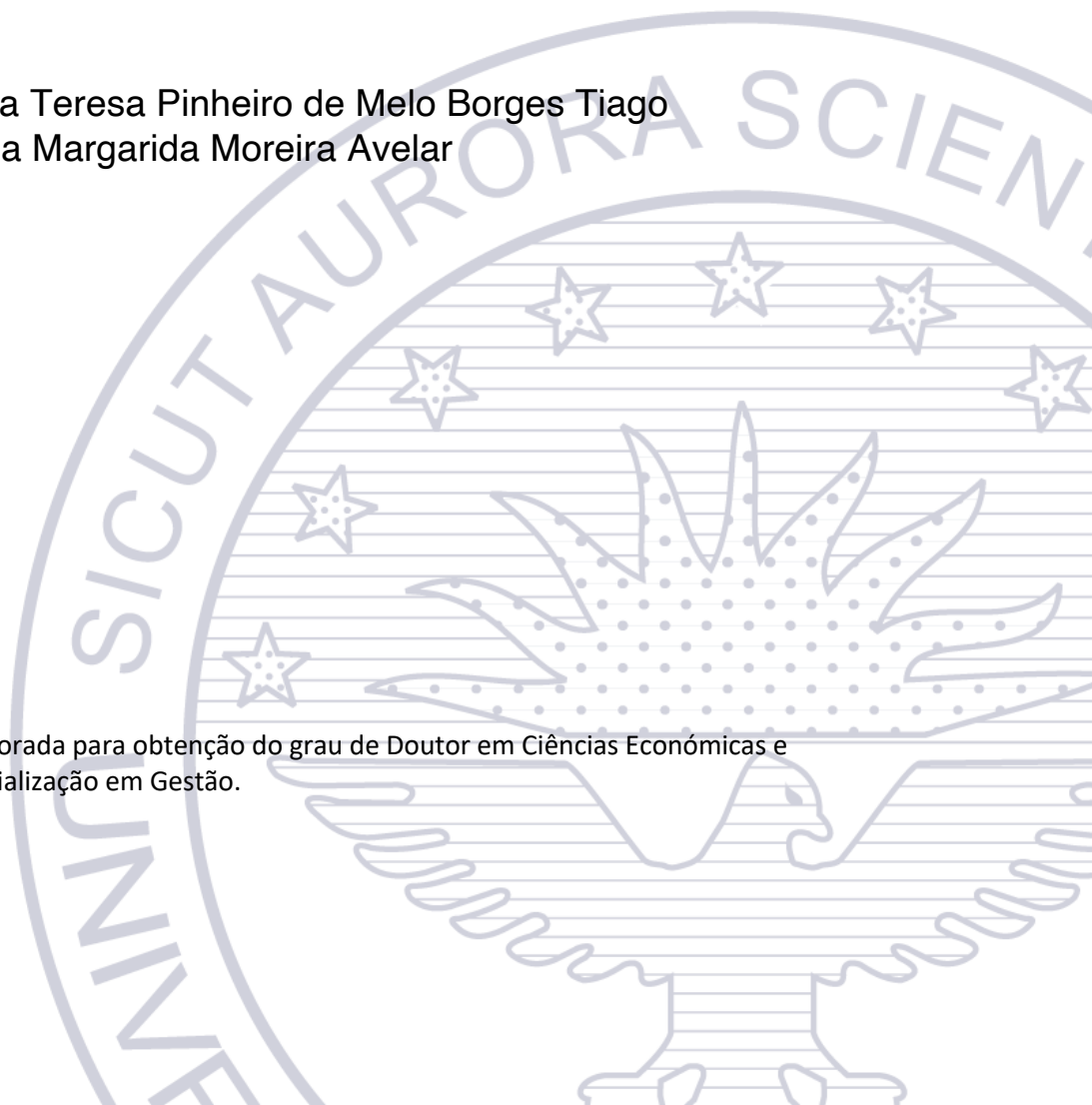
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Tese especialmente elaborada para obtenção do grau de Doutor em Ciências Económicas e Empresariais, com especialização em Gestão.



RESUMO

Esta investigação analisa o impacto da combinação entre inovação e sustentabilidade na satisfação dos clientes no turismo, uma indústria em constante transformação. Estudos anteriores tendem a considerar estes fatores de forma isolada. Assim, recorreu-se a uma investigação multi-métodos, composta por quatro estudos: uma análise bibliométrica, entrevistas a gestores do setor, um estudo de métodos mistos com turistas e um inquérito quantitativo em duas fases dirigido a hóspedes de hotéis. Os resultados destes estudos demonstram que tanto a inovação como as iniciativas de sustentabilidade podem potenciar a satisfação, sobretudo se implementadas em conjunto e de forma alinhada com as preferências dos clientes. Este impacto é mais expressivo através da melhoria da perceção de qualidade, um mediador central que traduz a inovação e a sustentabilidade em maior satisfação. Nem todas as inovações são valorizadas da mesma forma: melhorias diretamente experienciadas pelos clientes têm um impacto mais forte na qualidade percebida e na satisfação, comparativamente a alterações não visíveis. Além disso, inovar sem ter em consideração as necessidades dos clientes pode ter efeitos indesejados, ao gerar frustração. A análise identificou ainda segmentos distintos de turistas com diferentes preferências como os “entusiastas da inovação”, mais recetivos a ofertas tecnológicas e sustentáveis, que contrastam com os “fiéis à qualidade”, que privilegiam consistência e mostram maior resistência a mudanças disruptivas. Estes resultados evidenciam a necessidade de adaptar as estratégias de inovação e sustentabilidade aos perfis e expectativas dos clientes, em vez de optar por soluções indiferenciadas. Ao propor um quadro conceptual integrador que articula a inovação com medidas sustentáveis, esta investigação demonstra que o alinhamento de novas ofertas com as preferências e o contexto dos clientes gera melhorias mais expressivas na sua satisfação. Ao mesmo tempo, a melhoria da satisfação conduz a resultados comportamentais desejáveis, como maior fidelização, recomendações positivas e uma maior disposição para pagar mais. Do ponto de vista prático, a investigação evidencia que as empresas no setor do turismo e hotelaria podem desenvolver uma vantagem competitiva ao combinar a inovação em serviços com iniciativas de sustentabilidade, alinhadas com as preferências dos segmentos-alvo.

Palavras-chave: Hotelaria; Inovação; Satisfação do cliente; Sustentabilidade; Turismo

ABSTRACT

This investigation examines the impact of combining innovation and sustainability on customer satisfaction in tourism — an industry undergoing continual transformation. Prior studies tend to consider these factors separately. To address this, we employed a multi-method research design comprising four studies: a bibliometric analysis, interviews with industry managers, a mixed-methods study with tourists, and a two-phase quantitative survey of hotel guests. Findings from these studies demonstrate that both innovation and sustainability initiatives can enhance satisfaction, particularly when they are implemented together and aligned with customer preferences. This effect operates largely through improved perceived quality, a central mediator translating innovation and sustainability into higher satisfaction. Not all innovations are valued equally: improvements that are directly experienced by customers have a stronger impact on perceived quality and satisfaction than non-visible changes. Moreover, innovating without considering customer needs can have undesirable effects by causing frustration. The analysis also identified distinct segments of tourists with different preferences: “innovation enthusiasts,” who are more receptive to technological and sustainable offerings, and “quality loyalists,” who prioritize consistency and show greater resistance to disruptive changes. These results highlight the need to tailor innovation and sustainability strategies to customer profiles and expectations rather than opting for undifferentiated solutions. By proposing an integrative conceptual framework that links innovation with sustainable measures, this investigation demonstrates that aligning new offerings with customers’ preferences and contexts produces more significant improvements in satisfaction. In turn, higher satisfaction leads to desirable behavioral outcomes, such as greater loyalty, positive recommendations, and a higher willingness to pay. From a practical standpoint, the research shows that tourism and hospitality firms can develop a competitive advantage by advancing service innovation in tandem with sustainability initiatives in ways that are aligned with the preferences of their target segments.

Keywords: Customer satisfaction; Hospitality; Innovation; Sustainability; Tourism

DEDICATION

To my parents, who carried the weight so I could go further.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This doctoral journey would not have been possible without the support, guidance, and encouragement of many individuals and institutions.

First and foremost, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my supervisors, Professors Teresa Borges Tiago, Flávio Tiago, and Sónia Avelar, for their trust, thoughtful guidance, and constant intellectual challenge. Their mentorship not only shaped this thesis but also helped mold the researcher and person I have become. I am also grateful to my co-authors, whose collaboration strengthened the scientific value of this work.

To the University of the Azores, thank you for opening your doors and offering me a place where I could grow and thrive. To the School of Business and Economics, and to its President, Professor João Teixeira, I am grateful for the opportunities and the confidence in my work. To all faculty members who inspire me, my sincere appreciation. To all the students I had the privilege of teaching, thank you. You constantly pushed me to learn more than I could have imagined.

To my friends Isa and Rui, thank you for being a constant source of inspiration. Your dedication to your own growth, both personal and academic, has motivated me more than you may know. To Adriana, Fabiana, and Maria João — your presence through life's many stages has meant more than I can express. To Ana and Cláudia, friends from my school years, thank you for your early support. A heartfelt tribute goes to my first and forever teacher, Paula Abreu, who taught me in the very first grade and whose example instilled in me a lifelong respect for education and its transformative power.

To my family — near and far — thank you for being my home, no matter the distance. To the memory of my beloved grandparents, whose warmth and love continue to guide me — your absence is felt every day, yet your presence endures in all that I do.

To my partner Tiago, thank you for your patience, your constancy, and your unwavering belief in me. Your presence has sustained me more than words can say.

Finally, to my parents, Carlos and Alice, thank you for everything. Your quiet sacrifices, perseverance, and belief — even when uncertain — gave me the foundation to walk this path. This achievement is, above all, yours.

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