

Consumerism perception in Portugal at Christmas time

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Abstract

The research analyzes the estimated consumption at Christmas time in Portugal. Christmas is a religious holiday and also one of the most consumerist and profitable occasions in Christian countries, which may be considered a contradiction. A quantitative methodology based on a questionnaire was used, where participants answered a set of sociodemographic questions and indicated with whom they would spend the next Christmas. They also indicated the estimated amount they will spend on gifts and consumer goods. The sample consists of 1077 Portuguese individuals over 18 years old. The results show that Portuguese individuals expect to spend more on gifts than on other consumer goods. In addition, the estimated consumption over the Christmas holidays increases with age, the number of people in the household, level of education, and monthly household income. Individuals who estimate spending more are men, religious people, individuals who have a direct family member under the age of 16, married people (or those with a long-term partner). The study helps to understand the motivations of consumption at Christmas time and its importance in economic development. Finally, the research intends to contribute to unravel the spirit of Christmas and expose the symbolism present in society's social and cultural expressions.

KEYWORDS: Christmas. Consumption. Materialism. Family Affectivity. Christmas Market.

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Percepção do consumismo dos portugueses na época de Natal

Resumo

A presente investigação tem como objetivo analisar o consumo estimado pelos portugueses na época de Natal. O Natal transporta em si uma contradição, por ser considerado um feriado religioso mas também uma das ocasiões mais consumistas e lucrativas para o mundo cristão. Utilizou-se uma metodologia quantitativa baseada num questionário, onde os inquiridos, para além de responderem a um conjunto de questões de índole sociodemográfica, indicaram com quem passariam a festividade. Indicaram também o valor a gastar em presentes para oferecer e em bens de consumo na época de Natal. A amostra é constituída por 1.077 indivíduos portugueses, maiores de 18 anos. Os resultados demonstram que esses indivíduos estimam gastar mais em presentes para oferecer do que em bens de consumo. Verifica-se também que o consumo estimado para essa época do ano aumenta com a idade, com o número de elementos do agregado familiar, com o nível de escolaridade e com o rendimento mensal do agregado familiar. Os indivíduos que estimam gastar mais na época de Natal são: homens; os que têm religião; os que possuem familiar direto com menos de 16 anos; e os que são casados ou vivem em união de fato. O estudo ajuda a perceber as motivações do consumo na época natalina e a sua importância no desenvolvimento económico. Espera-se que este estudo venha a contribuir para desvendar o espírito de Natal e expor o simbolismo presente nas variadas manifestações sociais e culturais da sociedade.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Natal. Consumo. Materialismo. Afetividade familiar. Mercado de Natal.

Percepción del consumismo portugués en la temporada navideña

Resumen

La presente investigación tiene como objetivo analizar el consumo estimado por los portugueses en Navidad. La Navidad conlleva una contradicción, ya que es al mismo tiempo una fiesta religiosa y una de las ocasiones más consumistas y rentables para el mundo cristiano. Se utilizó una metodología cuantitativa basada en un cuestionario, en el que los encuestados además de responder un conjunto de preguntas de carácter sociodemográfico e indicar con quién pasarían la próxima Navidad, también informaron la cantidad estimada que gastarían en regalos y en bienes de consumo en la época navideña. La muestra constó de 1 077 individuos portugueses mayores de 18 años. Los resultados demostraron que los portugueses estiman gastar más en regalos que en bienes de consumo. También se verificó que el consumo estimado para esa época aumenta con la edad, con el número de miembros de la familia, con el nivel de educación y con el ingreso mensual del hogar. Las personas que estiman gastar más en Navidad son: hombres; los que tienen religión; los que tienen un familiar directo menor de 16 años; y los casados o parejas de hecho. El estudio ayuda a comprender las motivaciones del consumo en Navidad y su importancia en el desarrollo económico. Se espera que este estudio contribuya a desvelar el espíritu navideño y exponer el simbolismo presente en las variadas manifestaciones sociales y culturales de la sociedad.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Navidad. Consumo. Materialismo. Afectividad familiar. Mercado navideño.

INTRODUCTION

Christmas is the feast of family, children, and consumerism. Today there is a religious Christmas and a consumerist Christmas, although religion rejects materialism. Christmas is constituted of a variety of practices and differentiated rituals between cultures. In the case of Portugal, the celebration involves a family feast, exchange of gifts, sending messages, special decorations typical of this time of year, among other traditions. It is perceived that the date has strong symbolism and has been used as a great opportunity for increasing demand for goods and services.

Although it is par excellence the festivity of family, children, friends, generosity, relaxing and enjoying the atmosphere of Christmas, some take the opportunity to travel to paradisiacal places, in a clear cut from the daily routine.

However, according to Cruz (2013), the birth of Jesus divides the history of the world and men in two parts: the before and the after. Nowadays, Christmas is turning into a laic feast, where sometimes the family does not even get together. There is a growing disappearance of religion (CRUZ, 2013).

The date of q1December 25 is coincident with the winter solstice in the Roman calendar and is justified by the syncretism between Christianity and the solar cults of Mithras and the Sun Invictus in the Roman Empire (ROQUE, 2013). Thus, Cruz (2013) understands that Christian Christmas has baptized a pagan feast over time, and spirituality and worldliness have always been associated.

In the literature, there are not many studies related to Christmas; for instance, there is a lack of studies relating Christmas to the area of administration. Consumption is related, in economic terms, to household disposable income. This income, in Portugal, according to Pordata (2020), increased from 2014 (€29 245,5) to 2018 (€33 196,0) but remains below the European average. Thus, the present study is considered relevant.

This article aims to analyze the consumption estimated by the Portuguese at Christmas time. To achieve this goal, in addition to this introduction, the article then presents a literature review. In the third section, the methodology is revealed, in which the population and sample are presented, as well as the data collection instruments, and the procedures considered in carrying out the research work. In the fourth section, the results and their discussion are presented. Consumption and indebtedness at Christmas time are also analyzed, and research hypotheses are tested. At the end of the article, the conclusions are presented.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The celebration of Christmas carries a paradox, because it is considered both a prominent religious holiday and one of the most profitable occasions for the Christian world. Some include the non-Christian world, since, thanks to the influence of American hegemony and the popularity of the mythical figure of Santa Claus, the date also provides an increase in sales in countries where Christianity is not the main religion (BATINGA, PINTO and RESENDE, 2017). Robinot, Ertz and Durit (2017) say that the Christmas atmosphere leads people to consume more at this stage of the year and that they need to change their attitude to behave rationally and responsibly.

In the opinion of Clarke (2007), Christmas assumed worldwide relevance in terms of consumption, becoming a time when people spend money more freely, spontaneously, and generously in aspects related to its preparation and enjoyment.

It is recognized that materialism and consumerism intensify at this time of year, which is a contrast with the Christmas spirit, since the Christian religion rejects materialism (DEACY, 2016). This is visible during Christmas time as shopping centers and street shops increase their sales. According to Batinga, Pinto and Resende (2017), materialism is understood as the importance that the consumer attaches to worldly possessions, which confer status, distinction, and power. Consumerism is the act of consuming, sometimes unbridled.

Christmas frames us as religious subjects because it has been so widespread in America (BURROUGHES, 2019). Today, religious capitalism exists, and Christmas is more than a Christian holiday, it is a secular consumerist holiday. The favorite aspects of Christmas are family reunions, traditions, feasts, and food. Christmas serves some functions, such as teaching children the importance of donating, encouraging compassion, and love for others.

For Ribeiro (2018), the Christian religion is seen as a way of life that can invert the chaotic picture of consumerist culture. The author questions whether it is the consumerist culture that is immersed in Christianity, or whether it is Christianity that is immersed in a consumerist culture. Schuster, Dias and Battistella (2016) understand that, in consumerism, although there are differences in gender level, they are not significant, that is, the measurement model does not detect them. Simões and Amaral (2018) conclude that the higher the level of education, the higher the income of families, and the greater the trend for consumption. They say that investing in education is a step to eradicate inequalities and improve people's living conditions. It is normal in higher-income households to have a greater tendency to consume (BARR, 2020).

Miller (2017) says that Christmas is a feast that families live intensely. It is a tradition to offer gifts to family and friends. People offer gifts because gifts allow them to express their identity in a strong way (ROBINOT, ERTZ and DURIT, 2017). Dyble, Van Leeuwen and Dunbar (2015) concluded that at Christmas respondents bought gifts of greater value for close family members and for people from their social relationships. Although men and women spend similar amounts on gifts for relatives and people in close social relationships, there is a big difference in what is spent on friends and distant social relationships between genders, as women spend significantly more. Ganassali (2019) concluded that children and young people live Christmas intensely. In the letters, they write to Santa Claus there are four types of messages: gourmet (reflect the desire to ask for a single gift, usually expensive); sweet tooth; toys; and branded sweets.

According to a study by Deloitte (2018), the main factors that encourage spending during the Christmas festivities are promotions and the fact that Europeans, in general, want to have fun without thinking about the economic situation. This corporation also mentions that Portugal is one of the countries in Europe that most claim to spend from its Christmas and New Year budget, on special dates such as the Black Friday. The study also states that chocolates and books are at the top of the gifts in Portugal, but there are gender differences (men receive more food and drinks, and women receive more perfumes). Also, according to the study, the Portuguese favor shopping in shopping centers, followed by, in order of preference, hypermarkets or supermarkets, street stores, specialized retailers, outlets, and

luxury stores. The Portuguese prefer to make payments in cash, by debit card, and a small part uses the credit card.

According to Tavares, Pacheco and Sousa (2014), the demand for shopping centers is related to seven factors: advertising; levels of consumerism; food court; cinema; hygiene and safety of the shopping center; access to technology products and goods; and the existence of a hypermarket in the shopping center.

According to another study by Deloitte (2019), the online market has been growing in Portugal and is expected to represent 25% of Christmas shopping. Despite this growing trend, Portuguese families continue to choose physical stores as their preferred places to buy gifts due to personalized customer service, return policies and greater confidence in the used payment method. Still in this study, it is mentioned that the first half of December is the elected period for Christmas shopping, with a tendency to anticipate to November, having an impact on these purchases the Black Friday period.

Cunha, Tavares and Durão (2019) conclude that the main attribute of social networks is proximity to the customer and the permanent contact that enhances the relationship between the company and consumers. Brands use social networks as privileged B2C communication platforms, valuing the rapid transmission of messages and the ease of interacting and receiving feedback from fans and consumers.

Brida, Meleddu and Tokarchuk (2017) report that the main reasons for celebrating Christmas are spending time with family and friends, relaxing, and enjoying the Christmas atmosphere. They also understand that Christmas has the potential to positively influence culture, economic development, and encourage tourism in a low season. This Christmas tourism market creates, in addition to economic impacts, a value of knowledge for the host community, which benefits from the cultural exchange brought by tourists and urban revitalization during the low season.

Brida, Disegna and Osti (2013), when studying three tourist markets in the Christmas period in northern Italy, concluded that the purpose of the trip, the region of origin, the perception of the event, the length of the stay, and age are significant factors that influence the propensity for consumption and the amount of money spent during visits.

Based on the defined objectives and the literature review carried out in the present study, the research hypotheses listed below were formulated, accompanied by the respective theoretical foundation that will be tested in the empirical part.

- Hypothesis 1: The estimate of the amount to be spent on gifts to offer is higher than the estimated amount to be spent on consumer goods at Christmas time.
- Studies by Deloitte in 2018 and 2019 concluded that Portuguese and Europeans estimate to spend more on gifts compared to food goods.
- Hypothesis 2: There is a positive relationship between age and estimated consumption for Christmas time.

Robinot, Ertz and Durif (2017) record that at Christmas time people consume more, and it is naturally expected that the higher the age and disposable income, the more consumption increases.

- Hypothesis 3: There is a positive relationship between the number of household members and the estimated consumption for Christmas time.
- According to Miller (2017), families live Christmas intensely, and consumption is expected to increase in households with more elements.
- Hypothesis 4: There is a positive relationship between schooling levels and estimated consumption for Christmas time.
- Simões and Amaral (2018) mention that the higher the schooling, the higher the family income will tend to be, and the greater the tendency to consumption.
- Hypothesis 5: There is a positive relationship between the monthly income of the household and the estimated consumption for Christmas time.
- Barr (2020) reports that households with higher incomes tend to have a higher consumption.
- Hypothesis 6: There are differences in estimated consumption at Christmas time between men and women.
- Schuster, Dias and Battistella (2016) record that, although there are differences in consumption concerning gender, they are not statistically significant.
- Hypothesis 7: Individuals who have direct family members under the age of 16 estimate spending more at Christmas time.
- Ganassali (2019) concluded that children and young people live Christmas intensely, so families with children and young people are expected to spend more on Christmas.
- Hypothesis 8: There are differences in estimated consumption at Christmas time between the different marital status.

Dyble, Leeuwen and Bunbar (2018) concluded that at Christmas people buy gifts of greater value for close family members and individuals from their close social relationships.

- Hypothesis 9: There are differences in estimated consumption at Christmas time between individuals of the Christian religion, atheists, and those of other religions.
- Ribeiro (2018) states that Christian culture is linked (today becoming confused) with consumerism.
- Hypothesis 10: There are differences in consumption at Christmas time between the various regions of Portugal.
- Studies carried out by the Deloitte in 2018 and 2019 report that there are differences in consumption patterns in the various regions of Portugal (DELOITTE, 2018, 2019).

METHODOLOGY

Population and sample

The target population of the present study is Portuguese over 18 years old. To carry out the data collection, the non-random method of sampling was used for convenience due to the ease of access to the sample element and the low associated cost.

After the application of the questionnaires, there were only considered for analysis 1 077 individuals with ages between 18 and 73 years, with an average of approximately 36 years

($SD = 12,37$). Most individuals are female (56,3%, $n = 606$). Regarding the level of education, 47,5% ($n = 512$) have a degree, 25,6% ($n = 276$) have a 12th year, 22,5% ($n = 242$) have a master's or doctorate, and 4,4% ($n = 47$) have up to the 9th year. As for marital status, 46,1% ($n = 496$) are single individuals, 44,9% ($n = 484$) are married or live in a common-law marriage, and the remaining 9% ($n = 97$) are separated, divorced, or widowed.

The number of household elements ranges from 1 to 9, with an average of approximately 3 elements ($SD = 1,31$), and most have no direct family members under the age of 16 (60,4%, $n = 651$). Regarding the monthly income of the household, 41,1% ($n = 443$) earn from €1 001 to €2 000, 24% ($n = 258$) earn between €2 001 and €3 000, 17,5% ($n = 189$) earn more than €3 000, and 17,4% ($n = 187$) earn up to €1 000.

Regarding religion, 87,1% ($n = 938$) are Christians, 9,6% ($n = 103$) indicated that they are atheists and 3,3% ($n = 136$) say that they are of another religion.

The different districts of Portugal were grouped into five regions, of which 27,6% ($n = 297$) are from the North region (Braga, Bragança, Porto, Viana do Castelo and Vila Real), 44,8% ($n = 482$) are from the Center region (Aveiro, Castelo Branco, Coimbra, Guarda, Leiria and Viseu), 9,6% ($n = 103$) are from the Lisbon region (Lisboa and Setúbal), 15,2% ($n = 164$) are from the Alentejo region (Beja, Évora, Portalegre and Santarém) and 2,9% ($n = 31$) are from the Algarve region (Faro).

The overwhelming majority of individuals (96,3%, $n = 1 037$) indicate that they spend Christmas with their family, 12 (1,1%) indicate spending Christmas alone, 11 (1%) with friends, 11 (1%) with co-workers, 3 (0,3%) with family and friends, 2 (0,2%) with neighbors and 1 (0,1%) does not celebrate Christmas.

Data collection instruments

The methodology used in the present investigation is quantitative, and the instrument used is a questionnaire survey, consisting of four parts. In the first part, respondents indicate with whom they will spend Christmas in 2019 and whether or not they have dependent family members under the age of 16. The second part asks respondents about the estimated amount to be spent on gifts to offer and consumer goods at Christmas 2019. The third part analyzes the importance attributed to the places of purchase, aspects related to promotions (promotions and discounts, service, payment options, easy access to the store and prize draws) and the different festive moments of the Christmas season: Christmas Eve (from the 24th to the 25th of December), Christmas Day (December 25), New Year's Eve (December 31st to January 1st) and Kings Day (January 6). The fourth and final part analyses the sociodemographic profile of the respondents: gender, age, level of education, marital status, religion, number of household elements, monthly household income and district of residence.

PROCEDURES

The questionnaires were applied to Portuguese individuals over 18 years of age, between the 1st and 23rd of December 2019. They were presented to the participants with a short introductory summary defining the objectives of the study and ensuring the anonymity and confidentiality of the provided information.

To perform data analysis, the IBM SPSS Statistics 25 software was used, and descriptive statistical techniques were used to detail the sample and to perform a descriptive analysis of some variables that characterize the estimated consumption for the Christmas time.

The statistical inference technique was used to compare means between groups and to study the relationship between variables. For the analysis of the means differences between the estimated amount to be spent on gifts to offer and the estimated amount to be spent on consumer goods, the paired samples Student's t-test was used. For the analysis of the differences in means between independent groups, the Student's t-test or the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were applied, depending on whether the comparison established was between two or three groups. Whenever significant differences were found from ANOVA, the Tukey's multiple comparison test was used (HAIR, BLACK, BABI et al., 2014; MARÔCO, 2018; PESTANA and GAGEIRO, 2014).

To calculate the size of the effect of the differences of the means of the groups, Cohen's square eta was used, which represents the proportion of variation of the dependent variable that is explained by the independent variable. According to Pallant (2013), Cohen's square eta values can be classified as: 0,01 (small effect), 0,06 (moderate effect) and 0,14 (large effect).

To verify the existence of correlations between the variables, Pearson and Spearman's correlation was used. In general, in social and human sciences, the magnitude of correlations is considered as: i) weak, when ; ii) moderate, when ; iii) strong, when ; and iv) very strong, when (MARÔCO, 2018).

It is emphasized that the statistical assumptions for the application of the different tests were previously analyzed, which allowed their application with confidence.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Consumption and indebtedness at Christmas time

The 1 077 respondents who answered the questionnaire estimated to spend, on average, approximately €418 ($SD = 409,47$) at Christmas time, where it is estimated that €249 ($SD = 260,82$) on average are spent on gifts to offer and €169 ($SD = 199,68$) are spent on consumer goods. The values obtained in this study are slightly higher than those obtained in the Christmas study conducted with the participation of 786 Portuguese by Deloitte, in 2019, where each Portuguese family planned to spend an average of €387 (€9 more than in the Christmas study of the same corporation for 2018) and is below the European average, which is €461 (DELOITTE, 2018, 2019).

To examine if the 1 077 respondents become indebted at Christmas time, the estimated consumption was compared with the monthly household income. Table 1 shows the average consumption estimated by monthly household income, verifying that the estimated average consumption is within the monthly income of the household, showing no evidence of indebtedness. Carrying out a more detailed analysis, it was found that only 3 (0,3%) individuals present evidence for indebtedness, as they estimate spending more at Christmas time than the monthly income of the household. It should be noted that respondents do not attach much importance to payment options in instalments ($M = 1,96$, $SD = 1,22$).

TABLE 1

Estimated average consumption for the Christmas time by household monthly income

		Gifts	Goods	Total
Up to €1 000 (<i>n</i> = 187)	<i>M</i>	134,52	112,14	246,66
	<i>SD</i>	105,78	135,33	207,18
From €1 001 to €2 000 (<i>n</i> = 443)	<i>M</i>	197,71	133,70	331,41
	<i>SD</i>	146,94	135,78	239,63
From €2 001 to €3 000 (<i>n</i> = 258)	<i>M</i>	299,26	190,87	490,14
	<i>SD</i>	276,93	183,36	410,68
More than €3 000 (<i>n</i> = 189)	<i>M</i>	413,39	279,10	692,48
	<i>SD</i>	415,68	319,03	649,50

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

In the sample under study, it appears that individuals attach great importance to the reduction of prices ($M = 3,90$, $SD = 1,19$), service ($M = 3,87$, $SD = 1,10$), discount on spot price ($M = 3,76$, $SD = 1,24$), and easy access to the store ($M = 3,70$, $SD = 1,23$).

As far as places of purchase are concerned, individuals prefer street shops close to their residence ($M = 3,67$, $SD = 1,17$), commercial centers or shopping ($M = 3,55$, $SD = 1,23$) and supermarkets ($M = 3,40$, $SD = 1,19$). Individuals attribute lower levels of importance to online stores via computer ($M = 2,92$, $SD = 1,35$) and to m-commerce via smartphone or tablet ($M = 2,62$, $SD = 1,31$). This is in line with the studies carried out by the Deloitte (2019).

Test hypotheses

By applying the *Student's* t-test for paired samples, it was found that the estimated amount to be spent on gifts to offer differs statistically from the estimated amount to be spent on consumer goods at Christmas time ($t(1,076) = 11,93$, $p < 0,001$). The magnitude of the mean differences has a large effect size ($= 0,12$). Thus, it can be inferred that Portuguese individuals estimate to spend more on gifts to offer ($M = 248,92$, $SD = 260,82$) than in consumer goods ($M = 169,17$, $SD = 199,68$), which empirically supports Hypothesis 1, corroborating the results of studies conducted in Portugal (Deloitte, 2018, 2019). It is also noted that, from Pearson's correlation, there is a positive and statistically significant correlation between the estimated amount to be spent on gifts to offer and the amount to be spent on consumer goods ($r = 0,57$, $p < 0,001$), being the correlation classified as strong, which means that the higher the estimated amount to be spent on gifts to offer, the higher the estimated amount to be spent on consumer goods. All this confirms that at Christmas, people consume more (ROBINOT, ERTZ and DURIT, 2017), which makes people spend freely and spontaneously at this time of year (CLARKE, 2007).

The application of Pearson's correlation (Table 2) shows that there is a statistically significant and positive relationship of moderate magnitude between age and estimated consumption value for the Christmas time ($p < 0,001$) and of weak magnitude between the number of household elements and the estimated consumption value for the Christmas time ($p < 0,05$). According to Spearman's correlation application (Table 2), it is verified that there is a statistically significant and positive relationship of weak magnitude between educational levels and the estimated consumption value for the Christmas time ($p < 0,001$) and of moderate magnitude between monthly household incomes and the estimated consumption value for the Christmas time ($p < 0,001$). Thus, it can be inferred that the estimated consumption during Christmas time increases with age, with the number of elements of the household, with the level of education, and with the monthly income of the household. This empirically supports Hypotheses 2, 3, 4 e 5, corroborating the results of the studies of Robinot, Ertz and Durif (2017), who claim that at Christmas time consumption is higher; Miller (2017), who considers that people live Christmas intensely, which may increase consumption in households with more elements; and Simões and Amaral (2018), who concluded that individuals with higher education have a higher tendency to consume, resulting in a higher income (BARR, 2020).

TABLE 2
Pearson and Spearman correlation

Consumption	Pearson Correlation		Spearman Correlation	
	Age	Number of household elements	Education level	Monthly household income
Gifts	0,26***	0,06*	0,20***	0,37***
Goods	0,26***	0,07*	0,12***	0,28***
Total	0,30***	0,07*	0,19***	0,37***

Note: *** $p < 0,001$, * $p < 0,05$.

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

Table 3 presents data related to the application of Student's t-test for independent samples to compare the estimated consumption between men and women, verifying the existence of statistically significant differences ($p < 0,05$). Men estimate to spend more on Christmas time, which empirically supports Hypothesis 6, corroborating the results of the study of Schuster et al. (2016), who found differences in consumption at the gender level, although not significant. It should be noted that in this study, although the differences are statistically significant, the magnitude of the mean differences, according to Pallant (2013), has a small effect size ($= 0,01$).

TABLE 3
Comparison of estimated consumption at Christmas time between men and women

Consumption	Gender				Test <i>t</i>	Effect size
	Male (<i>n</i> = 471)		Female (<i>n</i> = 606)			
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
Gifts	272,41	302,27	230,66	221,89	2,52*	0,01
Goods	196,52	241,46	147,90	156,80	3,79***	0,01
Total	468,94	485,07	378,56	334,41	3,46**	0,01

Note: *** $p < 0,001$, ** $p < 0,01$, * $p < 0,05$.

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

From Table 4, it is concluded that there are statistically significant differences in estimated consumption at Christmas time between individuals who have a direct family member under the age of 16 and those without ($p < 0,01$). Individuals who have a direct family member under the age of 16 are those who estimate spending more at Christmas time, which is in line with the study of Dyble, Van Leeuwen e Dunbar (2015), who consider that at Christmas, people buy gifts of greater value for close family members and individuals from their social relationships. This is expected, according to Ganassali (2019), because children and young people live Christmas intensely, which makes families with children and young people (under 16) spend more at this time of year. Thus, Hypothesis 7 is empirically supported. However, the magnitude of the mean differences, according to Pallant (2013), has a small effect size.

TABLE 4
Comparison of estimated consumption at Christmas time between those who have or not a direct family member under the age of 16

Consumption	Have a direct family member under 16 years				Test <i>t</i>	Effect size
	No (<i>n</i> = 651)		Yes (<i>n</i> = 426)			
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
Gifts	219,48	205,61	293,91	322,81	-4,23***	0,02
Goods	152,86	167,08	194,09	239,21	-3,10**	0,01
Total	372,33	322,79	488,00	506,98	-4,19***	0,02

Note: *** $p < 0,001$, ** $p < 0,01$.

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

The Levene's test did not reveal the homogeneity of variances, which led to the application of the Welch's test (Table 5), and there were significant differences in estimated consumption at Christmas time between the different marital status ($p < 0,001$). Through the Games-Howell's multiple comparison test, significant differences were found between single and married or living in a common-law marriage individuals ($p < 0,001$) and between single and separated, divorced, or widowed individuals ($p < 0,01$). Married individuals or those who live in a common-law marriage are the ones who estimate spending the most at Christmas time. Thus, this empirically

supports the Hypothesis 8, which is what would be expected, because, according to the results of the study of Dyble, Leeuwen and Bunbar (2018), at Christmas people buy gifts of greater value for close family members and individuals from their close social relationships.

TABLE 5
Comparison of estimated consumption at Christmas time between different marital status

Consumption	Marital status						Welch's Test
	Singles (n = 496)		Married and de facto union (n = 484)		Separated, divorced, and widowed (n = 97)		
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	F
Gifts	167,80	145,07	326,57	324,05	276,22	245,91	53,60***
Goods	113,81	146,99	217,58	216,41	210,67	265,49	41,02***
Total	281,62	248,93	544,14	482,55	486,89	455,05	61,81***

Notes: *** $p < 0,001$

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

The Levene's test revealed the homogeneity of variances, which led to the application of ANOVA (Table 6), and there were significant differences in estimated consumption at Christmas time between individuals of the Christian religion, atheists, and those of other religions ($p < 0,05$). The magnitude of the mean differences, according to Pallant (2013), has a small effect size ($= 0,01$). Through the application of Tukey's multiple comparison test, there were significant differences in the estimated consumption at Christmas time between those who are religious (Christianity and other religions) and those who are not (Atheism). Moreover, individuals who are religious are the ones who most estimate spending at Christmas time, which empirically proves the Hypothesis 9, corroborating the study of Ribeiro (2018), which states that Christian culture is linked to consumerism. During this time, materialism and consumerism intensify, which is something considered to be paradoxical with the Christmas spirit, since the Christian religion rejects materialism (DEACY, 2016).

TABLE 6
Comparison of estimated consumption at Christmas time between those who have or not a direct family member under the age of 16

Consumption	Religion						Test	Effect size
	Christian (n = 938)		Atheist (n = 103)		Another (n = 36)			
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	F	
Gifts	259,58	269,67	179,48	169,13	169,67	193,34	6,16**	0,01
Goods	174,23	198,06	122,95	140,00	169,47	333,97	3,07*	0,01
Total	433,81	417,03	302,43	279,82	339,14	466,98	5,52**	0,01

Note: ** $p < 0,01$, * $p < 0,05$.

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

Levene's test did not reveal the homogeneity of variances, which led to the application of the Welch's test (Table 7), verifying the existence of significant differences in estimated consumption at Christmas time between the different regions of the country ($p < 0,05$). From the Games-Howell's multiple comparison test, there were significant differences between individuals from the Lisbon and Alentejo regions ($p < 0,05$), which empirically supports the Hypothesis 10, corroborating the results of Deloitte studies in 2018 and 2019. It should also be noted that individuals from the Lisbon region (districts of Lisbon and Setúbal) and from the Algarve region (district of Faro) are the ones who estimate to spend more at Christmas time.

TABLE 7
Comparison of estimated consumption at Christmas time between different regions of the country

		Gifts	Goods	Total
North ($n = 297$)	<i>M</i>	257,45	163,12	420,57
	<i>SD</i>	307,79	167,85	424,25
Center ($n = 482$)	<i>M</i>	240,24	168,98	409,21
	<i>SD</i>	222,94	206,17	375,65
Lisbon ($n = 103$)	<i>M</i>	324,08	221,35	545,43
	<i>SD</i>	369,62	307,69	617,92
Alentejo ($n = 164$)	<i>M</i>	200,13	138,78	338,91
	<i>SD</i>	164,81	127,07	273,71
Algarve ($n = 31$)	<i>M</i>	310,48	217,42	527,90
	<i>SD</i>	240,63	209,25	407,66
Welch's test	<i>F</i>	4,27**	3,26*	4,70***

Note: *** $p < 0,001$, ** $p < 0,01$, * $p < 0,05$.

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

Table 8 presents an analysis of the importance of the different festive moments of the Christmas season, verifying that respondents attach greater importance to Christmas Eve, from 24th to 25th December ($M = 4,51$, $SD = 0,87$), and Christmas Day, December 25 ($M = 4,34$, $SD = 0,91$). Minor importance is given to Kings Day on January 6 ($M = 2,79$, $SD = 1,31$), which leads to the conclusion that respondents experience Christmas festivities more intensely.

TABLE 8
Analysis of the importance of festive moments in the Christmas time

	M	SD
Christmas Eve (from 24th to 25th December)	4,51	0,87
Christmas Day (December 25)	4,34	0,91
New Year's Eve (from December 31st to January 1st)	3,85	1,15
Entry into the new year (January 1st)	3,70	1,16
Kings Day (January 6)	2,79	1,31

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

From the application of Pearson's correlation, there was a statistically significant relationship between the importance given to Christmas and the estimated consumption ($p < 0,001$). The positive correlation ($r = 0,12$) means that the more importance individuals attach to Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, the higher the estimated consumption levels for this time of year.

CONCLUSIONS

The present study aimed to analyze the consumption estimated by the Portuguese at Christmas time. According to the results obtained, most individuals (96,3%) spend Christmas with family. It is also verified that 1 077 individuals who responded to the questionnaire estimate to spend, on average, approximately €418 at Christmas time, of which about €249 is for spending on gifts to offer, and about €169 is for spending on consumer goods. These values are below the European average, which is of €461. The fact that it is below the European average is not surprising, because the net income of households in Portugal is also lower than this average.

From the present study, it can be inferred that the Portuguese estimate to spend more on gifts to offer than on consumer goods. The higher the value they estimate to be spent on gifts to offer, the higher the estimated amount to be spent on consumer goods.

About the existence of correlations between consumption and sociodemographic variables, it can be inferred that men estimate spending more at Christmas time. The estimated consumption for this time of year increases with age, the number of household elements, the level of education, and the monthly income household. Individuals who are married or living in a common-law marriage are the ones who estimate spending the most. In terms of the region of the country, it was found that individuals from the Lisbon and Algarve region are the ones who estimate the highest expenditures. As it would be expected, the fact of having a direct family member under the age of 16, and consequently buying a gift to offer, leads individuals to estimate higher values to spend at Christmas. Although the previous conclusions were more or less expected, these are subjects that were never studied in management, administration, and marketing in Portugal. Consumption is related, in terms of economy, to household disposable income, but the household income in Portugal is lower than the European average. Lisbon is the region of the country with the highest income, and Algarve the holiday region of the country, par excellence.

Regarding the Creed, religious individuals are the ones who estimate spending more at Christmas time, compared to those who have no religion. As Cruz (2013) and Roque (2013) refer, Christmas baptized a pagan feast, and the secrecy and marriage of spirituality and worldliness have remained over time. Thus, this date is not only religious, but also conducive to family life, consumption, and materialism, today more observable. This is due to school and family holidays, which many families do because it is a period of greater conviviality.

The article contributes to knowing better how Portuguese people behave about consumption at Christmas, perceiving some materialism in their acts. It also shows that, despite the degree of consumerism and materialism of the Portuguese people on this festive date, only 0,3% of individuals show a tendency to be indebted to the Christmas celebrations.

In conclusion, the Portuguese experience, with great intensity, the Christmas festivities when compared to the New Year and the Day of Kings, which means that the more importance individuals give to the Christmas time, the higher the level of consumption estimated to spend at that time.

Considering the characteristics of the work, some limitations were observed. Thus, there are not many research works on Christmas, especially in Portugal, which makes this work still exploratory, and it is not possible to compare some aspects addressed with the existing literature, which impoverishes the discussion.

In the future, it is intended to investigate the importance of the symbology of the festivity and its influence on consumerism in the specific Christmas season. It is also intended to investigate what kind of gifts are most offered at Christmas, and what is the importance of offering gifts. The study carried out in this research can help academics, researchers, and professionals to better understand the consumerism of the Portuguese population at Christmas time.

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