



book of extended abstracts

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*The Image and Sustainability of
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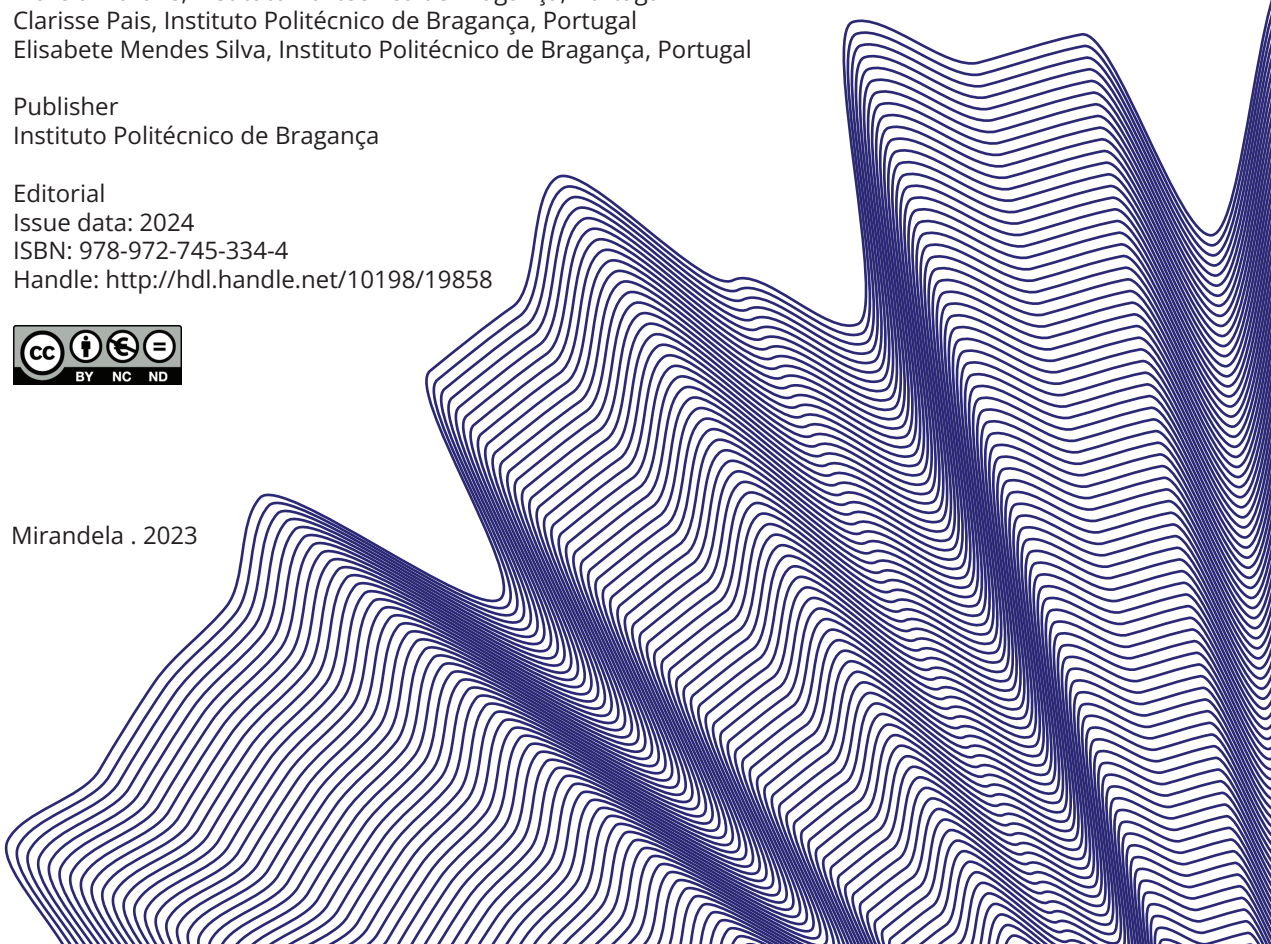
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GRANDE HOTEL DO PORTO: A CASE OF BRAND HERITAGE IN HOSPITALITY

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Purpose – The hotel industry has undergone major changes, due to growing competition, adoption of new technologies and the need to make the difference. Although there is a trend of having hotels housed in historic buildings, only a few have maintained their history and ancient design over the years.

Grande Hotel do Porto (GHP) is one of major icons among the Portuguese hospitality units which maintained not only its ancient building but also kept its service level to be different from the others. As an independent hotel, it is one of the oldest hotels in the city, known for its history and for its well-known guests.

Therefore, this research aims to find whether brand heritage and brand history have influence in the customers' decision process of choosing to stay at GHP, according to the employees' perspective.

Theoretical framework – According to Balmer (2011b, p.4) "brand heritage is one way to strengthen corporate level marketing for those organizations where heritage applies. For us, heritage is an integrated component of the character of such brands". The Balmer's model (2011a) introduce ten categories to better understand corporate heritage brands and their identities: Traditions, Customs, Nostalgia, Melancholia, Iconic Branding of the past, Retro Branding, Heritage Marketing, Heritage Tourism, Corporate Heritage Identities and Corporate Heritage Brands.

Design/methodology/approach – Once the purpose of this research is to have an internal perception concerning the hotel brand heritage and history, and the employees' vision about the guests' perspective, it was used a qualitative research methodology, with data being collected using nine semi-structured interviews to some key employees.

These interviews were carried out in person, during February and March of 2022 to some present and past employees, belonging both to management and operational level. Content analysis techniques and a coding process were used, being the main categories identified (Krippendorff, 2018) and organized in tables to help understand the results.

Secondary sources were also used to complement the information provided by the interviews, and fill gaps identified by the author in the employees' speech, on the author's observation during research.

Findings – The hotel history, tradition, facilities, and the quality of the service were the categories mentioned by the employees' as being something that together created the necessary environment not only to keep guests, but also employees, as some of them have been working there for over twenty years.

Research, practical & social implications – The values of the service culture, the service quality and the hotel reputation based on its history and famous guests are among the main reasons mentioned by the employees as influencing guests to choose GHP over other hotels, in Oporto.

Originality/value – This theme should be of interest to both empirical and theory in the hospitality field of research, since brand heritage has been used to differentiate the hotel product itself, and to reinforce the storytelling about the service offered by some small historical hotels located in city centers. These hotels are preferred by tourists who enjoy the service offered by small hotels, usually run by familiar companies over those managed by international chains.

Keywords – Brand heritage, Grande Hotel do Porto, History, Hospitality.

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