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Is your budget your guide? The willingness to pay for a more sustainable experience in Jericoacoara

Seu bolso é o seu guia? Disposição a pagar por uma experiência mais sustentável em Jericoacoara

¿Es tu bolsillo tu guía? Disposición a pagar por una experiencia más sostenible en Jericoacoara

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ABSTRACT
This study seeks to evaluate the willingness of tourists to pay for a more sustainable experience in Jericoacoara, Ceará in Brazil. It consists of a survey of 386 tourists. The data was collected from an online questionnaire administered on location. We used the Contingent Valuation Method (CVM), a descriptive method of analysis, and multiple linear regressions. The results indicate that, on average, tourists are willing to pay R$8,51 in addition to the Sustainable Tourism Fee charged by the Municipality of Jijoca de Jericoacoara (28.4% more). We identified that the variables age, income and dependents influenced their Willingness to Pay (WTP).
Keywords: willingness to pay; sustainable tourism; Jericoacoara; environment; sustainability.

RESUMO
Esta pesquisa tem como objetivo avaliar a disposição a pagar (DAP) do turista para usufruir de uma experiência mais sustentável em Jericoacoara, Ceará, Brasil. Trata-se de uma survey, realizada com 386 turistas. Os dados foram coletados por meio da aplicação de questionários in loco e on-line. Foram utilizados os métodos de análise descritiva, Método de Valoração Contingente (MVC) e regressão linear múltipla. Os resultados indicam que, em média, os turistas estão dispostos a pagar R$8,51 além da Taxa de Turismo Sustentável já cobrada pela Prefeitura Municipal de Jijoca de Jericoacoara (28,4% a mais). Ainda, verificou-se que as variáveis idade, renda e dependentes influenciam a DAP.
Palavras-chave: disposição a pagar; turismo sustentável; Jericoacoara; meio ambiente; sustentabilidade.

RESUMEN
Esta investigación tiene como objetivo avaliar la disposición a pagar (DAP) de los turistas para disfrutar de una experiencia más sostenible en Jericoacoara, Ceará, Brasil. Se trata de una encuesta realizada a 386 turistas. Los datos fueron recolectados a través de la aplicación de cuestionarios presenciales y en línea. Se utilizaron métodos de análisis descriptivo, Método de Valoración Contingente (MVC) y regresión lineal múltiple. Los resultados indican que, en promedio, los turistas están dispuestos a pagar R$ 8,51 además de la Tasa de Turismo Sostenible ya cobrada por el Municipio de Jijoca de Jericoacoara (28,4% más). Además, se encontró que las variables edad, ingreso y dependientes influyen en el DAP.
Palabras clave: disposición a pagar; el turismo sostenible; Jericoacoara; medio ambiente; sostenibilidad.

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1 INTRODUCTION

The buying behavior of some consumers has changed in recent years, which has contributing to activities related to sustainability (Chen, 2015; Fuentes-Moraleda et. al., 2019; Modica et. al., 2020). As consumers have become more and more engaged in environmental and social causes, they have sought out products and brands in line with their values. Sustainable products are perceived as having greater quality, socioeconomic value and sustainability by these individuals (Bisw As & Roy, 2015; De-Magistris & Gracia, 2016; Forbes et. al., 2009). Thus, many consumers are willing to change their buying habits to reduce their impact on the environment, paying a premium price for sustainable and environmentally responsible products and services (Haller et al., 2020).

Consumers who consider the effect of their behavior on the environment reflect a concern with purchases, consumption and activities associated with the market. They are willing to buy goods which have been produced with materials and techniques which have a smaller negative impact on the environment and make decisions based on the protection of natural resources (Shabani et al., 2013; Shahsavar et al., 2020). In this manner, sustainable consumption can also be the result of a decision-making process aligned with the individual necessities of consumers and social responsibility (Hartikainen et al., 2014; Vermeir & Verbeke, 2006).

Within the context of tourism, consumers tend to be deeply engaged in the decision-making process, which involves heightened elevated conscious cognitive processing (Malon et al., 2014). According to Fuentes-Moraleda et al. (2019), the level of environmental and lifestyle awareness of individuals can influence their willingness to pay for sustainable or environmentally certified products or services.

In any tourism context, the value that consumers attribute to tourism products, tangible or intangible, can help companies compare the willingness to pay with an efficient pricing strategy (Eustice et al., 2019). In dealing with environmental resources as in the case of tourism, the Contingent Valuation Method (CVM) is a viable alternative that signals how much individuals are willing to pay to obtain an improvement in their well-being or in this case their tourism experience (Jurado-Rivas & Sánchez-Rivero, 2019; Silva et al., 2020). In this manner, we have sought to answer the following question: What is the willingness to pay (WTP) of tourists to make their tourism experiences more sustainable?

To Fontenelle (2008), the main advantage of using CVM is that it provides a monetary value for goods which cannot be estimated in any other way, and with the intention of solving market failures, the results are arrived at with personal evaluations of the value to be paid based on the increase or decrease in the quality and/or quantity of a good or natural resource. In this manner, in order to analyze WTP for a more sustainable experience within the context of tourism, we have chosen to use CVM, because it is the most commonly adopted approach which contributes to the identification of consumer preferences. Thus, this study seeks to evaluate tourists' WTP for a more sustainable experience based on the Municipality of Jericoacoara, one of the main tourist destinations within the state of Ceará and the 3rd most visited national park in Brazil (Brasil, 2021).

In Jericoacoara there is a Sustainable Tourism Fee established by Supplementary Law Nº. 107/2015, implemented due to the environmental impacts of the effective or potential use of its visitors. Thus, it is understood that in visiting Jericoacoara, a tourist should be willing to pay for this public good and enjoy this tourist experience. This study seeks to analyze WTP for a more sustainable experience. To accomplish this, we submitted a survey to 386 tourists in Jericoacoara.

As noted by Jurado-Rivas and Sánchez-Rivero (2019), sustainable tourism management is becoming more and more relevant in terms of the image of tourist destinations, which has made it possible to charge higher prices for more sustainable products or services. The authors further state that ecological management in cultural heritage and protected nature locations is essential to improving the image of tourist destinations.

The scientific relevance of this study is its application of CVM to evaluate the WTP more for a sustainable experience within the context of tourism. Shahsavar et al. (2020) suggest that more studies are needed in this area to provide more consistent results regarding consumer characteristics to trace the profile of consumers who are concerned with the environment.

This study also contributes to research on consumer preferences and their willingness to pay for sustainable products or services during tourism. This study is thus further justified by the fact that it seeks to provide academic contributions and practices which have not been explored in previous studies of the WTP more in Jericoacoara.

2 THEORETICAL REFERENCES

This section presents the basic theoretical foundations of this study. It discusses the key concepts of environmental economic valuations and more specifically contingent environmental valuation.

2.1 Environmental Economic Valuation

The preoccupation with the scarcity of natural resources over the years has resulted in various theories and hypotheses designed to minimize the negative impacts on the environment caused by human actions (Casagranda & Azevedo, 2017). Environmental valuation refers to a variety of techniques used to attribute monetary values to environmental impacts, especially impacts unrelated to the market (Guijarro & Tsinaslanidis, 2020). The theory of consumer well-being is the theoretical foundation for

environmental valuation (Hervani et al., 2017; Marshall & Smith, 1930).

Guijarro and Tsinaslanidis (2020) point out that environmental valuation methods have traditionally been used within the context of non-market valuations and their aim has been to obtain a monetary measurement of the benefits or costs of environmental improvements or degradation for the well-being of individuals or social groups. Emoundou and Koundouri (2009) argue that the final objective is not to evaluate an environmental (non-market) good in monetary terms, but rather to give decision makers support in making appropriate decisions in terms of allocating resources in an efficient manner, implementing taxation and creating compensation schemes.

Environmental valuation emerged in the United States around 1960 and was later used in Europe and other areas beginning in the 1980s and 1990s (Damigos, 2004; Navrud & Prunckner, 1997). In terms of economic theory, the monetary measure of a change in society's well-being that results from a change in the quality or availability of an environmental good is based on its Total Economic Value (TEV) (Damingos, 2006).

The overall approach of TEV combines all of the various values which are grouped in accordance with the service provided by an environmental good. The values are derived from the real use and practical utility of a given environmental resource. The values of non-use, which can also be called passive values or the value of existence, are not related to its actual use. The use values are: (i) the Direct use value: where the value is derived from direct use or the exploitation of an environmental good; ii) Ecological value: refers to the benefits that environmental goods provide to sustain forms of life and biodiversity; and (iii) the Option value: which are the direct and indirect values which can be used at some point in the future. The non-use values are composed of the existence value and the legacy value. The former is the value that individuals attribute to environmental goods due to their mere existence, and the latter is the value estimated by individuals when they consider the future use of goods by their heirs (Guijarro & Tsinaslanidis, 2020; Plottu & Plottu, 2007).

It is important to point out that there are variations in the terminology used by various researchers, even though the concepts are similar. Corroborating the findings above, Orlowski e Wicker (2018) explain that use values are related to (potential) consumption of a good or service, which can be classified as: (i) Direct use values, (ii) Indirect use values and (iii) Option values. As explained above, the direct use value is determined by the value of the utility that individuals derive from direct use, such as active participation. On the other hand, indirect use is determined by associated benefits. The option value is attributed to the knowledge that a good or service can be potentially used or consumed by individuals, however it is possible that consumers will obtain the utility of a good without physically using it (Carson, 2000; Orlowski & Wicker, 2018). Unlike previous authors, Bertram and Rehdanz (2013) and Bertram et al. (2017) subdivide the non-use values into three types: (i) Existence value – this is related to the valuation of an individual of a good or service; (ii) Altruistic value – involves an individual valuation of the knowledge that a good or service is used by others; and (iii) Legacy value – reflects the perceived value of a good or service due to its environmental or cultural legacy for future generations.

In order to obtain the value of public goods, methods are utilized which allow the researcher to obtain the maximum willingness of an individual to pay for a public good, given that the willingness to pay is the maximum amount that individuals would be willing to pay in exchange for an improvement in their circumstances, and inversely the willingness to accept is the minimum amount that a person would accept for a reduction in circumstances (Hervani et al., 2017). An environmental resource offers a variety of services, therefore it is valuable to society and the primordial objective of an environmental valuation is to present this value and estimate any costs derived from the use or damage to environmental resources (Damigos, 2006).

The main goal of environmental valuation methods is estimating the values included in the TEV. According to Falco et al. (2013), there are three methodologies which focus on environmental valuations: the Travel Cost Method (TCM), the Hedonistic Pricing Method (HCM) and the Contingent Valuation Method (CVM). For this study, we have opted to use the Contingent Valuation Method, because it is the most appropriate method in terms of this study's proposed objective. It should be emphasized that like any method, its use has advantages and disadvantages. However, it is the only method that captures values for the existence of environmental goods and services and it is adaptable to most of the problems of the environmental approach (Barbisan et al., 2009; Farias et. al, 2018; Laurila-Pant et al., 2015).

2.2 Contingent Valuation Method

The role of the consumer within the context of sustainable tourism is essential to contributing to improving the environment (Bigerna et al., 2019), and the destinations that seek more sustainable business models and greatly dependent on tourists' willingness to pay, or in other words, the effort that consumers are willing to make to improve their behavior in terms of sustainability (Platani & Rizzo, 2018). The estimate of this economic value can contribute to the sustainable preservation of the environment (Marella & Raga, 2014).

Therefore, in this study we have opted to use the Contingent Valuation Method (CVM) because an estimate of the environmental value can be made utilizing CVM (Neckel et al., 2020). The CVM provides an estimate of economic values through the willingness to pay (WTP). CVM is also known for its flexibility in attributing a value from WTP, because the hypothetical scenario facilitates the application of market conditions (Egan et al., 2015; Neckel et al., 2020).

There are various studies that utilize CVM within the context of valuing cultural goods, including studies related to urban parks (Neckel et al., 2020; Silva et al., 2020) and the valuation of museums (Freire et al., 2017; Gómez-Zapata et al., 2018), among others. In addition to cultural heritage, there are many studies in which the willingness to pay for environmental issues has been quantified, as well as studies which seek to estimate the willingness of farmers to pay for the management of agricultural and ecological residues (Haimanot et al., 2020); to reduce pollution in terms of plastics (Zambrano-Monserrate & Ruano, 2020) and mainly in relation to tourism (Jurado-Rivas & Sánchez-Rivero, 2020; Lee, 2020), analyzing the willingness to pay more to make certain tourism products and services more sustainable (Jurado-Rivas & Sánchez-Rivero, 2020). Therefore, various studies within the context of tourism are being developed with the objective of estimating the value of tourist resources by using CVM (Lee, 2020), given that most of them are considered non-market goods.

CVM has been applied to various academic fields and it is considered an ordered method which seeks to estimate the value of non-commercialized goods. Its utilization is focused on determining how much individuals are willing to pay for non-commercial goods, based on a hypothetical market situation (Egan et al., 2015; Lee, 2020). In this sense, the utilization of environmental resources offers benefits which affect the well-being of individuals (Silva et al, 2020). However, some benefits are less easy to value, since the benefits provided by environmental resources are considered public goods of free access with undefined property rights, and their lack of market prices poses an obstacle to their measurement (Godoy, 2006).

Silva et.al (2020) and Jurado-Rivas and Sánchez-Rivero (2019) state that CVM is a technique which consists of quantifying the value that consumers are willing to pay (WTP) or the quantity that they are willing to accept (WTA) as compensation for the loss or gain of a benefit. Therefore, the CVM seeks to estimate values of WTP and WTA based on hypothetical situations (Mota, 2011). Maia and Romeiro (2008) explain that WTP consists of the maximum amount that an individual would be willing to pay for an increase to continue providing this good, or to avoid the deterioration of a good, considering the preferences of individuals. WTA, on the other hand, is the minimum amount that a person would be willing to accept to be compensated for a decrease in the providing of, or the deterioration of, a good.

In the application of CVM, respondents are asked to directly declare how much they would be willing to pay (or accept) for a good or to choose a preferred option (Choi, 2010; Motta, 2011; Venkatachalam, 2004). According to Carvalho, Marques e Freire (2016) and Silva et al., (2020), there are several variations of CVM in existence used to obtain information about Willingness to Pay or Accept as listed in Table 1.

Table 1
Variations in estimating Willingness to Pay or Accept

Free-Form or Open-Ended	The researcher questions the respondent about how much he or she is willing to pay for an environmental good or service in an open manner. The individual states in a free manner whether he or she is willing to pay, and if so, how much.
Bidding Games	The researcher negotiates the values giving suggestions of how much the interviewee would be willing to pay or accept. In this case, the values are suggested and are not asked in a free manner.
Debt Card	The researcher gives the respondent a card and asks how much would be the maximum or minimum that he or she would be willing to pay or accept.
Referendum	The researcher asks the respondent if he or she would be willing to pay a value “x”, in which the amount “x” is systematically modified to evaluate the frequency of responses for the different numbers presented.

Source: Adapted from Silva et al. (2020) and Carvalho et al. (2016).

As an economic valuation method for public goods, CVM is not exempt from criticism (Orlowski & Wicker, 2018). Ludwig (2000), for example, argues that some values cannot be commercialized. However, to Pizzol et al. (2015), the objective of a non-market valuation is not to attribute absolute values for a good or service, but rather marginal values, or in other words, what compensation individuals are prepared to accept.

Considering the limitations of CVM, Clark and Oswald (2002) argue that the process of attributing monetary values to supposedly incalculable goods and services is valid, because it permits the creation of a common unit of measure, making it possible to make more objective decisions in a variety of contexts. Choi et al, (2010) argue that the need for knowledge and the development of appropriate techniques to measure the economic value of non-market goods and services can help in the development of policies which are better directed and helps ensure more efficient support (Choi et al., 2010).

To Lemos et al. (2008), individual preferences, motivations and the search to maximize individual well-being reflect the decisions for which individuals are willing to pay monetary values, which also depend on the individual’s evaluation of the benefits received from the acquired product or received service.

Ayadi and Lapeyre, (2016) and Qiu, Park and Song (2020) argue that WTP is widely used in consumer behavior studies and is considered to be a universal measure of the values or concerns of individuals and a direct antecedent of the buying intentions and behaviors of consumers. A large portion of tourism resources are non-market goods and various tourism studies are actively being conducted to estimate the value of tourism resources utilizing CVM (Lee, 2020).

3 METHODOLOGY

In this section we will describe the methodological aspects used to conduct this study including the procedures used to achieve our overall objective. This is an empirical study which utilizes a positivist approach in the form of a survey. We use quantitative analysis with the utilization of descriptive statistics and estimates based on a multiple linear regression model derived from the common least squares method. We will now provide information about Jericoacoara, the object of this study, as well as the study's methodological procedures.

Jericoacoara, known popularly as Jeri belongs to the Municipality of Jijoca de Jericoacoara, and is located in the extreme North of the state of Ceará, 300 km from the state capital Fortaleza. This destination has sun the entire year and one of its distinguishing characteristics is that the streets are covered with sand and the beaches are very large (Brasil, 2010). Therefore, it is considered a destination that is literally on the beach which charms tourists with the village's authentic simplicity and also offers a lot of fun and adventure (Brasil 2010). In Jeri, you can find peace, but also nightclubs and sports such as windsurfing and kitesurfing. The Jericoacoara area has been protected through the creation of the National Park of Jericoacoara since 2002. It covers an area of 88.5 square kilometers, which is administered by the Chico Mendes Institute of Biodiversity Conservation (Brasil, 2020). It was the third most visited national park in Brazil (Brasil, 2020) before the COVID-19 pandemic (Martins et al., 2022). Currently access to it is simpler, and even though there is a segment of 28 km which crosses the National Park of Jericoacoara, there are various options in terms of transport (Brasil, 2010).

There are a number of tourism activities available in the National Park of Jericoacoara (NPJ), and this destination offers various options in terms of ecological, adventure and cultural tourism designed to please the most demanding and varied tourists (Brasil, 2010). According to data from the Secretariat of Tourism of Ceará, the Municipality of Jericoacoara is classified as Category A on its Tourism Map due to its growing flux of tourism together with the accommodations and jobs it offers (Secretaria do Turismo do Estado do Ceará, 2018).

In accordance with Supplementary Law Nº. 107/2015 (Brasil, 2015), a Sustainable Tourism Fee was implemented in Jericoacoara, to compensate for the environmental impact of the effective or potential use of its visitors. The fee of R$30.00 (thirty reais) per visitor covers a seven day visit. According to Decree Nº. 044/2017, handicapped individuals, children under 12, and adults 60 or over are exempt, as are the residents of the Municipality of Jijoca de Jericoacoara and those who work there.

The data collection was performed through the use of a questionnaire applied during July and August 2022 through the use of an electronic form for tourists who were at the destination and those who had already visited Jericoacoara. At the destination, the tourists were approached at specific locations in the village (e.g., inns and hotels, restaurants, on forms of transport, on the beach, the village entrance, and the parking lot). For people who were not in the village, the link for the form was sent through the social networks of those responsible for the collection. According to Murphy (2015), data collection using social media offers various advantages to researchers, such as anonymity, an absence of filters, and the possibility of analyzing specific groups. There are also advantages of utilizing the internet presented by Malhotra (2011), including the respondent's ability to answer the survey at his or her convenience. The questionnaire was applied to tourists who visited this destination, and it was adapted from Jurado-Rivas and Sánchez- Rivero (2019), which contains questions about the tourist destination, WTP, and the respondent's profile. In total, our sample consists of 386 validated questionnaires. According to the Ministry of Tourism, the National Park of Jericoacoara was the third most visited conservation area in Brazil in 2021 with 1,669,277 visitors (Brasil, 2022). Taking the number of visitors as the base for our sample calculation and considering a degree of confidence of 95% and a margin of error of 5%, the minimum number of respondents would be 385. Therefore, the sample is larger than the established minimum sample.

For the CVM valuation we included the following questions in the survey: i) What is the perception of the amount charged to visit Jericoacara (inexpensive, appropriate, expensive) and ii) Would you be willing to pay more to enjoy a more sustainable stay in this destination (yes or no). In the first part of the questionnaire, the elaborated hypothetical situation was simple, and the existence of a R$30 visitor's fee was mentioned. These procedures made it possible to divide the sample between those who were willing to pay more and those who were not.

Thus, as in Carvalho et al.'s study (2016), the respondents presented greater familiarity with scenarios which involve a payment to maintain the providing of a good rather than compensation for these changes (Carvalho et al., 2016). In addition, Maia (2002) and Mota (1997) point out that WTP, even though it presents theoretical consistency, can lead to an overestimation of the value of a good.

To estimate the WTP of the respondents, we used bidding games, giving 6 (six) suggestions of how much more the interviewee would be willing to pay. We also opted to make one of the items free-form or open-ended in case the respondents were willing to pay a value greater than those presented. It should be noted that the open format provides more information, because the values obtained are the direct expressions of these individuals (Maia, 2002).

In order to evaluate the factors associated with WTP, we estimated multiple linear regression models. For the dependent variable, we used WTP. For the independent variables we utilized the sociodemographic characteristics

of the respondents, such as gender (GEN), age (AGE), education (EDU) and income (INC) and their number of dependents (DEPEN). In terms of gender, we used a dummy binary variable in which a value of 0 is attributed for male respondents and 1 for female respondents. In terms of age, we used the respondent's age. In terms of education, we used values that ranged from 1 (incomplete 9th grade) and 8 (doctorate). For income, we opted to use individual monthly income. In terms of dependents, we attributed 0 for those without dependents and 1 for those who possess dependents. We utilized the Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) method to estimate the regression models with the help of the SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) Version 22.0, utilizing the equation below:

$$WTP = \beta 0 + \beta 1 GEN + \beta 2 AGE + \beta 3 EDU + \beta 4 INC + \beta 5 DEPEN + \varepsilon \quad [1]$$

Where:

WTP = Value associated with willingness to pay;

GEN = Binary variable (dummy), which has a value of 0 for male respondents and 1 for female respondents;

AGE = Age of the respondent in years;

EDU = Value ranging from 1 to 8, in which 1 is incomplete 9th grade, 2 is completed 9th grade, 3 is incomplete high school, 4 is completed high school, 5 is completed college, 6 is completed graduate degree, 7 is completed Master's degree, and 8 is completed Ph.D.;

INC = Individual monthly income in reais (R$);

DEPEN = Binary variable (dummy), which has a value of 0 for those without dependents, and 1 for those who possess dependents.

4 ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

The profile of the 386 respondents that make up our sample is presented below. The data includes gender, age group, education, income, and whether they possess dependents, whether they reside in the state of Ceará, and their marital status.

Table 2
Profile of the Respondents

Characteristic	Classification	N	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	119	30.83
	Female	267	69.17
	Total	**386**	**100.00**
Age group	Up to 25 years old	66	17.10
	26 to 30	68	17.62
	31 to 35	132	34.20
	36 to 40	67	17.36
	41 or older	53	13.73
	Total	**386**	**100.00**
Education	Completed High School	67	17.35
	Completed College	142	36.78
	Completed Graduate Degree	177	45.85
	Total	**386**	**100.00**
Monthly Income	Up to R$3,000	135	34.98
	From R$3,000.01 to R$5,000	89	23.05
	From R$5,000.01 to R$9,000	74	19.17
	Above R$9,000	88	22.80
	Total	**386**	**100.00**
Possesses dependents	Yes	137	35.50
	No	249	64.50
	Total	**386**	**100.00**

Source: Prepared by the authors.

Based on Table 2, we can verify that the most common profile has the following characteristics: female (69.17%); aged between 31 and 35 (34.20%); with a graduate education (45.85%), and monthly income of up to R$3,000 (34.98%). It should also be noted that of the 386 respondents, 64.50% did not possess dependents.

In terms of the perceptions of the respondents in relation to this tourist destination and the tourism fee, 66.84% considered the value of R$30 appropriate, while 11.66% considered it inexpensive, and 21.50% considered the value expensive, as we can see in Table 3. In relation to their intentions to return to this tourist destination, the overwhelming majority (94.56%) would visit Jericoacoara again, with just 5.44% not wishing to return. It should be also noted that 68.91% of the respondents believe that a sustainable experience raises prices, and in terms of the fee, 51.81% of those surveyed would be willing to pay more than they were charged to have a more sustainable experience.

Table 3
Perceptions of the Respondents in Relation to the Tourist Destination and the Fee

Item	Response	N	Percentage (%)
Considers the value of the Sustainable Tourism Fee	Inexpensive	45	11.66
	Appropriate	258	66.84
	Expensive	83	21.50
	Total	**386**	**100.00**
Intention to return to Jericoacoara	Would visit it again	365	94.56
	Would not visit it again	21	5.44
	Total	**386**	**100.00**
Believes that a sustainable experience raises prices	Yes	266	68.91
	No	120	31.09
	Total	**386**	**100.00**
Is willing to pay a higher fee for a more sustainable experience	Yes	200	51.81
	No	186	48.19
	Total	**386**	**100.00**

Source: Prepared by the authors.

To Malon et al. (2014), consumers tend to be deeply engaged in the decision-making process within the context of tourism, which involves an elevated conscious cognitive processing. Previous academic studies have shown that the level of environmental awareness of these individuals and their lifestyles can influence WTP for sustainable or environmentally certified products or services (Fuentes-Moraleda et al., 2019). To Penz et al. (2017), in order to motivate consumer behavior in the sustainable tourism sphere, it is necessary to understand these people's preferences as well as their perceptions of the available tourism offers and services. The authors also argue that the tourism industry needs to raise awareness about the importance of offers of sustainable tourism.

Consumer behavior within the context of tourism is a strong indicator for the development of sustainable products and services, which can also promote sustainable activities within the corporate and governmental sphere (Feil et al., 2020; Hankammer et al., 2019), which can have an economic and environmental impact. Furthermore, in Oliveira et al. (2021), the authors point out that an individual who presents sustainable behavior is his or her daily life tends to display it in various environments, including tourism.

In Table 3, we verified that of the 386 tourists surveyed, 200 (51.81%) were willing to pay more than the current sustainable tourism fee charged by the Municipal Government of Jijoca de Jericoacoara (R$30.00) for a more sustainable experience at this tourist destination. Table 4 displays the WTP values declared by the respondents.

Table 4
Willingness to Pay More for a More Sustainable Experience in Jericoacoara

Response	N	Percentage (%)
Nothing	186	48.19
R$ 5.00	33	8.55
R$ 10.00	58	15.03
R$ 15.00	26	6.74
R$ 20.00	44	11.40
R$ 25.00	2	0.52
R$ 30.00	35	9.07
R$ 70.00	1	0.26
R$ 100.00	1	0.26
Total	**386**	**100.00**

Source: Prepared by the authors.

According to the WTP distribution of the respondents (Table 4), the most cited value was R$10.00, which was proposed by 15.03% of the tourists. It may also be observed that the highest values (> R$30.00) were mentioned by just two tourists. Within any tourism context, understanding the value that consumers attribute to tangible and intangible tourism products helps organizations compare willingness to pay with an efficient price strategy (Eustice et al., 2019). In the public sector, understanding tourists' willingness to pay can help in making adjustments and monitoring implemented public policies.

In addition, the continual growth in green consumption in recent years offers opportunities for marketing companies and professionals to develop market strategies related to environmental causes (Figueroa-García et al., 2018). In this way, local companies can segment the market by developing communication strategies which are more oriented towards sustainable consumption and the preservation of these destinations.

Besides being questioned about their WTP for a more sustainable experience (Overall WTP), the respondents were asked about WTP to enjoy specific benefits and

experiences in Jericoacoara, such as: (i) a peaceful and relaxing environment; (ii) cleanliness and beauty of the village; (iii) cultural activities; (iv) environmental activities for tourists and the community; and (v) actions that reduce exploitation and promote protection, conservation and preservation studies. The results of the descriptive statistics are displayed in Table 5.

Table 5
Descriptive Statistics for Willingness to Pay

WTP	Average	Minimum	Maximum	Standard Deviation	Variation Coefficient
Overall	8.51	0.00	100.00	11.4	134%
Peaceful and Relaxing Environment	8.04	0.00	70.00	10.9	135%
Cleanliness and Beauty	8.78	0.00	70.00	11.2	127%
Cultural Activities	7.94	0.00	70.00	10.8	136%
Environmental Education	7.38	0.00	70.00	10.4	141%
Protection and Preservation	8.55	0.00	70.00	11.1	130%

Source: Prepared by the authors.

Based on Table 5, we can see that tourists are more willing to pay for improvements in cleanliness and beauty in Vila de Jericoacoara ($WTP_{average}$ = R$8.78), followed by actions to reduce exploitation and promote protection, conservation and preservation studies ($WTP_{average}$ = R$8.55). The WTP for environmental education activities presented the lowest value (R$7.38), indicating that tourists tend to attribute less importance to this aspect compared to the others. Within the context of tourism, WTP is linked to the sense of utility of a tourism product, and the recognition of its value is related to the tourist's involvement with this location (Lemos et al., 2008).

From this perspective, due to this lifestyle and consumption model, human beings, in addition to social spheres, such as governments and companies, have also come to be held responsible for the planet's degradation. Considering worsening environmental problems and the indiscriminate use of existing natural resources, we are observing the emergence of a new type of posture on the part of individuals within various contexts (Afonso et al., 2014). Even though the respondents attributed a lower value to Environmental Education, it can be argued that activities of this nature produce benefits, given that they give individuals an idea of their influence on this location and their role as agents of transformation in this tourist destination (Azevedo, 2014).

In regard to actions to reduce exploitation and promote environmental protection, conservation and preservation studies, it should be noted that travel can contribute to adverse environmental effects such as increases in pollution and threats to natural resources and the environment, given that the tourism sector offers a gamut of activities related to consumption (Wang et al., 2019). Thus, it is possible that respondents attribute greater value to this aspect, because they understand that the use of this destination is also associated with negative impacts. Thus, paying more to promote actions and studies that make environmental preservation viable seems to be an appropriate counterweight to the impacts caused by tourism.

It should be emphasized that the actions that individuals perform in relation to sustainability in tourist destinations vary depending on the situations, contexts and indications of the environment.(Aguiar et al., 2015; Gallarza et al., 2002; Oliveira et al., 2021). A tourist destination focused on sustainability may be a more favorable environment for ecologically aware tourist practices of lower impact. In addition, the sociodemographic characteristics of individuals can help explain WTP for a more sustainable experience. Thus, Table 6 displays the results of the multiple linear regression models that explain WTP based on the respondents' profiles.

Table 6
Results of the Multiple Linear Regression Models

Variables	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
GEN	-0.080	-0.002	-0.047	-0.039	-0.028	-0.020
AGE	0.089*	0.113**	0.095*	0.124**	0.119**	0.087
EDU	-0.032	-0.006	-0.051	-0.063	-0.045	-0.052
INCOME	0.166***	0.180***	0.164***	0.145***	0.138**	0.159***
DEPEN	-0.217***	-0.173***	-0.173***	-0.153***	-0.161***	-0.153***
Constant	6.001	1.134	6.285*	4.954	3.686	6.016
R^2	8.22%	6.88%	6.10%	5.45%	5.23%	4.90%
F	6.81***	5.61***	4.94***	4.38***	4.19***	3.91***

Source: Prepared by the Authors.
Note. *** Significant at a level of 1%; ** Significant at a level of 5%; * Significant at a level of 10%. Model 1: WTP – Overall; Model 2: WTP – Peaceful Environment; Model 3: WTP – Cleanliness and Beauty; Model 4: WTP – Cultural Activities; Model 5: WTP – Environmental Education; Model 6: WTP – Protection and Preservation.

Based on the results displayed in Table 6, we can observe that the variables age, income and dependents influenced the willingness to pay more in most of the models. Specifically, older individuals were willing to pay

more for a more sustainable tourism experience (Model 1), a more peaceful (Model 2) and clean (Model 3) environment, with cultural activities (Model 4) and environmental educational activities (Model 5). However, we did not observe the influence of age on WTP for environmental protection and preservation actions and studies (Model 6). Previous works (Tambosi et al., 2014; Zimmer et al., 2019) indicate a positive relationship between age and pro-environmental behavior, corroborating the findings of this study. It is argued that with the passage of time, people tend to have a more positive attitude towards the environment, which turns into more ecological behavior (Tambosi et al., 2014).

We also verified that higher income and the absence of dependents positively influenced WTP in all of the models (1 to 6). In terms of income, it may be argued that individuals with greater purchasing power tend to be more willing to pay for more expensive ecological products and experiences (Leite et al., 2021). Within the context of environmental valuation, it is suggested that individuals with greater income have more capacity to pay and are more willing to give up a portion of their income to ensure the preservation and conservation of environmental goods (Silva et al., 2020). Thus, this result corroborates the findings of Silva et al. (2020), Justo and Rodrigues (2014) and Corbeti et al. (2010). In terms of dependents, the result diverges from Silva et al. (2020), in which the authors found that dependents increased WTP for the preservation and conservation of environmental goods. To Leite et al. (2021), individuals who have children may be more concerned with future generations, which will lead them to practice more ecologically aware and sustainable consumption to ensure that future generations can enjoy natural resources.

To Jurado-Rivas and Sánchez-Rivero (2019), sustainable tourism management is becoming a more and more relevant factor in the image of tourist destinations, making it appropriate to consider the possibility of charging higher prices for more sustainable products or services. The authors also state that the ecological management of cultural heritage locations and protected nature areas is essential to improving the image of tourist destinations. However, some goods and services do not have market prices, which makes them difficult to measure, especially those related to natural resources, because they are public goods (Silva et al., 2020). Nonetheless, in verifying tourists' WTP, it is possible to estimate the potential financial gain considering values presented by the respondents as calculated in Table 7.

Table 7
Estimate of the Potential Financial Gain based on WTP More

Average WTP	Estimated Visitors[(a)]	Potential Financial Gain
R$ 8.51	1,669,277	R$ 14,205,547.30

Source: Prepared by the authors.
Note. [(a)] Number of visitors in 2021 (Brasil, 2022).

Based on Table 7, the average WTP of these tourists was R$8.51, considering WTP for a more sustainable experience overall in Jericoacoara. This value indicates that in addition to the current Sustainable Tourism Fee of R$30.00, tourists would be willing to pay on average R$8.51 or 28.4% more. Given that Vila de Jericoacoara received a total of 1,669,277 visitors in 2021 (Brasil, 2022), the potential financial gain if the fee were increased R$8.51 would be R$14,205,547.30 annually. In this manner, the Municipality of Jijoca de Jericoacoara would increase its fundraising by more than 14 million reais which could be used to support sustainability in the Vila de Jericoacoara.

It should be emphasized that the calculated potential financial gain is relatively close to the fundraising forecasts for the municipality in 2021 through monetary transfers from FUNDEB (Educational Development and Maintenance Fund) and those related to its quota from FPM (Municipal Participation Fund), the two main sources of municipal revenues (Jijoca de Jericoacoara, 2022). However, this value can be considered conservative, given that the estimate of the number of visitors was made during the pandemic and its associated health and economic restrictions limited the number of visitors.

Lozano-Oyola et al. (2019) suggest that studies of sustainable tourism should play a part in the design of more efficient sustainability policies, developing new empirical studies in search of practical solutions, and facilitating collaborations between various tourist destinations through the definition of integrated or collaborative practices. To accomplish this, it is necessary to understand the role of various agents and stakeholders involved in this activity. It is important to recognize the relevance of the consumer in tourism, give that consumers play an active role in it and are capable of shaping tourism offers. Thus, this study's findings can contribute to the delineation of public policies and managerial strategies within the investigated context and can also serve as a parameter for other tourist destinations.

5 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This study has sought to analyze tourists' willingness to pay more for a more sustainable touristic experience. To accomplish this, we have conducted a survey of 386 tourists who had already been in or were in Jericoacoara, Ceará in Brazil. The results indicate that most tourists are willing to pay more for a more sustainable experience in Jericoacoara. On average, tourists are willing to pay R$8.51 in addition to the Sustainable Tourism Fee that is currently charged by the Municipality of Jijoca de Jericoacoara. Given that in 2021 Vila de Jericoacora received 1,669,277 visitors according to data from the Ministry of Tourism, the potential financial gain would be approximately R$ 14,205,547.30 if the fee were increased by the average additional WTP amount observed in this study (R$8.51). We also verified that the variables of age, income and having dependents influence WTP.

Based on this study's findings, government administrators and public policy formulators can delineate strategies focused on sustainability. In addition, this study provides a better understanding of the preferences and predisposition of tourists in terms of paying this fee. We can conclude that administrators can focus their actions on cleaning and beautifying the village, as well as funding actions and studies focused on the protection, conservation and preservation of natural resources, given that these were the elements that presented the greatest WTP. Administrators can reflect further about how to optimize their fundraising through this fee, but it is important to note that tourists are willing to pay more if there is an improvement in their tourist experience, making it more sustainable. Thus, if there is an increase without corresponding improvements, it is possible that the government will create dissatisfaction among its tourists, resulting in subjective losses in terms of the image of this tourist destination.

Future studies can focus on the individual perceptions of the Sustainable Tourism Fee and not just tourists' willingness to pay. In addition, psychological factors could be included such as personal attitudes, behavior, values, lifestyle and other elements which can contribute to the explanation of the investigated phenomenon. It would also be interesting to apply this survey in other tourist destinations in order to make comparisons and possible generalizations about this study's objective. In terms of this study's limitations, we can mention the difficulty of conducting field surveys with tourists in a leisure setting, given that answering the survey implies giving up a moment of relaxation. Another limitation is that the results cannot be generalized over the macro-context of tourism, because the investigated destination has a series of unique features. Even though local tourism was just resuming after the pandemic when we conducted our study, our results can contribute to the delineation of new strategies within this context.

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