The literature on human factors and road user behavior in road and transport design is extensive (Papadimitriou, Lassarre, & Yannis, 2017). Compared to other road users, human factors related to pedestrians have received somewhat less attention in the literature. This prevalence stands out although it is often underlined that road and traffic factors alone may explain only a small part of pedestrian walking and crossing behavior in urban areas (Papadimitriou, 2012). Increasing the share of walking and cycling instead of using the car on short trips contributes to sustainability: It is cheap both for the individual and for society (economy), and it helps to protect the environment (ecology) and it supports the quality of urban life and health.

Despite the improvement in road safety in recent years, road accidents and their consequences remain a serious social problem (Ribeiro, 2010). In 2015, 5,435 pedestrians were killed in road accidents in the EU (excluding Lithuania), which is 21% of all road fatalities. On 27th of January 2017, the Portuguese Social Communication (Jornal de Noticias) reported that between 2015 and 2016, in Portugal, there were 3,618 pedestrian accidents with an average of five road deaths per day. Data published by the Portuguese National Road Safety Authority indicate that in 2016, 5 537 were pedestrian victims of accidents of whom 82 were killed.

The need to face off pedestrian is growing as a central element of the urban rail system. As a principal actor, the pedestrian deserves to see spaces where can circulate freely, practice activities and calm walks. It is known that the behavior of road users is influenced by a wide range of factors such as their personality, physical and emotional state, culture, social status and mobility options (origin and destination of their journeys, mode of transport). These aspects must be considered when design and planning urban mobility systems, that should be fair and universal, sufficiently flexible and adaptable to the needs and desires of everyone (Ribeiro, 2010).

Some already studied factors that influenced the ambiently capacity of the road are, for example, the probability of abusive parking as well as the quality of the sidewalk (Buchanan, 1963; Ribeiro, 2010). It is only accounting for all risks associated with conflicts between them and motor vehicles that it is possible to try to provide greater safety and comfort to the pedestrian circulation (Buchanan, 1963; Ribeiro, 2010).

The main purpose of this study is to describe pedestrian’ habits and characterize subjects’ perceptions of pedestrian quality in Coimbra. We also aimed to study the difference of perceptions between group age and by high lightening the main reasons why walking is a very little practiced activity and what changes are needed to make to increase pedestrian quality. Coimbra is a Portuguese city in the Center Region of Portugal. Is a historically university town and currently has more than 30,000 students that make walking a way of life.
For the purpose, the questionnaire -Life Quality of Pedestrians-LQP was adapted from the work of Ausserer, Fuessl, Risser & Chaloupka-Risser (2013) entitled "What makes walking attractive and what keeps people from walking". It was filled by 130 subjects. Descriptive and frequencies analysis were carried out, revealing that 67.7% were woman and 24.6% men, between the age of 18 and 85 years old (N=129; 35.40± 13.32 years old). Most of the subjects were employed (48.5%) and studying (26.2%), were natural of Coimbra (67.7%) and resided in the periphery of the city (60.8%).

The results show that most subjects reported like walking, with 18.5% reported they like very much and 4.6% reported they didn’t like it at all. Regarding the frequency of walking during the week, it was higher than on the weekends, which can be due to the transportation to and from the workplace/study. It also seems that students walk more frequently than employed subjects, which can be due to the lack of driver’s license or lack of car ownership.

When inquired about the main situations that disturb walking, most relevant complaints were: cars travelling too fast, dirty sidewalks (e.g., dog excrements, garbage...), drivers that do not stop at crosswalks, cars parked on sidewalks, insufficient green areas for rest in public spaces, public roads with little or no lightening, high amount of car traffic, among others.

Our study lead us to the conclusion that there a strong need for socio-cultural change in walking habits, as such an increase of actions, combining human, engineering, psychological, social and economic fields leading to the consideration of the pedestrian as an important road user and the increase of its quality of life and reduction of their vulnerability. The Traffic-safety work of the future will have to focus more on specific traffic safety problems of pedestrians and their involvement in the city.