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**THE NEW ERA OF TOURISM: SECURITY AND WELL-BEING IN TOURISM
DESTINATIONS**



UNIVERSITY OF ALGARVE

Faculty of Human and Social Sciences

Faro 2025

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DESTINATIONS**

PhD in Psychology

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This paper was financed by National Funds provided by FCT – Foundation for Science and Technology (Portugal) through project UI/BD/150799/2020.

Statement of Work Authorship

I declare to be the author of this work, which is unique and unprecedented. Authors and works consulted are properly cited in the text and included in the references list.

Patrícia Raquel Fernandes Martins

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to express my deepest gratitude to all those who have accompanied me throughout these almost five years of doctoral studies.

I sincerely thank the University of Algarve (UAlg) for warmly welcoming me and all the professors and colleagues who crossed my path and generously shared their knowledge with me.

I am especially grateful to my supervisors, whose guidance accompanied me through this journey of challenges and achievements. Thank you for all the knowledge you imparted, your patience, and always encouraging me to keep going.

I want to thank Professor Saúl Neves de Jesus for the opportunity to be part of this academic journey and for the warm welcome he gave me to UAlg during the first year of my PhD. Thank you for your constant availability and support over the years.

I sincerely thank Professor Margarida Pocinho for the sympathy and kindness she always showed me, her contagious optimism, and all her words of encouragement. Thank you for always welcoming me into your office with your cheerful spirit.

I am deeply grateful to Professor Patrícia Pinto, who played a special role throughout this process. She was a constant source of support, clarity, and motivation from the beginning. Her tireless dedication, thoughtful feedback, and unwavering availability guided me every step of the way. I am genuinely thankful to her for the way she always believed in me, for all the words of encouragement in moments of doubt and for the countless hours she dedicated to helping me grow academically and personally. Working with her was a privilege, and her influence on this journey is something I will always carry with me.

I would also like to thank Marlene and Julieta from CinTurs for their professionalism, availability, and constant support. I extend my gratitude to all the members of CinTurs, whose contributions and shared knowledge have been fundamental to my academic growth during this journey.

Finally, I am deeply grateful to my family, especially my mum and brother, for their unwavering support and unconditional love. A very special thank you to Filipe. Thank you for encouraging me to go further and for all the strength and motivation you gave me to keep going.

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ABSTRACT

Wellness tourism is at the intersection of tourism and wellness, two large and growing industries. Holistic health and prevention are increasingly central to the decision-making of wellness tourists. Wellness tourism is travel associated with the pursuit of maintaining or improving one's well-being and includes all experiences and expenditures made by tourists on wellness-related trips. As a growing segment of the global tourism industry, wellness tourism offers significant potential for both personal and economic benefits. Despite its increasing popularity, the sector remains underexplored, particularly regarding its distinction from other sub-categories of health tourism, such as medical tourism. Therefore, the research is structured into three distinct studies. Study 1 and Study 2 present a comprehensive theoretical foundation through a bibliometric analysis and a systematic literature review. These studies chart the evolution of wellness tourism, analyse key trends, identify theoretical and methodological frameworks, and highlight emerging areas for future exploration. Study 3 focuses on empirical analysis, examining the factors that shape destination loyalty in the wellness tourism context in Portugal, a segment that remains underexplored in the country. It utilises Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to analyse the relationships between destination loyalty and factors such as tourist perceived safety at the destinations, tourist worry, tourist perception of restorative environments, well-being, and life satisfaction. The findings highlight the importance of a peaceful, secure environment in promoting wellness tourism experiences. The study also reveals the unexpected role of tourist worry in fostering destination loyalty, challenging previous assumptions. Moreover, the research underscores the growing significance of restorative environments in promoting well-being and life satisfaction through tourism practices and the potential of Portugal to position itself as a leading wellness destination. By contributing to the theoretical and practical understanding of wellness tourism, this thesis paves the way for future studies. It offers valuable insights for researchers, tourism practitioners and policymakers aiming to foster the growth of this sector.

Keywords: Destination Loyalty, Restorative Environments, Safety Perceptions, Tourist Worry, Well-being, Wellness Tourism.

RESUMO

Ao longo dos anos, o setor do turismo tem vindo a destacar-se como uma das indústrias mais dinâmicas e influentes da economia mundial. Para além do valor económico, a atividade turística tem contribuído de forma significativa para o desenvolvimento das regiões e das comunidades locais. Este crescimento tem sido acompanhado por uma diversificação dos mercados, à medida que os destinos turísticos procuram atrair visitantes através da oferta de experiências exclusivas e personalizadas. É precisamente nesta procura ativa pela diferenciação e especialização que os mercados de nicho, como o turismo de bem-estar, têm vindo a registar um crescimento significativo.

Paralelamente, o campo da psicologia positiva, conforme proposto por Seligman e Csikszentmihalyi (2000), tem-se concentrado no estudo dos fatores que contribuem para o bem-estar e a satisfação com a vida dos indivíduos. Embora predominantemente enraizados na psicologia, os estudos contemporâneos sobre o bem-estar têm vindo a assumir uma natureza cada vez mais interdisciplinar, expandindo-se progressivamente para o domínio do turismo. Os investigadores têm recorrido com frequência aos conceitos da psicologia positiva para explorar de que forma é que as experiências turísticas podem facilitar estados psicológicos positivos. A investigação académica tem sugerido que as experiências turísticas aumentam significativamente a satisfação com a vida, a felicidade e o bem-estar.

A interseção entre a psicologia e o turismo é particularmente evidente no turismo de bem-estar, um ramo do turismo de saúde. O turismo de bem-estar visa a procura ativa pela manutenção ou melhoria do bem-estar através de experiências direcionadas para a promoção da saúde geral. Os serviços podem incluir tratamentos de spa, aulas de yoga, sessões de meditação, termalismo, imersão em ambientes naturais ou programas de alimentação saudável. Este segmento tem vindo a crescer de forma significativa na última década, particularmente após a pandemia de COVID-19, onde se observou uma aceleração desta tendência, à medida que os indivíduos sentiram uma maior necessidade de restaurar o seu equilíbrio emocional, mental e físico.

Por ser uma área de investigação relativamente recente, o turismo de bem-estar é muitas vezes confundido na literatura académica com o turismo médico. Ambos correspondem a subcategorias do turismo de saúde. Contudo, o turismo de bem-estar tem como característica principal a procura ativa por experiências que promovem o bem-estar, a qualidade de vida e o equilíbrio geral. Aqueles que optam por este tipo de turismo geralmente procuram relaxamento, rejuvenescimento, prevenção de doenças e desenvolvimento pessoal. Por outro lado, o turismo médico tem como objetivo principal a realização de tratamentos médicos, cirúrgicos ou

dentários especializados, que podem não estar disponíveis ou acessíveis no país de residência do turista. Este segmento caracteriza-se por uma abordagem mais reativa, onde o foco está na procura de tratamentos para tratar ou prevenir determinadas doenças.

Neste contexto, e numa primeira fase, a tese tem como objetivo principal contribuir para uma correta definição e caracterização do turismo de bem-estar através da análise da literatura científica publicada na área. Posteriormente, esta tese explora os fatores que contribuem para a lealdade ao destino no turismo de bem-estar, com particular enfoque no contexto português. Deste modo, entre 2020 e 2025, foram desenvolvidos trabalhos de investigação que resultaram em três artigos científicos, dois teóricos e um empírico, posteriormente submetidos a revistas científicas especializadas em turismo.

O primeiro estudo visa definir e caracterizar o panorama da investigação sobre o turismo de bem-estar através de uma análise bibliométrica assente em 143 artigos científicos publicados entre 2013 e o primeiro semestre de 2023. O objetivo é mapear a evolução da literatura sobre o tema, identificar tendências emergentes e lacunas na investigação. Os resultados revelaram um aumento significativo do número de publicações na última década, com um crescimento expressivo após a pandemia da COVID-19. O impacto da pandemia na investigação sobre o turismo de bem-estar foi evidente, refletindo um interesse renovado nas viagens de bem-estar. Apesar do aumento da investigação sobre turismo de bem-estar, o estudo bibliométrico sublinhou a necessidade de mais estudos nesta área.

O segundo estudo diz respeito a uma revisão sistemática da literatura, tendo por base o método PRISMA (Page et al., 2021), com o intuito de identificar as principais abordagens teóricas e metodológicas utilizadas na investigação sobre turismo de bem-estar, identificar os tópicos mais estudados e sugerir recomendações para estudos futuros. A revisão de 72 artigos publicados entre 2019 e 2023 destacou que os fatores intrínsecos, tais como o desejo de autoaperfeiçoamento, o alívio do stress e a autoindulgência, desempenham um papel fundamental na formação dos processos de tomada de decisão dos turistas de bem-estar. Concluiu-se que a experiência de turismo de bem-estar tem um impacto positivo no bem-estar, na satisfação com a vida e na lealdade ao destino. Adicionalmente, verificou-se que a perceção de segurança e as qualidades restauradoras dos ambientes onde decorrem as experiências de bem-estar são elementos-chave na promoção do bem-estar do turista e na promoção da lealdade ao destino. A revisão sistemática também apontou as tendências metodológicas na investigação sobre o turismo de bem-estar, registando uma predominância de estudos quantitativos e a necessidade de mais abordagens qualitativas e de métodos mistos.

O terceiro estudo utiliza a modelagem de equações estruturais com mínimos quadrados parciais (PLS-SEM) para analisar a relação entre a lealdade ao destino e a percepção de segurança nos destinos, as preocupações dos turistas, a percepção de ambientes reparadores, o bem-estar e a satisfação com a vida. Este estudo empírico revelou que a percepção de segurança nos destinos tem um impacto significativo na lealdade ao destino e na percepção de ambientes restauradores. Por sua vez, a percepção de ambientes restauradores, caracterizados pelo relaxamento, recuperação cognitiva e sentimento de ligação ao ambiente, influencia positivamente o bem-estar dos turistas, a satisfação com a vida e a intenção de visitar ou recomendar o destino. No entanto, contrariamente ao esperado, o estudo encontrou uma relação positiva entre os níveis de preocupação dos turistas e a lealdade ao destino, uma relação que deve ser explorada em estudos futuros. Adicionalmente, a investigação confirmou que tanto o bem-estar hedónico como o eudaimónico contribuem significativamente para a lealdade ao destino, com o bem-estar hedónico a surgir como maior preditor.

Do ponto de vista teórico, a tese aprofunda a compreensão das variáveis psicológicas e ambientais que influenciam a experiência do turista de bem-estar. Destaca, em particular, o papel da segurança percebida nos destinos e dos ambientes restauradores na promoção do bem-estar, satisfação com a vida e lealdade ao destino. De igual modo, propõe uma distinção clara entre turismo de bem-estar e turismo médico, contribuindo para uma definição mais precisa deste segmento.

Em termos práticos, a investigação faculta recomendações relevantes para profissionais do setor e decisores políticos. Salienta a importância de criar ambientes seguros e tranquilos, que favoreçam a recuperação física, mental e espiritual dos indivíduos. A personalização das ofertas de bem-estar também é apontada como uma via eficaz para fortalecer a lealdade dos turistas e aumentar a competitividade dos destinos.

Em Portugal, o turismo de bem-estar ainda é pouco explorado, sobretudo quando comparado com outros segmentos turísticos. Apesar dos abundantes recursos naturais, como praias, montanhas, termas e zonas rurais, com forte potencial para o desenvolvimento deste tipo de turismo, a investigação tem-se centrado exclusivamente no turismo termal, frequentemente associado ao turismo médico.

Esta tese contribui para preencher essa lacuna ao focar-se exclusivamente no estudo do turismo de bem-estar, excluindo experiências motivadas por razões médicas. O estudo empírico realizado em território português abrangeu um vasto leque de experiências de bem-estar, tais como caminhadas na natureza, massagens, yoga, meditação e visitas a termas. Assim, esta

investigação contribui para expandir a o estudo de turismo de bem-estar no país, que tem sido frequentemente restringida ao termalismo.

Palavras-chave: Ambientes Restauradores, Bem-estar, Lealdade ao Destino, Perceção de Segurança, Preocupação do Turista, Turismo de Bem-estar

ABBREVIATION'S LIST

- APA** – American Psychological Association
- ART** – Attention Restoration Theory
- AVE** – Average Variance Extracted
- CMB** – Common Method Bias
- CR** – Composite Reliability
- EFA** – Exploratory Factor Analysis
- ETC** – European Travel Commission
- GPI** – Global Peace Index
- GW** – Global Wellness Institute
- HTMT** – Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratios
- PLS-SEM** – Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling
- PRISMA** – Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis
- PRS** – Perceived Restorativeness Scale
- PSFE** – Perceived Safety of Facility and Equipment Elements
- PSH** – Perceived Safety of Human Elements
- PSM** – Perceived Safety of Management Elements
- PSNE** – Perceived Safety of Natural Environments
- PSSE** – Perceived Safety of Social Environments
- SWLS** – Satisfaction with Life Scale
- TPSD** – Tourist Perceived Safety at Destinations
- TPRE** – Tourist Perception of Restorative Environments
- TPSS** – Tourist Perceived Safety Scale
- TWS** – Tourist Worry Scale
- VIF** – Variance Inflation Factor
- WHO** – World Health Organization
- WoS** – Web of Science
- WTO** – World Tourism Organization

CHAPTER 1
GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 Context and Scope

In recent decades, tourism has become one of the most dynamic and fastest-growing sectors in the world economy (World Tourism Organization [WTO], 2025). It has evolved from a leisure activity into a significant international trade and economic driver, particularly for developing countries, playing a vital role in sustaining local economies (Mishra & Panda, 2022; Romão et al., 2022; WTO, 2024). This growth has been accompanied by increased diversification, as destinations compete more intensively to attract visitors by offering distinctive and tailored experiences (WTO, 2024). Therefore, the demand for niche markets, such as wellness tourism, has risen, focusing on enhancing personal well-being through travel (Global Wellness Institute [GWI], 2024a).

In parallel, the field of positive psychology, as advocated by Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000), has focused on studying the factors that contribute to human flourishing, happiness, and optimal functioning. This approach extends beyond addressing psychological issues to actively promoting well-being and life satisfaction (Seligman, 2002). While predominantly rooted in psychology, contemporary well-being studies have become increasingly interdisciplinary, expanding into tourism (e.g., Chang et al., 2022; Huang et al., 2024; Smith & Diekmann, 2017). Tourism scholars have increasingly drawn on positive psychology to explore how travel fosters positive psychological states (Chang et al., 2022). Academic research suggests that tourism experiences significantly enhance life satisfaction, happiness, well-being and overall quality of life (Damijanić, 2020; Vada et al., 2020).

The intersection of psychology and tourism is particularly evident in wellness tourism, a rapidly growing segment that appeals to consumers seeking wellness activities for health benefits (GWI, 2024a; Huang et al., 2019). This trend has increased since the COVID-19 pandemic, intensifying the demand for wellness-focused travel (Chen et al., 2023; Yao et al., 2023). As a branch of health tourism, wellness tourism is centred on proactive and preventive holistic practices to harmonise the mind, body, and spirit (Backman et al., 2023; Damijanić, 2020; Koskinen & Wilska, 2019; Han et al., 2020; Kongtaveesawas, 2022). Wellness travellers pursue these experiences to achieve holistic well-being, with peaceful restorative environments pivotal in promoting physical and mental health (Liu et al., 2024). These settings help reduce directed attention fatigue, support emotional recovery, enhance mental well-being, and restore cognitive functions (Chen et al., 2023; Lehto, 2012; Lehto et al., 2017; Lin & Yang, 2024; Sun et al., 2023). Destinations offering secure and restorative wellness features significantly contribute to tourists' well-being (Liu et al., 2024; Saari et al., 2023; Yao et al., 2023), boost life

satisfaction (Yao et al., 2023), and strengthen destination loyalty (Backman et al., 2023; Kong et al., 2024).

Destinations that blend natural beauty, cultural heritage, and specialised wellness services are particularly appealing to wellness tourists. Rural settings, including forests, mountains, and coastal areas, are increasingly recognised as ideal locations for wellness tourism (Xie et al., 2022). While this form of tourism is often associated with high-end spas and luxurious resorts (Backman et al., 2023; Chen et al., 2023; GWI, 2024a; Park et al., 2021), it encompasses a wide range of experiences designed to promote health and well-being (GWI, 2024a; Xie et al., 2022). Visitors may engage in various activities, from nourishing nutrition programs and outdoor adventures to yoga, meditation, and treatments at thermal and mineral springs. All these activities contribute to a holistic wellness journey, enhancing relaxation, personal growth, and overall life satisfaction (Dini & Pencarelli, 2022; GWI, 2024a; Xie et al., 2022; Yao et al., 2023).

Furthermore, wellness tourists can be divided into two groups: primary and secondary wellness tourists. Primary wellness tourists specifically choose destinations that prioritise wellness, making it the primary purpose of their travel. In contrast, secondary wellness tourists may travel for various reasons but incorporate wellness experiences into their itinerary, such as spa treatments, fitness activities, or mindfulness practices (GWI, 2024b; Saari et al., 2023).

1.2 Purpose of the Thesis

Despite the growing body of research on wellness tourism (e.g., Dini & Pencarelli, 2022; Kazakov & Oyner, 2020), its definition and scope remain relatively ambiguous (Mueller & Kauffmann, 2001; Koncul, 2012; Huang et al., 2022; Lee & Kim, 2023). Scholars continue to debate its exact nature, often blurring the lines between wellness tourism and other closely related segments like medical tourism (e.g., Kemppainen et al., 2021; Suban, 2022; Zhong et al., 2021), which focuses on specialised medical treatment (GWI, 2018; Kazakov & Oyner, 2020; Pessot et al., 2021). These overlapping areas of study highlight the need for a clearer distinction and a more comprehensive understanding of wellness tourism in academic discourse.

To address this gap, Study 1 and Study 2 contribute to a more precise conceptualisation of wellness tourism, offering a comprehensive overview of its current state while paving the way for future scholarly exploration. Specifically, Study 1 aims to define and characterise the landscape of wellness tourism research through a bibliometric analysis conducted over the past decade. By examining the peer-reviewed selected publications, this study identifies the most-

cited articles, key contributing authors, influential journals, and the countries with the most contributions to wellness tourism research. Additionally, it explores the interrelationships between diverse research topics by analysing the co-occurrence of keywords and investigates the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on scholarly interest in wellness tourism. This analysis provides valuable insights into the evolution of the field and the shifting focus of research in response to global events.

Building on these findings, Study 2 seeks to deepen the understanding of wellness tourism through a more focused examination of the literature published within the past five years. This study adopts a systematic literature review approach to identify the theoretical models and methodological frameworks that shape wellness tourism research. This study captures the field's current state by analysing emerging themes and key trends. It provides recommendations for future research directions, addressing gaps in the literature and offering insights into the potential evolution of wellness tourism as an academic discipline.

Understanding destination loyalty is fundamental in wellness tourism research (Chua et al., 2024; Han et al., 2017) as it explores the psychological factors influencing tourists' commitment and repeated visits to wellness destinations (Kim et al., 2017). Han et al. (2018) emphasise that understanding wellness tourists' loyalty is essential for maintaining tourism destinations' competitiveness and sustainable growth.

Furthermore, the European Travel Commission's (ETC) ongoing report, "Monitoring Sentiment for Domestic and Intra-European Travel", tracks public sentiment and short-term travel intentions within Europe (European Travel Commission [ETC], 2024). According to the 19th wave of research published in June 2024, European travellers prioritise safety, good weather, and attractive deals when choosing their destinations (ETC, 2024). According to Toker and Emir (2023), safety and security are foundational elements for tourism activities and essential for the broader development of tourism and the fulfilment of travellers' psychological needs.

Feeling secure is a fundamental human need that fosters positive emotions and well-being. In tourism, this translates to safety perceptions, a sub-dimension of destination image (Xie et al., 2020), encompassing personal security, belongings protection, and a general sense of environmental peace (Sarfraz et al., 2022). In wellness tourism, where well-being and relaxation are central, peaceful and secure environments enhance the overall experience, reinforcing a sense of safety that directly influences destination loyalty.

Building on Safety System Theory and Attention Restoration Theory (ART), Study 3 examines the relationship between destination loyalty in wellness tourism and its interaction

with tourist perceived safety at destinations (TPSD), tourist worry, tourist perception of restorative environments (TPRE), well-being, and life satisfaction in the Portuguese context.

1.3 Significance of the Thesis

Good health and well-being are among the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (United Nations, 2015). The link between tourism, health and well-being has been highlighted (United Nations, 2015), with wellness tourism playing a crucial role in promoting and sustaining individuals' health and well-being. As an emerging segment with significant potential (GWI, 2024a; Huang et al., 2019), studying wellness tourism is fundamental for accurately defining its scope and unique features (Mueller & Kauffmann, 2001; Koncul, 2012; Huang et al., 2022; Lee & Kim, 2023). Recognising its potential can provide valuable insights for researchers, investors, and policymakers to identify opportunities for sustainable development, drive innovation, and craft policies that enhance its long-term growth. Additionally, a deeper understanding of wellness tourism can facilitate the creation of new partnerships, improve destination marketing strategies, and ensure that tourism infrastructure aligns with the needs of wellness-focused travellers.

As one of the most competitive tourist destinations globally, Portugal (Turismo de Portugal, 2024b) offers an ideal setting for wellness tourism, featuring mild winters, warm summers, breathtaking beaches, lush mountains, nutritious local cuisine, and rich cultural heritage, including historic towns and UNESCO World Heritage sites (Moreira, 2018; Turismo de Portugal, 2024a). Moreover, Portugal is ranked the seventhth safest country globally (Institute for Economics & Peace, 2023). It provides a secure environment for tourists seeking peace of mind and stress-free experiences during their wellness journeys. Despite this potential, the wellness tourism sector in Portugal remains largely underexplored. Current research has predominantly focused on thermal experiences within the broader health and wellness tourism framework, including medical tourism (e.g., Brandão et al., 2021; Mota et al., 2023; Pereira et al., 2023; Pina & Martins, 2022; Quintela, 2023).

This thesis exclusively examines wellness tourism experiences, expanding the focus beyond thermalism to explore diverse wellness options in Portugal. Additionally, it investigates underexplored concepts such as TPSD and tourist worry, addressing a gap in tourism literature by shifting the focus from risk perceptions, the dominant theme in prior studies (e.g., Fuchs et al., 2024; Godovykh et al., 2021; Kim et al., 2023), to safety perceptions. This perspective remains unexamined mainly, as existing studies primarily centre on COVID-19 and health-related risks (e.g., Goyal & Taneja, 2023; Li & Huang, 2022; Majeed & Ramkisson, 2020).

Furthermore, the thesis explores how TPSD influence TPRE, an overlooked area in wellness tourism research, and their impact on tourist well-being, life satisfaction and destination loyalty. This study aims to foster a more diversified wellness tourism sector by addressing these gaps, enhancing Portugal's international appeal and overall development in this field.

1.4 Methodology

This thesis employs qualitative and quantitative methodologies.

Study 1 applies bibliometric analysis, including descriptive and network analysis, to assess patterns and impact in the literature on wellness tourism. Data was collected from the Web of Science database, covering peer-reviewed articles published between 2013 and 2023, resulting in a final sample of 143 peer-reviewed articles. VOSviewer 1.6.19 (Van Eck & Waltman, 2010) was used to map co-authorship and co-occurrence networks, providing insights into key research trends, author collaborations, and thematic connections within wellness tourism literature.

Study 2 follows a systematic literature review based on Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis (PRISMA) guidelines (Page et al., 2021) to map the current knowledge on wellness tourism. A targeted search of the Web of Science and Scopus databases was conducted using predefined keywords and inclusion criteria to ensure relevance. After screening and refining the dataset, an inductive content analysis was performed on 72 peer-reviewed articles published between 2019 and 2023.

Study 3 employs Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) using SmartPLS 4.0.8.2 (Ringle et al., 2022) to estimate and validate a complex model with second-order constructs. This method is well-suited for handling non-normal data and small sample sizes (Hair et al., 2019). Common method bias (CMB) was assessed using Harman's single-factor test and collinearity tests, confirming no significant CMB issues. A two-step approach was applied to estimate reflective second-order constructs before testing the structural model and hypotheses. Data was collected through an online survey created using Google Forms (<https://www.google.com/forms/about/>) between November 2023 and July 2024, resulting in 237 valid responses. The survey targeted national and international tourists aged 18 and above who had experienced wellness activities in Portugal since 2022, including primary and secondary wellness travellers.

1.5 Structure of the Thesis

This thesis is structured into five chapters. Chapter One introduces the research topic by outlining the research problem, objectives, and the significance of the study. It also provides an overview of the constituent articles and their objectives.

Chapter Two, “*Wellness Tourism: A Bibliometric Analysis Approach*”, presents a bibliometric study analysing wellness tourism publications. This chapter maps research trends, key authors, influential publications, and thematic developments in the field.

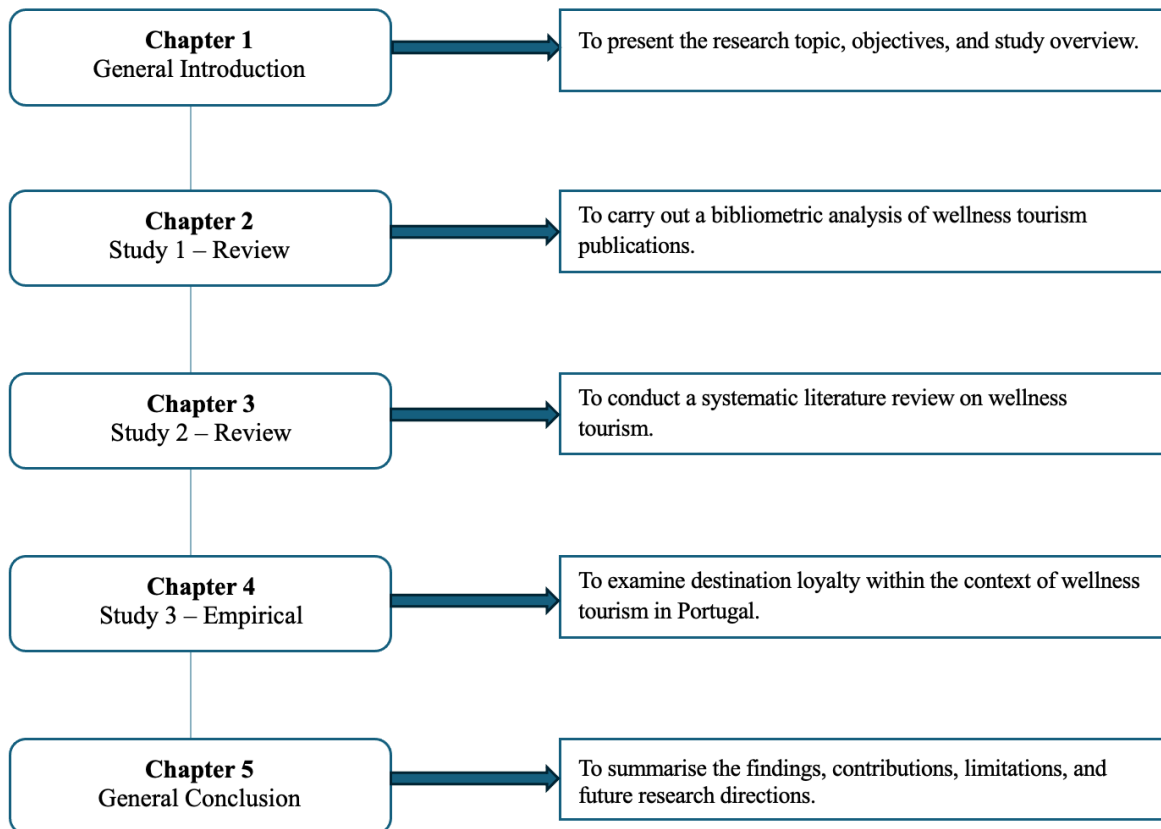
Chapter Three, “*Wellness Tourism: A Systematic Literature Review*”, conducts a systematic literature review to critically examine wellness tourism frameworks, methodologies, emerging themes, and key trends. It also identifies research gaps and suggests future research directions.

Chapter Four, “*Building Destination Loyalty in Wellness Tourism: The Impact of Safety Perceptions, Tourist Worry, Restorative Environments, Well-being, and Life Satisfaction*”, explores factors influencing destination loyalty in wellness tourism. This chapter examines the interplay between destination loyalty and TPSD, tourist worry, TPRE, well-being, and life satisfaction within the context of Portugal.

Chapter five synthesises the main findings and contributions of the study. It discusses the theoretical and practical implications, acknowledges the study’s limitations, and provides recommendations for future research.

Figure 1.1 presents a schematic representation of the thesis structure, highlighting the objectives of each chapter.

Figure 1.1. Structure of the thesis



Source: Own elaboration.

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CHAPTER 2

STUDY 1 – WELLNESS TOURISM: A BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS APPROACH

WELLNESS TOURISM: A BIBLIOMETRIC ANALYSIS APPROACH¹

Abstract

An emerging field, wellness tourism can reduce stress levels and foster positive emotions, leading to a healthy balance of body, mind, and spirit and satisfying consumer experiences that enhance personal well-being. As a distinct subcategory of health tourism, it is often erroneously interchanged with medical tourism in the literature. Moreover, up to this point, no comprehensive review has assessed the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on wellness tourism research. A bibliometric review was conducted to fill this gap. Data was collected in June 2023 through the Web of Science (WoS) database. The selection process encompassed articles published from January 2013 to June 2023. A total of 143 relevant peer-reviewed articles published in English-language journals were selected. Data were analysed through evaluation techniques based on productivity and impact measures and relational techniques via mapping the results through VOSviewer software. Based on these findings, potential directions and suggestions for future research were proposed.

Keywords: Bibliometric Analysis, Covid-19, VOSviewer, Wellness Tourism, Wellness

2.1 Introduction

According to the Global Wellness Institute (GWI), wellness tourism is a fast-growing tourism segment that results from the intersection of two large and growing industries: tourism and the wellness industry (Global Wellness Institute [GWI], 2018b). The GWI estimated that in 2017 and 2019, wellness tourism generated US\$617.0bn and US\$720.4bn, respectively, representing an average annual growth rate of 8.1% between 2017 and 2019 (GWI, 2018a). Tourism is an important economic segment that benefits individual and social development in many regions across the globe (Mishra & Panda, 2022). It increases incomes, job development, and living standards (Romão et al., 2022). However, the sociocultural changes during the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly regarding travel restrictions, have directly affected the international travel and tourism industry (Wang et al., 2022). In 2020, the wellness tourism segment only

¹ Article published.

Martins, P., de Jesus, S. N., Pocinho, M., & Pinto, P. (2023). Wellness Tourism: A Bibliometric Analysis Approach. *Journal of Tourism, Sustainability and Well-being*, 11(4), 203-217. Received 30 July 2023/ Accepted 27 November 2023. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.34623/p5ve-gw38>

generated US\$435.7bn, which reveals a decrease of 39.5% when compared with the previous year (GWI, 2021). Nevertheless, GWI (2021) predicts that wellness tourism will return to its robust growth in the next five years with a projected average annual growth rate of 20.9%.

Health and wellness are intricately related to overall satisfaction and quality of life, contributing to the high demand for specialised wellness services at most tourist destinations (Garjan et al., 2023; Liu et al., 2023). Wellness vacations can reduce stress levels and foster positive emotions, leading to a healthy balance of body, mind, and spirit and satisfying consumer experiences that enhance personal well-being (Backman et al., 2023). In the post-COVID-19 era, the demand for wellness and healthier lifestyles is expected to intensify (Sthapit et al., 2023). As a result, individuals will increasingly seek holistic alternatives to preserve and improve their health (Tiwari & Hashmi, 2022), and wellness tourist destinations must create a differentiated service offering (Chen et al., 2023).

The worldwide wellness sector has emerged in response to people's increasing need to have experiences that bring relaxation and rejuvenation, particularly during the pandemic and post-pandemic period (Mishra & Panda, 2022; Bočkus et al., 2023). Likewise, research in this field has also been growing, with a few studies attempting to understand the mechanisms behind the demand for wellness tourism (Kemppainen et al., 2021).

Recent theoretical studies (e.g., Kemppainen et al., 2021; Zhong et al., 2021; Suban, 2022) have sought to collect data characterising the evolution of wellness tourism and suggest guidelines for future research. For example, there is the study of Zhong et al. (2021), where through a review of the literature on medical, health, and wellness tourism between 1970 and 2020, they verified that the scientific community interest in these tourism segments increased between 2013 and 2017. In the same line of research, Kemppainen et al. (2021) conducted a literature review on health, medical, and wellness tourism in research published between 2010 and 2018. The authors concluded that studies in this field emerged during the past decade, mainly between 2017 and 2018. Suban (2022) has developed a bibliometric study based on wellness tourism research published between 1998 and 2021. The investigation attempted to identify the main contributors to wellness tourism, publication patterns, most cited documents, productive countries, authors' affiliation, popular keywords, and its co-occurrence.

Despite their valuable insights, none of these studies considered the distinction between wellness and medical tourism during the article selection process for review (Kemppainen et al., 2021; Suban, 2022; Zhong et al., 2021). Nevertheless, it is essential to consider this distinction to define and characterise wellness tourism publications accurately (Mueller & Kauffmann, 2001; Koncul, 2012; Huang et al., 2022; Lee & Kim, 2023). While wellness and

medical tourism contribute to health and well-being, they serve distinct purposes and cater to travel needs and preferences (He et al., 2022; Phuthong et al., 2022). In addition, the impact of the pandemic on publications in this field has yet to be found in previous investigations (Kemppainen et al., 2021; Suban, 2022; Zhong et al., 2021). To address these gaps, conducting a bibliometric review on wellness tourism was considered pertinent.

2.2 Literature Review

Tourism has been strongly linked to health and wellness studies and is seen as a pursuit of mental, physical, and spiritual health (Patterson & Balderas-Cejudo, 2022). Previous studies have shown that interest in wellness tourism research has emerged in the last decade (Kemppainen et al., 2021; Zhong et al., 2021; Suban, 2022), and academics have postulated that the pandemic will positively influence consumer behaviour toward wellness tourism in the medium term (Kongtaveesawas et al., 2022).

Wellness tourism has been growing faster than the whole tourism industry since new healthcare trends emphasise holistic methods of prevention and well-being rather than specialised medical procedures to treat illness (Phuthong et al., 2022). Wellness tourism concerns a healthy lifestyle and involves individual or group travel to specialised destinations (Sthapit et al., 2023). Tourism scholars state that it is universally challenging to define wellness tourism because of cultural and linguistic differences (He et al., 2022). Nevertheless, the GWI (2018b) defines wellness tourism as travel associated with maintaining or enhancing one's personal well-being, where people seek to prevent diseases, reduce stress levels, or increase their well-being. It is a proactive process, without associated pathology, focused on prevention where tourists actively engage in wellness activities, leading to a holistic health state encompassing spiritual, emotional, mental, physical, social, and environmental dimensions (GWI, 2018b).

Despite the nuances, contradictions, and contrasts in defining the concept of wellness tourism (Lee & Kim, 2023), it has been considered a type of health tourism, an umbrella concept for another related tourism, medical tourism (He et al., 2022). Contrary to wellness tourism, medical tourism is a reactive process focused on the healing and treatment of an associated pathology, which involves travelling to access specialised medical treatment (GWI 2018b; Kazakov & Oyner, 2020; Pessot et al., 2021).

Wellness tourism is a recent line of research and presents in several publications some inaccuracies in its definition and consequent distinction from other types of tourism (Mueller & Kauffmann, 2001; Koncul, 2012; Huang et al., 2022; Lee & Kim, 2023;). In addition, the

impact of the pandemic on publications in this field has yet to be found in previous studies (Kemppainen et al., 2021; Zhong et al., 2021; Suban, 2022). One of the most critical indicators for evaluating the quality of scientific production is the analysis of bibliographic data through bibliometric methods (Santos-Rojo et al., 2023). Bibliometric analysis is widely used to highlight trends and evolutions in publications, which allows both evaluation and prediction of potential future areas of study (Hanaa & Abdul, 2023).

To address these gaps, conducting a bibliometric review on wellness tourism was considered pertinent, excluding publications related to medical tourism once past research did not reach this distinction. The study has addressed the following research questions:

RQ1. Which are the most-cited articles and the most contributing authors, journals, and countries in wellness tourism research?

RQ2. What is the relationship among topics in terms of the co-occurrence of keywords?

RQ3. What was the impact of the pandemic on the number of publications in wellness tourism, and which topics were the most investigated?

2.3 Methodology

2.3.1 Data collection

Data was collected in June 2023 through the Web of Science (WoS) database, as it is one of the most widely used databases in the tourism field; the WOS core collection covers literature data that has passed quality inspection in this database (Mihalic *et al.*, 2021; Chen *et al.*, 2022; Pahrudin *et al.*, 2022; Coll-Ramis *et al.*, 2023; Santos-Rojo *et al.*, 2023). Articles published between January 2013 and June 2023 were selected once the number of publications in wellness tourism has grown in the last decade (Kemppainen *et al.*, 2021). The keywords “wellness tourism,” “tourist,” “visitor,” “travel,” and “medical tourism” were combined with the Boolean operators “OR”, “AND”, and “NOT.” The authors selected only peer-reviewed articles published in English-language journals to refine the results. A total of 330 relevant records were retrieved. The authors screened the remaining records’ titles, keywords, and abstracts for thematic relevance. The screening process generated 143 papers, and the full texts were further reviewed.

2.3.2 Data analysis

Bibliometric analysis is a form of quantitative analysis through mathematical and statistical methods to measure the value and impact of research publications in a given field (Santos-Rojo et al., 2023). The most common methods encompass evaluation techniques based on

productivity and impact measures, focused on the total number of citations and publications (Coll-Ramis et al., 2023), and relational techniques via mapping the results (Van Eck & Waltman, 2010). The VOSviewer version 1.6.19 (Van Eck & Waltman, 2010) has mapped the results through co-authorship and co-occurrence analysis. VOSviewer is a software tool for generating, visualising, and analysing bibliometric networks. Maps created using VOSviewer include publications, authors, keywords, journals, or countries (Rocio et al., 2023). In a map display, items with a higher weight are shown more prominently than items with a lower weight. Between items, there is a connection or a relationship named link. Each link has a strength that can, for example, indicate the number of publications in which two researchers were co-authors (co-authorship links) or the number of publications in which two terms occurred together (co-occurrence links) (Santos-Rojo et al., 2023).

2.4 Results

2.4.1 Sample characteristics

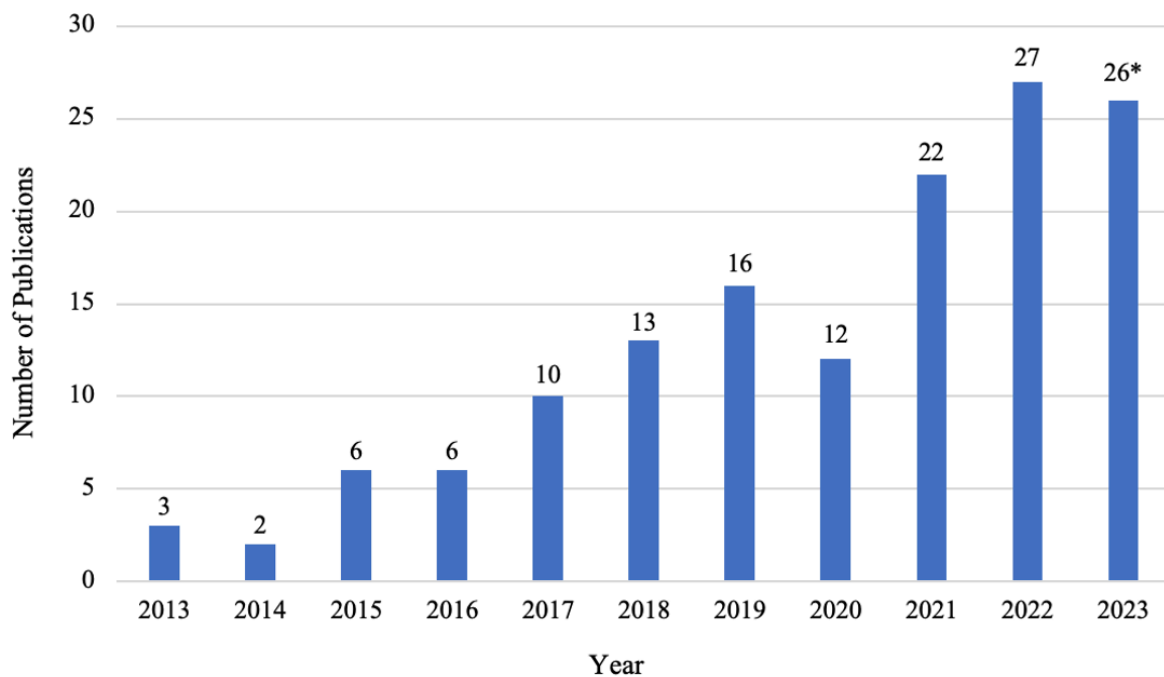
The analysis in this paper focuses on articles published in journals indexed in the WoS database from January 2013 to June 2023. The sample covers 143 articles produced by 75 journals and written by 372 authors from 45 different countries. There are only 14 single-authored articles, while 358 authors wrote in collaboration.

2.4.2 Performance analysis

2.4.2.1 Publication trends

The number of publications per year (Figure 2.1) shows a generally increasing trend from 2013 to the first half of 2023. There are some fluctuations in the number of publications from year to year, but overall, the trend is upward. From 2015 to 2023, there was a consistent growth in the number of publications, with some years showing more significant increases than others. The largest increase in the number of publications occurred between 2020 and 2021, with an increase from 12 to 22 publications. The number of publications in 2020 was 12, compared to the previous year's 16 in 2019, indicating a slight decrease in research output. This decrease can be attributed to the challenges and disruptions caused by the pandemic, including the publication process. The data for 2023 represents the number of publications in the first six months only, providing a snapshot of the research activity during that period. In the first half of 2023, there were 26 publications on wellness tourism, indicating a robust level of research output. If the trend observed in previous years continues, it is reasonable to anticipate continued publication growth throughout 2023.

Figure 2.1. Number of publications from 2013 to 2023



**The figure for 2023 refers only to the period from January to June.*

Source: Own elaboration.

2.4.2.2 Top authors and countries

The most influential authors and the top countries with the highest cited documents in wellness tourism research are shown in Table 2.1, obtained through citation metrics. Chun-Chu Chen and James F. Petrick are the most highly cited authors, with 315 and 280 citations, respectively, which means that their research contributions have garnered significant attention and recognition within the field. Based on the total number of publications, the most influential author is Heesup Han, with five publications and 214 citations. Among 45 countries with at least one document published in wellness tourism research, the USA emerges as the leading country, with 26 papers and 739 citations. The high number of citations reflects the significant impact and recognition of research conducted by scholars from the USA. Conversely, China has the highest number of published documents, boasting 32 papers and 356 citations.

Table 2.1. Top authors and countries on wellness tourism research

Authors	TC	TP	Countries	TC	TP
Chen, Chun-Chu	315	4	USA	739	26
Petrick, James F.	280	3	Australia	568	10
Han, Heesup	214	5	South Korea	395	15
Kiatkawsin, Kiattipoom	210	4	China	389	32
Kim, Wansoo	210	4	Taiwan	269	14

Note(s): TC = Total Citations, TP = Total Publications.

Source: Own elaboration.

2.4.2.3 Most-cited articles

The top five cited articles on wellness tourism research are ranked in Table 2.2 based on the total number of citations. Of the 143 selected articles, the research paper titled “Health and wellness benefits of travel experiences: A literature review,” authored by Chen, C.C., and Petrick (2013), emerged as the most cited, accumulating a substantial number of 166 citations. Their study attempts to comprehensively review the literature concerning travel's health and wellness benefits. The findings indicated that numerous studies had substantiated the favourable impact of travel experiences on individuals’ perceived health and well-being. Nevertheless, these benefits tend to diminish gradually after the vacation period.

Table 2.2. Top articles on wellness tourism research

Authors	Title	Journal	TC
Chen, C.C. & Petrick (2013)	Health and wellness benefits of travel experiences: A literature review	Journal of Travel Research	166
Han et al., (2018)	The role of wellness spa tourism performance in building destination loyalty: The case of Thailand	Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing	145
Chen, K.H. et al., (2013)	Essential customer service factors and the segmentation of older visitors within wellness tourism based on hot springs hotels	International Journal of Hospitality Management	103
Loureiro et al., (2013)	The effect of atmospheric cues and involvement on pleasure and relaxation: the spa hotel context	International Journal of Hospitality Management	90
Han et al., (2017)	Investigating customer loyalty formation for wellness spa: Individualism vs. collectivism	International Journal of Hospitality Management	53

Note(s): TC = Total Citations.
Source: Own elaboration.

2.4.2.4 Key journals

Table 2.3 provides a compilation of the leading journals in wellness tourism research. Tourism Review and Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing stand out with notable citation counts of 420 and 266, respectively. However, considering the number of published articles, Sustainability is the most prolific journal, with 15 publications. Analysing the data from Table 3, it becomes evident that most of the top five journals specialising in wellness tourism research are specifically focused on tourism, emphasising the significance of tourism-oriented publications in this domain.

Table 2.3. Top journals on wellness tourism research

Journal	TC	TP	Tourism
Tourism Review	420	6	X
Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing	266	7	X
Tourism Management Perspectives	200	5	X
Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research	167	7	X
Sustainability	67	15	

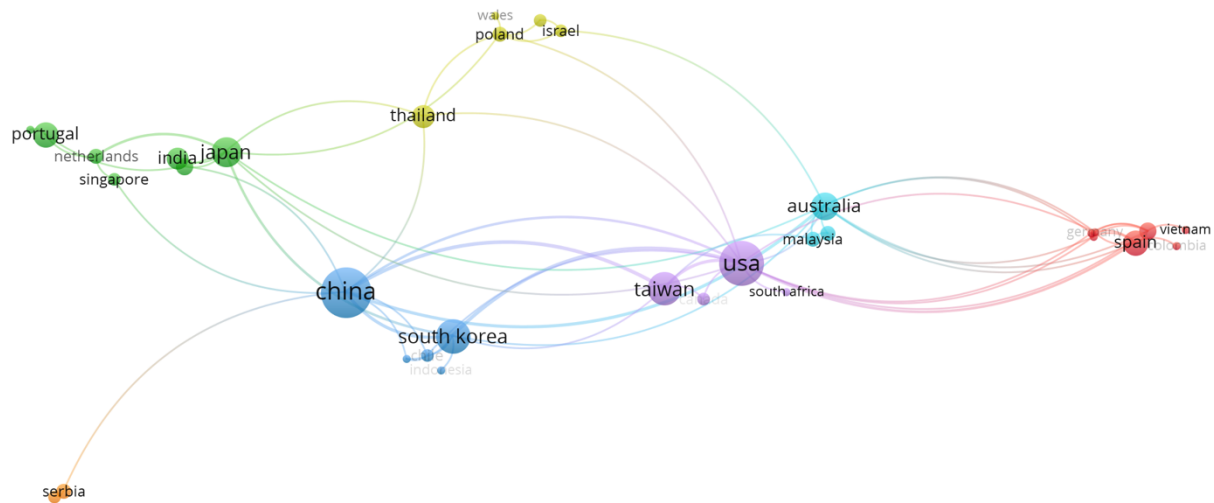
Note(s): TC = Total Citations, TP = Total Publications.
Source: Own elaboration.

2.4.2.5 Co-authorship by country

Co-authorship analysis examines the collaboration networks among authors, organisations, or countries in advancing knowledge within a specific scientific domain (Rocio *et al.*, 2023). The observable and well-established technique of co-authorship analysis offers valuable insights into scientific collaboration. Rather than working in isolation, researchers now engage in teamwork, leveraging diverse perspectives and complementary skills to achieve shared goals. Therefore, co-authorship analysis effectively assesses collaboration trends and identifies significant contributors (Hanna & Abdul, 2023). Consequently, this study aims to explore co-authorship research by country, recognising the importance of understanding collaborative patterns and contributions within specific geographic contexts. Among the 45 countries, 33 engage in international co-authorship collaborations.

Figure 2.2 illustrates these countries using labelled circles, where the size of each circle corresponds to the number of papers written by authors from that nation. The thickness of the connections between countries indicates the strength of their collaborative efforts, as measured by the number of jointly authored documents. Based on these connections, seven distinct clusters emerge. Clusters 1 and 2 consist of seven items each, while clusters 3 and 4 comprise five. Cluster 5 includes four items, cluster 6 has three, and cluster 7 has two. With a link strength of 22, the USA boasts the highest number of links, collaborating with 15 countries. Notably, the USA maintains robust ties with South Korea and Taiwan, reflecting its strong social presence. Australia ranks second with the most links, while China secures third, with 12 and 10 links, respectively. Interestingly, 12 countries operate in isolation, signifying a need for collaborative work between their authors and those from other nations.

Figure 2.2. Co-authorship analysis based on countries



Source: VOSviewer software.

2.4.2.6 Co-occurrence analysis

Co-occurrence analysis is a tool that maps the research area and creates a knowledge map based on words and their relationships. The purpose is to understand scientific research's current themes and future roadmap (Toker & Emir, 2023). Among the 874 keywords used in the 143 selected articles on wellness tourism research, 30 met the threshold of occurring at least 5 times. Specific keywords, such as “model” or “analysis,” were irrelevant and removed. The 30 items were distributed in 4 clusters. Cluster 1 has nine keywords, clusters 2 and 3 have eight keywords each, and cluster 4 has five items. The network map illustrated in Figure 2.3 shows that the clusters are closely related and provide a network of interconnected clusters.

Keyword analysis shows two pairs of keywords with the strongest connection: “wellness tourism-health” and “wellness tourism-tourist experience,” justifying the central theme of the study. In cluster 1 (red), keywords such as authenticity, motivations, and destination image suggest the similarity of studies with this theme. Cluster 2 (green) focuses on customer experience and behavioural intentions. Cluster 3 (blue) shows well-being, sustainability, and word-of-mouth investigations. Cluster 4 (yellow) focused on the overall tourism experience. The most common keywords are customer satisfaction, service quality, behavioural intentions, motivations, and loyalty, suggesting that most research focuses on these themes. Conversely, keywords such as well-being, destination image, perceived value, authenticity, and sustainability, which appeared less frequently, suggest emerging themes.

the total number of citations and publications, and relational techniques via mapping the results through VOSviewer software version 1.6.19 (Van Eck & Waltman, 2010).

RQ1. Which are the most-cited articles and the most contributing authors, journals, and countries in wellness tourism research?

Based on a performance analysis, the most contributing authors, countries, and journals and the most-cited articles were identified. Chun-Chu Chen and James F. Petrick were the most-cited authors, with 315 and 280 total citations each. Among 45 countries with at least one document published in wellness tourism research, the USA emerges as the leading country, followed by Australia and South Korea. No nation from Europe entered the top five most influential countries, suggesting that wellness tourism research could be a potential research area in this continent. The research paper “Health and wellness benefits of travel experiences: A literature review” by Chen, C.C. and Petrick (2013) was the most-cited article, accumulating 166 total citations. This result demonstrates scholars’ interest in the potential benefits of travel to health and wellness dimensions. *Tourism Review* and *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing* were the most influential journals, with 420 and 266 citations, respectively. Most of the top five journals specialising in wellness tourism research focus on tourism, emphasising the significance of tourism-oriented publications in this domain. Data were analysed based on co-authorship for mapping analysis through VOSviewer software. Co-authorship analysis examines the collaboration networks among authors, organisations, or countries. In the present study, the co-authorship by countries was selected. Among 45 countries, 33 engage in international co-authorship collaborations. The USA boasts the highest number of links, collaborating with 15 countries. The strong social presence of the USA is evident in its robust relationships with South Korea and Taiwan.

RQ2. What is the relationship among topics in terms of the co-occurrence of keywords?

Regarding co-occurrence, among the 874 keywords from the 143 selected articles, 30 meet the threshold of occurring a minimum of 5 times. The most common keywords were customer satisfaction, service quality, behavioural intentions, motivations, and loyalty, suggesting that most research focuses on these themes. Conversely, keywords such as well-being, destination image, perceived value, authenticity, and sustainability, which appeared less frequently, suggest emerging themes. Based on keyword analysis, Table 2.4 outlines recommendations for future research and provides a comprehensive list of potential sources that researchers can utilise as references for their studies.

Table 2.4. Future research suggestions

Thematic	Contextualization	Keywords	Future research	Potential sources
Destination attractiveness and competitiveness	Destination attractiveness corresponds to the destination's ability to attract and satisfy potential tourists through their attributes that lead tourists to select one destination over another (Medina-Muñoz & Medina-Muñoz, 2012).	Motivation, destination image, risk perception, sustainability	Investigate the evolving motivations of wellness traveler's post-pandemic. Explore how risk perception influences wellness travelers' decision-making and travel behavior. Examine the impact of destination image on perceptions of safety among wellness travelers. Investigate the role of sustainability in destination attractiveness for wellness travelers. Identify and analyze the rise of new and emerging wellness tourism destinations. Investigate the crisis management and recovery strategies implemented by wellness tourism destinations during and after the pandemic.	Pramod & Nayak (2018) Brandão et al., (2021) Bhatt et al., (2022) Bhatta et al., (2022) Li & Huang (2022) Xue & Shen (2022) Handler & Kawaminami (2023) Lee & Kim (2023) Toker & Emir (2023)
Tourist experience	A positive and satisfactory experience have a significant effect on tourists' satisfaction, promotes well-being, and consequently increasing destination loyalty (Liberato <i>et al.</i> , 2021)	Involvement, authenticity, perceived value, service quality, customer satisfaction, well-being	Investigate the impact of personalized wellness programs on tourist involvement. Examine how the authenticity of wellness experiences enhances cultural immersion for tourists. Assess the relationship between perceived value and wellness offerings. Analyze the link between service quality in wellness tourism services and customer satisfaction. Conduct longitudinal studies to measure the long-term well-being outcomes of wellness tourism experiences. Investigate the stress-reducing effects of wellness tourism experiences.	Choi et al., (2015) Chen et al., (2016) Trihas & Konstantarou (2016) Hudson et al., (2017) Pesonen & Tuohino (2017) He et al., (2021) Xie et al., (2021) Chen et al., (2023) Liu et al., (2023) Lee & Kim (2023)
Behavioral Intentions	Consumer behavior refers to the consuming actions of products/services by individuals and involves an intention based on previous experiences or ideas (Hudson <i>et al.</i> , 2017)	Loyalty, word-of-mouth	Investigate the factors that influence loyalty among wellness tourists and its impact on repurchase intentions. Assess the effectiveness of loyalty programs in wellness tourism and their influence on behavioral intentions. Examine the relationship between positive word-of-mouth and intentions to recommend wellness tourism experiences to others. Study the role of crisis management in building customer loyalty and positive word-of-mouth during challenging times. Explore the influence of social media on word-of-mouth in wellness tourism. Segment wellness tourists based on their loyalty levels and word-of-mouth.	Loureiro et al., (2013) Han et al., (2017) Han et al., (2018) Han et al., (2020)

Source: Own elaboration.

RQ3. What was the impact of the pandemic on the number of publications in wellness tourism, and which topics were the most investigated?

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted the tourism industry (Bhatta et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2022). Several countries imposed travel restrictions and lockdown measures to control the spread of the virus (Wang et al., 2022). This drastically reduced international and domestic travel, including wellness tourism (GWI, 2021). People hesitated to travel due to safety concerns, affecting the demand for wellness-related trips (Li & Huang, 2022; Wang et al., 2022). Nevertheless, the pandemic raised awareness of health and well-being, leading to a greater interest in wellness-related activities (Tiwari & Hashmi, 2022; Sthapit et al., 2023). Likewise, research in this field has also been growing, with a few studies attempting to understand the mechanisms behind the demand for wellness tourism

Based on the sample of 143 selected articles, there was a noticeable upward trend in the number of publications per year from 2013 to 2023. During the onset of the pandemic in 2020, there was a slight decrease in research output, with 12 publications compared to 16 publications in 2019. However, the number of publications experienced a significant upswing between 2020 and 2021, reaching 22 articles. In 2022, this growth was maintained with a total of 27 publications. In the first half of 2023, 26 publications on wellness tourism were recorded, indicating a robust level of research output. If the trend observed in previous years persists, it is reasonable to expect further growth in publications throughout 2023. These findings prompt an interesting inquiry into whether the COVID-19 pandemic has contributed to an increased interest of scholars in wellness tourism research, a topic that warrants examination in future studies (Mishra & Panda, 2022; Tiwari & Hashmi, 2022; Bočkus et al., 2023; Chen et al., 2023; Sthapit et al., 2023).

Since 2020, the most investigated topics have been those related to the destination image (e.g., Tiwari & Hashmi, 2022), service experience (e.g., Chen et al., 2013), and loyalty (e.g., Han et al., 2018). Concerning tourist experience, the most studied variables are those related to authenticity (e.g., Loureiro et al., 2013), involvement (e.g., Loureiro et al., 2013), and well-being (e.g., Liu et al., 2023). These data provide valuable insights into how the global health crisis has influenced interest in wellness tourism research. The pandemic may have altered travellers' perceptions of destinations and the services they offer (Wen et al., 2021; Bhatta et al., 2022), leading researchers to explore how destinations have adapted to ensure safety, meet travellers' needs, and build loyalty during uncertain times (Handler, 2022; Li & Huang, 2022). The pandemic's disruptions have likely influenced the demand for authentic and meaningful travel experiences (Liu et al., 2023). With health concerns in mind, travellers may have shifted

their focus towards more mindful and immersive experiences (Chen et al., 2016), which could explain the continued investigation of authenticity, involvement, and well-being variables in wellness tourism (Loureiro et al., 2013). Understanding how travellers seek genuine connections, engage actively, and prioritise their well-being amid the pandemic could help tourism stakeholders cater to evolving preferences (He et al., 2021; Xie et al., 2021). Overall, the prominence of these topics in wellness tourism research since 2020 showcases the resilience of the industry and its adaptability to the challenges posed by the pandemic. Scholars and practitioners recognise the importance of addressing travellers' changing needs and expectations during times of uncertainty (Mishra & Panda, 2022; Bočkus et al., 2023).

2.6 Implications and Limitations

This bibliometric review on wellness tourism allows researchers, practitioners, and industry stakeholders to identify the current research trends. It helps pinpoint the most studied topics, emerging areas of interest, and potential gaps in the existing literature. The analysis of co-authorship and co-citation networks in the review offers insights into the collaborations and influence among researchers (Hanna & Abdul, 2023). This can foster future collaborations and encourage knowledge exchange within the academic community (Rocio et al., 2023). Moreover, this investigation contributes to understanding how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected wellness tourism research. It provides insights into the emergence of new topics, the shift in research focus, and the most studied areas during the pandemic. Industry stakeholders in wellness tourism can use the review's findings to adapt their offers, marketing strategies, and services to cater to changing traveller needs and demands.

While the paper makes valuable contributions, it is essential to acknowledge and address certain limitations. One notable limitation is relying on a single database, WoS, for data retrieval rather than multiple sources. Although the authors believed that WoS provided a substantial representation of relevant papers (Chen et al., 2021; Mihalic et al., 2021; Pahrudin et al., 2022; Coll-Ramis et al., 2023; Santos-Rojo et al., 2023), operating several databases would have ensured broader coverage of the topic. Furthermore, the inclusion criteria excluded unpublished working papers, book reviews, conference proceedings, and doctoral theses, potentially omitting relevant research. Additionally, the study's focus only on publications in English led to the oversight of valuable research conducted in other languages. The study's data analysis was restricted to VOSviewer software (Van Eck & Waltman, 2010). However, incorporating tools like R-Package can provide an alternative and complementary data perspective.

Addressing these limitations in future research would provide a more comprehensive and diverse view of the subject matter.

Acknowledgements

This paper was financed by National Funds provided by FCT – Foundation for Science and Technology (Portugal) through project UI/BD/150799/2020.

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CHAPTER 3

STUDY 2 – WELLNESS TOURISM: A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

WELLNESS TOURISM: A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW²

Abstract

Wellness tourism is a proactive process where people travel to maintain or enhance their well-being. The main goal of this study is to analyse the publications on wellness tourism as a subcategory of health tourism over the last five years and contribute to a better understanding of this field. Specifically, the objectives are: a) to identify the theoretical models and methodological frameworks involving wellness tourism, b) to identify prominent and emerging themes, and c) to provide directions for future investigations. A systematic literature review based on the PRISMA guidelines was carried out through Web Science and Scopus databases in December 2023. After applying the inclusion and exclusion criteria, 72 peer-reviewed empirical articles published between 2019 and 2023 in English-language academic journals were selected. The review identified and assessed the selected studies' theoretical and methodological frameworks. Additionally, the thematic analysis revealed 66 distinct variables related to wellness tourism, highlighting emerging research trends. Finally, the study outlines potential avenues for future research. This systematic review provides theoretical insights and practical contributions to the growing field of wellness tourism.

Keywords: PRISMA Guidelines, Systematic Review, Tourists, Wellness, Wellness Tourism

3.1 Introduction

Wellness tourism has recently witnessed significant growth by attracting consumers to engage in wellness-related activities for health benefits, with a forecast for sustained development (Global Wellness Institute [GWI], 2018; Huang et al., 2019). Post-pandemic sociocultural changes significantly impacted the travel and tourism industry (Kim & Yang, 2021). In particular, the global outbreak of COVID-19 in 2020 heightened awareness of physical, mental, and spiritual well-being (Kotur, 2022; Liu et al., 2022). As a result, scholars posit that, in the medium term, this increased focus on health and well-being is likely to positively influence consumer behaviour toward wellness-related services and products (Kongtaveesawas, 2022).

² Article published.

Martins, P., de Jesus, S. N., Pocinho, M., & Pinto, P. (2025). Wellness tourism: a systematic literature review. *International Journal of Spa and Wellness*, (ahead-of-print). Received 04 March 2024/ Accepted 07 February 2025. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/24721735.2025.2467608>

Before discussing wellness tourism, it is essential to have a comprehensive understanding of health and well-being concepts within a broader context to grasp the context of wellness (Dillette et al., 2021; Riswanto & Kim, 2023). According to the World Health Organization (WHO; 2023), “Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity” (para. 1). Furthermore, according to the Global Wellness Institute (GWI, 2021), wellness is characterised as an individual proactive pursuit of lifestyles, choices, and activities that together work toward an optimal state of health and well-being. While health and wellness are distinct concepts, they are intricately linked to enhancing individuals’ overall health (Riswanto & Kim, 2023). Health is regarded as the primary goal, with wellness functioning as a pathway to attain it. Wellness sits within the larger context of overall health (Damijanić, 2019). Regarding well-being, this concept primarily represents an intangible concept of happiness and is both subjective and psychological in nature (Damijanić, 2019; Dillette et al., 2021; Thal & Hudson, 2019a). Whereas wellness is a holistic term encompassing mind, body, spirit, and environment, well-being reflects a psychological state (Thal & Hudson, 2019a).

Wellness tourism has recently emerged as a significant area of interest in academic literature (Kemppainen et al., 2021). Despite this increased focus, many theoretical studies on wellness tourism fail to approach it as a distinct sub-category of health tourism, frequently conflating it with similar related segments. This overlap reflects a gap in the literature, as there remains a lack of studies exclusively analysing wellness tourism publications. For example, investigations by Kemppainen et al. (2021), Zhong et al. (2021), and Suban (2022) have included medical tourism, a distinct sub-category of health tourism, within their scope, thereby limiting their ability to provide a focused understanding of wellness tourism research. Moreover, much of the existing research on wellness tourism has broadly adopted conceptual or perspective-based approaches (e.g., Dini & Pencarelli, 2021; Kazakov & Oyner, 2019), presenting a broad and generalised view of the nature and scope of wellness tourism. This underscores the need for more systematic, detailed, and targeted research into wellness tourism.

This study adopts a systematic literature review approach to address these gaps following the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis (PRISMA) guidelines (Page et al., 2021). The application of this method ensures a well-structured, clear, and concise investigation (Liberati et al., 2009). The primary goal of this study is to conduct a rigorous analysis of publications on wellness tourism, focusing specifically on its development as a subcategory of health tourism over the last five years. This research seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of the field by achieving the following objectives: a)

identify theoretical models and methodological frameworks involving wellness tourism, b) identify prominent and emerging themes, and c) provide directions for future investigations.

As wellness tourism research remains a relatively recent area of academic inquiry, this study contributes to the growing body of knowledge in this field. It is designed to serve as a valuable resource for researchers developing their studies by providing a comprehensive overview of recent research. This study also offers practical insights for policymakers and industry stakeholders, enabling them to respond more effectively to emerging trends and opportunities in wellness tourism.

3.2 Theoretical Context

Tourism experiences offer physical, psychological, and cognitive benefits that positively influence tourists' overall health and well-being (Damijanić, 2019). Wellness tourism has the potential to increase happiness, reduce stress, and enhance life satisfaction. Positive travel experiences add to satisfaction and improve the quality of life, significantly contributing to travellers' well-being (Liu et al., 2023). Wellness tourists are typically drawn to exceptional natural surroundings, unique cultures and customs, and specialised wellness services and activities. Rural areas encompassing forests, mountains or spa resorts emerge as significant destinations for wellness tourists (Xie et al., 2022).

In 1959, Dr. Halbert Dunn introduced the concept of "holistic wellness," defining it as integrating alternative and preventive measures to maintain health and foster well-being (Dillette et al., 2021; Thal & Hudson, 2019a). According to the author, the individual should be perceived as a total personality consisting of a continuum of mind, body, and spirit in a constantly changing environment and flow of events (Park et al., 2021). Over subsequent decades, influential wellness advocates further developed this concept. Ardell (1977), for instance, proposed a new wellness model with self-responsibility at its core, surrounded by factors such as nutritional awareness, physical fitness, stress management, and environmental sensitivity (Thal & Hudson, 2019a). Additionally, some researchers have expanded the definition to include elements such as occupational (Hettler, 1980; Leafgren, 1990; Crose et al., 1992) and psychological wellness (Adams et al., 1977).

In the early exploration of wellness within hospitality and tourism, Mueller and Kaufmann (2001) proposed one of the initial definitions of wellness attributes. According to their definition, wellness is characterised as "a state of health featuring the harmony of body, mind, and spirit, with self-responsibility, physical fitness/beauty care, healthy nutrition/diet, relaxation/meditation, mental activity/education, and environmental sensitivity/social contacts

as fundamental elements” (Mueller & Kaufmann, 2001, p. 6). Smith and Kelly (2006) found that wellness travellers are proactive and self-aware individuals seeking well-being (Li & Gao, 2023). Rodrigues et al. (2010) determined that wellness tourism integrates perspectives of a balanced state of body, mind, and spirit, along with intellectual development, into leisure activities to enhance subjective well-being. Heung and Kucukusta (2013) further asserted that wellness tourism involves achieving a physical and mental balance by considering social and environmental factors (Huang et al., 2019). Despite the diverse conceptualisation of wellness, scholars have reached a consensus on the importance of harmonising the three aspects of wellness – the body, mind, and spirit (Lyulicheva et al., 2023).

As per the GWI (2020), wellness tourism is a proactive process where people travel to maintain or enhance their well-being. It stands apart from passive approaches focusing on escapism, characterised as a form of tourism where individuals purposefully seek enhanced wellness (Kotur, 2022). Positioned as a subcategory of health tourism, wellness tourists travel primarily for non-medical reasons (Damijanić, 2019; Koskinen & Wilska, 2019; Han et al., 2020; Kongtaveesawas, 2022). Wellness tourists can be classified into two categories: primary and secondary. Primary wellness tourists select their destination for wellness purposes, where the central focus of their holiday is the diverse available wellness activities. In contrast, secondary wellness tourists travel for other reasons but sporadically engage in wellness services and activities, such as those available at hotels or resorts (Saari et al., 2023).

Mueller and Kaufmann (2001) propose that wellness tourism comprises six interrelated dimensions, namely, physical, mental, spiritual, emotional, social, and environmental. Voigt et al. (2011) define wellness tourism as encompassing all interactions resulting from the journey individuals undertake with the intention, whether wholly or partially, of preserving or enhancing their health and well-being. These individuals stay at a facility tailored to improve their spiritual, psychological, physical, or social well-being for at least one night.

Heung and Kucukusta (2013) investigated the significant attributes of wellness tourism in China. They concluded that environmental and safety characteristics, such as fresh air, clean water, beautiful scenery, natural resources, and a safe, peaceful, and relaxing environment, were the most important in the industry. Individuals who participate in wellness tourism experiences are typically healthy but actively seek facilities and activities to sustain their well-being (Yao et al., 2023). This form of tourism integrates different wellness promotion programmes and treatments, often incorporating natural agents, as well as a range of services and products such as beauty treatments, exercise, nutrition, massages, meditation, yoga, acupuncture, walking and

mountaineering (Damijanić, 2019; 2020; Lyulicheva et al., 2023; Xie et al., 2022). They are designed to satisfy tourist needs, encompassing desires for relaxation, socialisation, escapism, and indulgence (Damijanić, 2019; 2020; Huang et al., 2019).

3.3 Methods

Systematic reviews are an essential research tool for summarising evidence accurately and reliably (Liberati et al., 2009), especially when seeking to explore new and emerging trends within disciplines, notably in the field of tourism (Vada et al., 2020). Therefore, a systematic literature review was conducted to map the current state of knowledge on wellness tourism through the Web of Science and Scopus electronic databases, as they presented a greater reach and coverage of scientific articles than other search engines. This systematic review is based on the PRISMA guidelines (Page et al., 2021).

3.3.1 Identification

A scientific literature search was initially performed to achieve a subject overview and identify possible gaps. Subsequently, the objectives, research questions, search terms, and publication time frame were defined.

The key search terms used were “wellness tourism”, “tourist”, “visitor”, “travel”, “tourism experience”, “tourist experience”, and “medical tourism”. Broader terms, such as “health,” were deliberately excluded because they encompass both wellness and medical tourism, which are distinct categories. Similarly, the term “well-being” was not included, as it represents a psychological state and is often used as a study variable rather than referring to a specific type of tourism. Including such broad terms would have resulted in a much larger set of articles, many unrelated to wellness tourism. By excluding these broader terms, the sample was refined to focus exclusively on studies addressing wellness tourism, thereby enhancing the relevance and precision of our review.

A search for wellness tourism publications was conducted in December 2023, focusing on scientific articles published between January 2019 and December 2023. This time frame was chosen based on a previous bibliometric analysis of wellness tourism (Martins et al., 2023), which identified a significant increase in publications since 2019. Limiting the scope to the last five years allowed for a more targeted and in-depth field analysis.

3.3.2 Inclusion and exclusion criteria

The inclusion criteria used were as follows: a) search terms “tourist” or “visitor” or “travel” or “tourist experience” or “tourism experience” and “wellness tourism” included in the title or

abstract or keywords; b) time range between January 2019 and December 2023; c) document type: empirical articles; d) source type: journals; e) peer-reviewed publications; f) language: English; and g) studies with tourists as a sample. The following exclusion criteria were applied: a) articles about medical tourism; b) document types: proceedings papers, review articles, early access, editorial materials, book reviews, meeting abstracts, retracted publications; c) source types: conference proceedings, books, book series; and d) studies with patients, residents, service providers, entrepreneurs, and non-tourists as a sample.

3.3.3 Search strategy

According to each database, Web of Science and Scopus, the combination of keywords was performed using the Boolean operator “OR” to find records containing any of the terms separated by the operator; “AND” was used between terms to ensure both were included in the search; and “NOT” was used to exclude records covering specific words from the search. Truncation symbols “*” and “?” were used to include words with the exact origin and to find singular and plural forms of the terms, respectively.

3.3.4 Screening

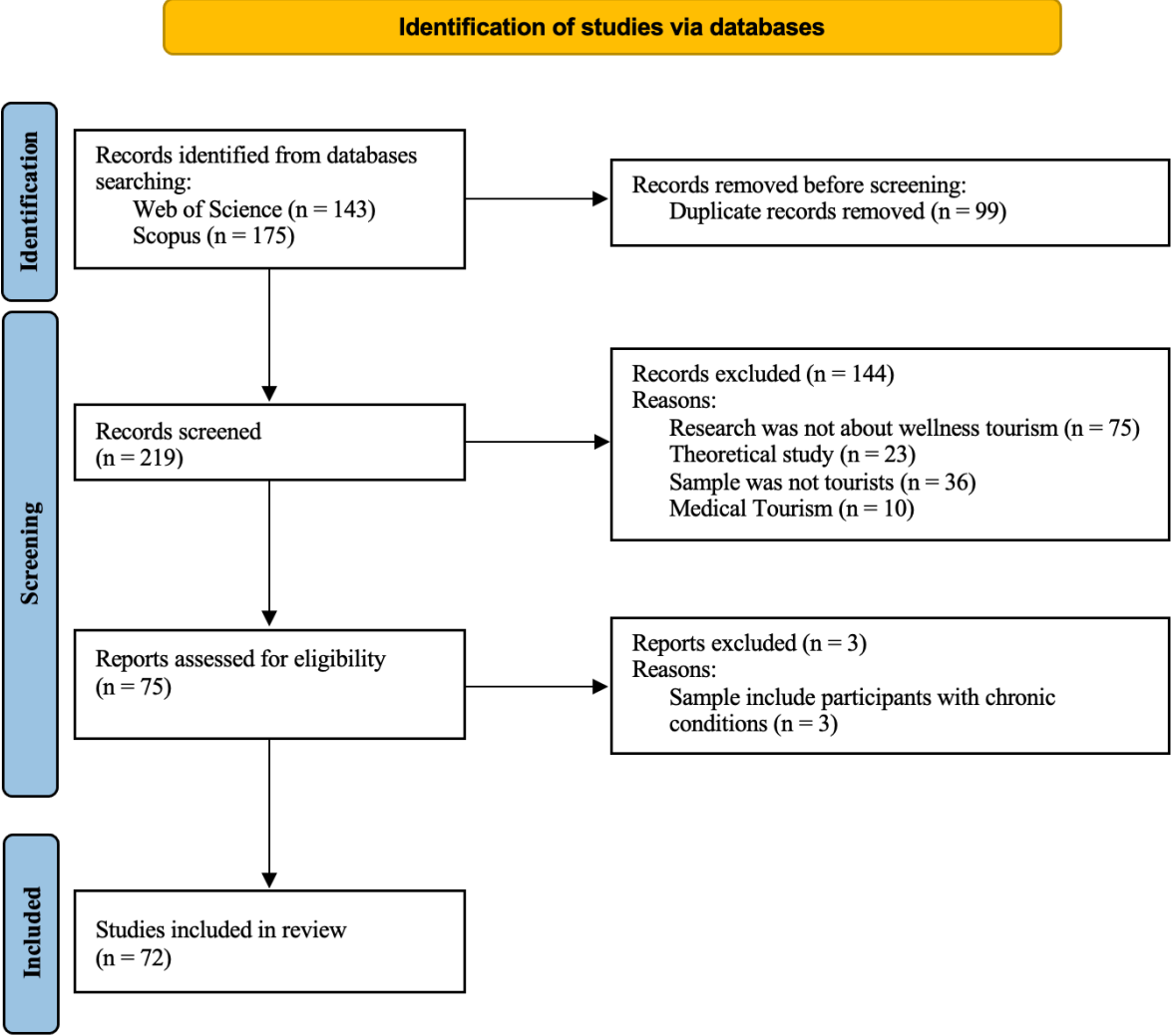
A total of 318 records obtained from the Web of Science (WoS) and Scopus databases were imported into Endnote Desktop, a software programme used to manage references and format the bibliography. In the first instance, 99 duplicate references were removed. Considering the previously established inclusion and exclusion criteria, the remaining 219 records were screened based on the title, abstract, and keywords. At this stage, each study’s main goals and general content were the objects of particular attention. As a result, 75 records not concerned with wellness tourism were removed, 23 were not empirical articles, 36 were deleted because the sample was not composed of tourists, and 10 were exclusively about medical tourism. The screening process generated 75 records, and the full texts were further reviewed. Koskinen and Wilska (2019) and Wen et al. (2022) studies were removed because they seemed closer to medical tourism, including participants with chronic conditions looking for treatment and symptom relief. Similarly, Meera and Vinodan's (2019) research was excluded since participants registered in wellness or medical programmes were considered. Figure 3.1 presents a flowchart (Page et al., 2021) of records screened and excluded at different stages of the review.

3.3.5 Extraction and synthesis

An inductive content analysis of the 72 peer-reviewed articles was carried out. Subsequently, a summary table was performed in Microsoft Excel to organise and systematise the information.

The full texts were reviewed, and the inclusion and exclusion criteria were rechecked. Any disagreement emerging between reviewers in the analysis of the articles was resolved through dialogue until a consensus was reached.

Figure 3.1. Summary of the systematic review process



Source: Own elaboration.

3.4 Results

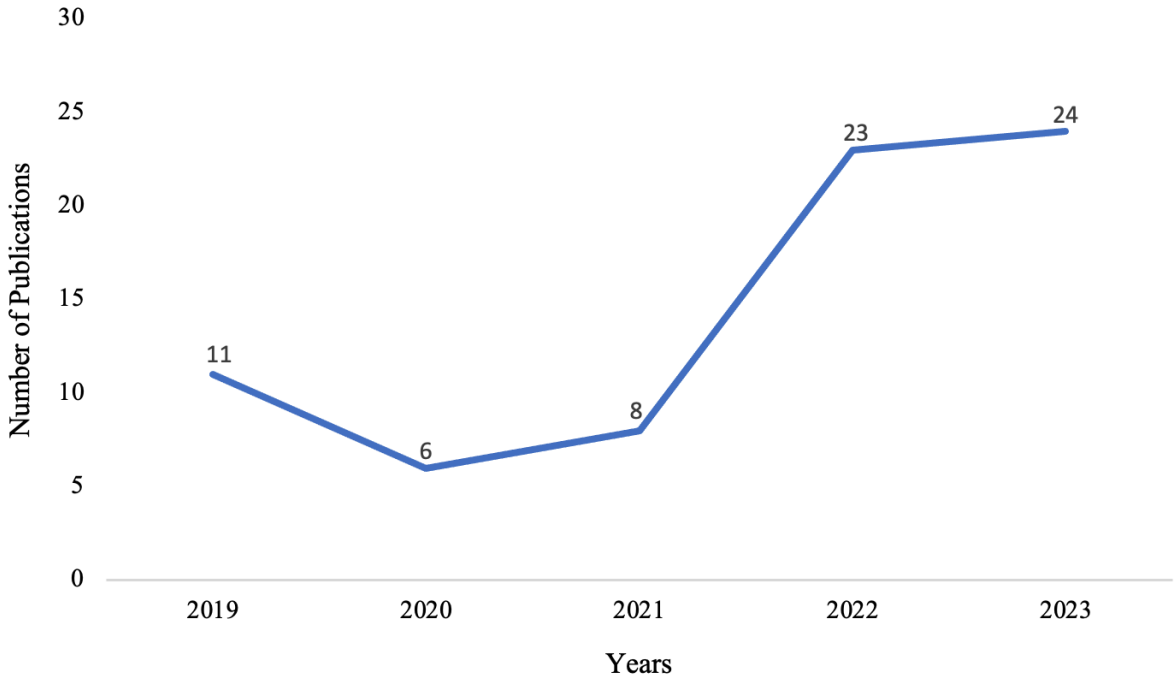
3.4.1 General characteristics of the body of research

3.4.1.1 Temporal progression of the publications

Figure 3.2 illustrates the number of articles published per year in wellness tourism research. There was a significant decrease in publications from 2019 (11 publications) to 2020 (6 publications). However, from 2020 onwards, there has been a growth trajectory. The number of publications more than doubled from 2021 (8 publications) to 2022 (23 publications). Furthermore, there was a slight increase from 2022 to 2023 (24 publications). The data suggests

a fluctuating trend, with a significant increase in 2022 and a slight rise in 2023. While the number of publications dropped in 2020, the subsequent years showed recovery and growth.

Figure 3.2. Number of selected peer-reviewed articles by year published

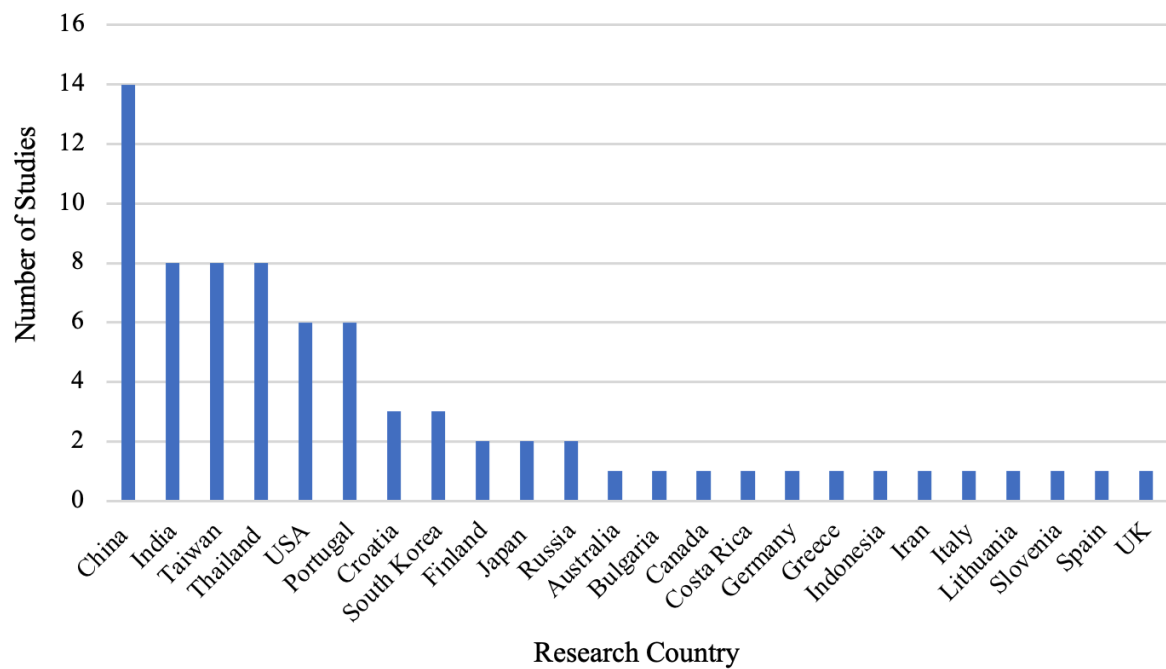


Source: Own elaboration.

3.4.1.2 Geographical setting

The countries where the sample data for each study was collected are represented in Figure 3.3, which lists 24 countries across Asia, Europe, America, and Oceania. The data revealed a significant concentration of studies in Asia, with China, India, Taiwan, and Thailand leading in the number of studies. While Asia and European countries dominate the list, countries such as Australia, Canada, the USA, and Costa Rica were identified, although there were fewer studies than the leading countries. Note that specific studies collected samples from multiple countries or did not focus on any particular country for sampling. For instance, Rodrigues et al. (2022) gathered samples from five countries: Russia, Japan, China, Italy, and Germany. Similarly, Bočkus et al. (2023) sourced their data from Finland, Russia, and Lithuania. Additionally, studies by Dilletta et al. (2021), Forlani and Pencarelli (2022), and Sthapit (2023) did not target any particular country for sample collection.

Figure 3.3. Number of selected peer-reviewed articles by research country



Source: Own elaboration.

3.4.2 Theoretical frameworks

From the 72 peer-reviewed articles, 29 theories or models were cited or applied. Table 3.1 summarises the theoretical frameworks identified. As can be observed, the push and pull motivational theory (Dann, 1977) was the most frequent, featured in seven articles, followed by the attention restoration theory (Kaplan & Kaplan, 1989), present in four articles. Additionally, the top-down and bottom-up well-being theories (Diener, 1984), self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000), and cognitive appraisal theory (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) were present in three articles each.

Table 3.1. Theoretical frameworks identified in the selected peer-reviewed articles

Theoretical framework	Summary of the theory	Wellness Tourism articles using the theoretical framework
Push and pull motivational theory (Dann, 1977)	Distinguishes between two main factors that motivate tourists to travel: push factors which involve internal forces that motivate or create a desire to satisfy a need to travel; pull factors, recognised as destination attributes.	Aleksijevits (2019) Damijanić (2019, 2020) Huang (2022) Kessler et al. (2020) Saari, (2023) Subawa et al. (2023)
Attention restoration theory (Kaplan & Kaplan, 1989)	Engaging in a stimulating environment accompanied by aesthetic pleasures helps to restore attention, facilitate recovery, and enhance concentration, thus fostering increased well-being.	Backman et al. (2023) Huang (2022) Wang, T. et al. (2022) Xue & Shen (2022)
Top-down and bottom-up well-being theories (Diener, 1984)	Well-being can be accrued through positive experiences in the bottom-up approach, while the top-down approach posits that an individual's internal disposition influences subjective well-being.	Huang (2022) Huang et al. (2019) Singh et al. (2022)
Self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000)	People have innate drives for personal growth and emotional fulfilment, which are key to self-motivation.	Baloglu et al. (2019) Thal & Hudson (2019a; 2019b)
Cognitive appraisal theory (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984)	People may experience different emotional reactions to the same stimulus. Appraisal refers to the cognitive process through which individuals interpret, assess, and react to environmental stimuli.	He et al. (2022) Liu et al. (2022) Wang, G. et al. (2022)
Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory (Maslow, 1943)	Categorizes human needs into different levels, indicating that basic needs should be satisfied before addressing higher-level needs.	Li et al. (2023) Saari (2023)
Transmission model of inspiration (Trash & Elliot, 2003)	Individuals initially draw inspiration from novel experiences, leading them to the inspired-to-phase, characterised by heightened creativity and engagement.	He et al. (2023) Liu et al. (2022)
PERMA model of well-being (Seligman, 2011)	Presents a multi-dimensional approach to understanding what it means to flourish in life. This framework includes five elements: engagement, positive emotion, meaning, accomplishment, and relationships.	Chhabra (2022) Dillette et al. (2019)
Feelings-as-information theory (Schwarz, 2001)	An individual's subjective feelings act as a key source of information, which subsequently influences their attitudes and behaviours.	He et al. (2022) Yao et al. (2023)
Stimulus-organism-response theory (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974)	External environmental stimuli can trigger cognitive and emotional shifts within individuals, leading to either approach or avoidance behaviours.	Chen et al. (2023) Sthapit et al. (2023)
Kano model (Kano et al., 1984)	The diverse possible connections between service features and customer satisfaction or dissatisfaction, highlighting each service attribute's distinct roles.	Park et al. (2021)
Tourism experience design framework (Tussyadiah, 2014)	Emphasizes the importance of gaining a thorough understanding of tourist experiences, with tourists playing an active role in sharing their perspectives.	Forlani & Pencarelli (2022)
Attachment theory (Bowlby, 1969)	Humans naturally possess an attachment behaviour system, activated when emotional connections are formed with others and the environment.	Kan et al. (2023)
Dunn's high-level wellness theory (Dunn, 1959)	Introduces the idea of wellness as a comprehensive state of health that includes physical but also mental, spiritual, and environmental dimensions.	Kotur (2022)
Bourdieu field theory (Bourdieu, 1977)	Understanding a social phenomenon or the dynamics between individuals requires examining the outcomes and the broader field in which these transactions and events unfold.	Zhang et al. (2021)

Affect control theory (Lee & Shafer, 2002)	An individual's initial feelings response to their environment, shaped through dynamic interactions and experiences, eventually leads to the development of emotions that contribute to their sense of place.	Liu et al. (2019)
Theory of relationship marketing (Berry, 1983)	Building and sustaining long-term relationships benefit service providers and customers.	Mishra & Panda (2022)
Model of integrative well-being tourism experience (Smith & Diekmann, 2017)	The most effective way to enhance well-being through tourism is by integrating three key dimensions: meaningful and altruistic experiences, pleasure and hedonism, and altruistic experiences and sustainability.	Clissold et al. (2022)
Broaden and build theory (Fredrickson, 1998)	Individuals who experience positive emotions tend to exhibit more creative and unconventional thinking.	Baloglu et al. (2019)
Experience economy model (Pine & Gilmore, 1999)	Assesses customer experiences through two dimensions: the level of customer participation, ranging from passive to active, and the degree of connection with the environment, spanning from absorption to immersion.	Singh et al. (2022)
S-D logic (Vargo & Lusch, 2004) and value co-creation (Ramaswamy, 2004)	In service ecosystems, the service experience and perceived value emerge through key aspects of value co-creation, which include interactions between customers and service personnel; among customers; and between customers and service environments.	Xie et al. (2022)
Bottom-up spillover theory (Andrews & Withey, 1976)	Explains how an individual's emotional state can transfer from one personal area of life to other areas.	Liu et al. (2023)
Eudaimonic well-being framework (Ryff, 1989)	The tourist's sense of complete life fulfillment and accomplishment, experienced before, during, and after travel, defines eudaimonic experiences.	Ritpanitchajchaval et al. (2023)
Triple bottom line framework (Elkington, 1994)	The three core aspects of sustainability designated the "three P's", are planet, people, and profit. By balancing these three bottom lines, organisations can improve their financial performance and positively impact the broader environment and society.	Wang et al. (2021)
Experience marketing framework (Pine & Gilmore, 1998)	Experiential marketers understand consumers as emotional and rational beings driven by the desire for pleasant and fulfilling experiences.	Wang et al. (2021)
Cognitive-experiential self-theory (Epstein, 1990)	The experiential system operates through affect, allowing for rapid and straightforward information processing, often occurring at the preconscious level. In contrast, the rational system is associated with logical reasoning, engaging with information in a deliberate, conscious, and logical way.	Wang et al. (2021)
Theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991)	A person's behaviours are influenced by their intentions, which are shaped by attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control. These factors determine whether a person will engage in a particular behavior.	Subawa et al. (2023)
Three-factor theory of customer satisfaction (Matzler & Sauerwein, 2002)	Classifies product or service attributes into three distinct categories, reflecting their effect on customer satisfaction: basic factors, performance factors, and excitement factors.	Mikulić et al. (2023)
Goal systems theory (Kruglanski, 2002)	Human behaviour is influenced mainly by the pursuit of goals. This internal motivation promotes personal engagement with an event or object. As a result, goals significantly shape one's attitudes and behaviours towards a particular task or objective.	Wang, G. et al. (2022)

Source: Own elaboration.

3.4.3 Methodological frameworks

Among the 72 peer-reviewed empirical articles, 17 measurement scales were identified and are detailed in Table 3.2. The Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) from Diener et al. (1985) was the most frequent, applied in seven studies, followed by the Tourism Experience Scale from Oh et al. (2007) employed in six studies.

Most of the selected peer-reviewed articles used scales from previous studies. In some instances, researchers used only specific items or dimensions from these original scales, while others made minor modifications to suit the context of their investigations. Notably, Kessler et al. (2020) introduced the Wellness Tourism Motivation Scale, while Li et al. (2023) developed the Wellness Tourism Experience Scale. Similarly, Chen et al. (2023) created the Wellness Tourism Experiencescape Scale.

Table 3.2. Measurement scales identified on the selected peer-reviewed articles

Measurement scale	Items/dimensions	Articles using the measurement scale
Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener et al., 1985)	5 items	Backman et al., (2023) Huang (2022) Huang et al., (2019) Kan et al., (2023) Singh et al., (2022) *Sthapit et al., (2023) Thal & Hudson (2019b)
Tourism Experience Scale (Oh et al., 2007)	16 items 4 dimensions (“educational”, “entertainment”, “esthetic”, and “escapist”)	*Backman et al., (2023) *Baloglu et al., (2019) *He et al., (2023) *Huang et al., (2019) Liu et al., (2023) *Singh et al., (2022)
Perceived Restorativeness Scale (Hartig et al., 1997)	16 items 4 dimensions (“being away”, “compatibility”, “fascination”, and “extent”)	*Backman et al., (2023) *Huang (2022) *Xue & Shen (2022)
Positive and Negative Affects Schedule (Watson et al., 1988)	20 items 2 dimensions (“positive affect” and “negative affect”)	*Backman et al., (2023) Thal & Hudson (2019b)
Benefits of Wellness Tourism Scale (Voigt et al., 2011)	42 items 6 dimensions (“transcendence”, “physical health and appearance”, “escape and relaxation”, “important others and novelty”, “re-establish self-esteem”, and “indulgence”)	*Baloglu et al., (2019) *Singh et al., (2022)
Subjective Happiness Scale (Lyubomirsky & Lepper, 1999)	4 items	Sthapit et al., (2023) Thal & Hudson (2019b)
Wellness Tourism Motivation Scale (Kessler et al., 2020)	28 items 7 dimensions (“movement & fitness”, “healthy food & diet”, “meditation & mindfulness”, “rest & relaxation”, “learning about wellness”, “self-care”, and “nature & disconnect”)	Kessler et al., (2020) Saari et al., (2023)
Wellness Tourism Experience Scale (Li et al., 2023)	9 items 3 dimensions (“regain health”, “escape from stress”, and “discover oneself”)	Li et al., (2023)
Subjective Vitality Scale (Ryan & Frederick, 1997)	7 items	Thal & Hudson (2019b)
Customer Inspiration Scale (Böttger et al. 2017)	10 items 2 dimensions (“inspired-by” and “inspired-to”)	*Liu et al., (2022)
Recovery-Experience Scale	15 items	He et al., (2022)

(Sonnentag & Fritz, 2007	4 dimensions ("control"; "detachment"; "mastery"; and "relax")	
Customer-Perceived Value Scale (Walsh et al., 2014)	12 items 4 dimensions ("functional value", "social value", emotional value", and "value for money")	Xie et al., (2022)
Customer-Engagement Scale (Vivek et al., 2014)	10 items 3 dimensions ("enthusiasm", "conscious participation", and "social interaction")	*Xie et al., (2022)
Recreation Experience Preference Scale (Manfredo et al., 1996)	12 items 4 dimensions ("enjoyment of nature", "relaxation", "learning", and "socialisation")	Huang (2022)
Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (Brown & Ryan, 2003)	15 items	Zafeiroudi et al., (2022)
Wellness Tourism Experiencescape Scale (Chen et al., 2023)	19 items 4 dimensions ("unique travel experience", "mental learning", "health promotion treatments", and "healthy diet")	Chen et al., (2023)
Tour Leaders' Cultural Competence Scale (Tsaur & Tu, 2019)	36 items 10 dimensions ("understanding local travel environment", "cross-cultural communication and interaction skills", "understanding local culture", "language ability", "understanding local life habit", "understanding cultural backgrounds of tour members", "cultural empathy", "cultural affinity", "cultural mediation", and "cultural adaptability")	*Kan et al., (2023)

Note(s): *Articles that did not fully use the original scale.
Source: Own elaboration.

3.4.4 Thematic patterns analysis

A comprehensive analysis of variables explored in the selected peer-reviewed articles identified 66 distinct variables (see Appendix: Table 1). Wellness tourism motivational factors stand out in 20 studies (e.g., Aleksijevits, 2019; Baloglu et al., 2019), followed closely by tourist satisfaction and destination loyalty, both of which were examined in 19 studies each (e.g., Liberato et al., 2021; Warangkana & Supawat, 2020). Furthermore, tourist well-being receives attention from 13 studies (e.g., Liu et al., 2023; Saari et al., 2023) and tourist experience from 12 studies (e.g., Huang et al., 2019; Singh et al., 2022). Identified as emerging themes, examples include destination image (e.g., Goyal & Taneja, 2023; Tiwari & Hashmi, 2022), service quality (e.g., Han et al., 2020; Sangpikul, 2022), tourist perceived restorativeness (e.g., Huang, 2022), sustainable behaviour intention (e.g., Xue & Shen, 2022), and mindfulness (e.g., Zafeiroudi et al., 2022).

Table 3.3 below provides a more detailed examination, highlighting the key topics and examples of emerging themes based on the findings obtained through the thematic analysis of the peer-reviewed selected articles.

Table 3.3. Thematic analysis based on the selected peer-reviewed articles' variables

Variable	Conceptualization	Study	Main conclusions
Tourist motivation	Motivation is widely acknowledged as a core element which explains a tourist's intentions and behaviour. Motivations can be categorised into intrinsic, referring to actions driven by personal gratification and inner enjoyment, and extrinsic, referring to reward or status-driven behaviour (Bočkus et al., 2023)	<i>"Consumer motivation and behaviour when selecting a wellness holiday destination"</i> (Aleksijevids, 2019)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wellness consumer purchasing behaviour is mainly affected by a consumer's internal (push factors) motivations. Safety and security are the most important pull factor for the UK-based consumer.
		<i>"Impact of experience on emotional well-being and loyalty"</i> (Baloglu et al., 2019)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exploratory factor analysis revealed five intrinsic motivations (self-improvement, shared/new experience, de-stress, solitude, and self-indulgence). Intrinsic motivation significantly influences memorable experience. Memorable experience and emotional well-being positively influence spa customers loyalty.
		<i>"Motives for thermal tourism: an application to North and Central Portugal"</i> (Brandão et al., 2021)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The majority of participants engaged in thermal tourism for relaxation and leisure purposes, citing benefits such as spending quality time with family, escaping from daily stress, and enjoying a sense of being "pampered". Relaxation emerged as the primary motivation, with the pursuit of psychological and physical well-being following closely behind.
Tourist experience	Consumer experience is positively associated with emotional responses to products and services (Huang et al., 2019). Travellers' who find their leisure trip experiences and services satisfying are more inclined to experience positive outcomes, including enhanced positive emotions, life satisfaction, psychological well-being, and destination loyalty (Backman et al., 2023).	<i>"Customer experience, well-being, and loyalty in the spa hotel context: integrating the top-down & bottom-up theories of well-being"</i> (Huang et al., 2019)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The wellness spa experience demonstrated a strong connection with two key aspects of subjective well-being, life satisfaction and positive emotions, alongside consumer loyalty. The internal disposition of autonomy plays a crucial role in shaping experience and life satisfaction, with experience acting as a mediator between autonomy and positive emotions and loyalty. The duration of stay significantly moderate the relationship between autonomy and positive emotion.
		<i>"Investigating the relationship between experience, well-being, and loyalty: A study of wellness tourists"</i> (Singh et al., 2022)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intrinsic motivation leads to experience. Wellness tourism experience positively influences positive emotions, life satisfaction, and loyalty.
		<i>"Development and verification of the wellness tourism experience scale"</i> (Li et al., 2023)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A three-dimensional scale for wellness tourism experiences was established, consisting of nine measurement items. The identified dimensions, "regain health", "escape from stress", and "discover oneself", align closely with Maslow's hierarchy of needs, corresponding to safety needs, belongingness needs, and esteem and self-actualization needs, respectively.
Tourist satisfaction and destination loyalty	Customer satisfaction, a critical success factor that impacts brand loyalty, is defined as the pleasurable fulfilment level during a product or service consumption (Park et al., 2021). Loyalty	<i>"Satisfaction and loyalty evaluation towards health and wellness destination"</i> (Liberato et al., 2021)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The most valued aspects in the selection of the thermal establishment influence the degree of satisfaction regarding the trip and the thermal experience, and the intention to recommend and revisit the destination. Overall satisfaction with the thermal destination significantly influences health and wellness destination loyalty.

	is a construct related to the intention to repeat a purchase, the intention to recommend a service/product to others, and the willingness to say positive things about it (Warangkana & Supawat, 2020).	<p><i>“Antecedents of tourist loyalty in health and wellness tourism: the impact of travel motives, perceived service quality, and satisfaction”</i> (Warangkana & Supawat, 2020)</p> <p><i>“Measuring customers’ satisfaction and loyalty in Thai wellness spas”</i> (Wisitnorapatt & Sirirat, 2023)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wellness travellers’ motives positively influence their perception of service quality and overall satisfaction. Perceived service quality and satisfaction significantly and positively enhance loyalty. Experience value and satisfaction are outcome variables of experience quality, thus linking experience quality to desire. The desire to revisit spas significantly mediates the impact of satisfaction on loyalty intentions. Satisfaction and desire significantly mediate the impact of cognitive loyalty factors, experience quality, and spa experience value on loyalty intentions.
Tourist well-being	According to positive psychology well-being draws from two philosophical traditions: hedonia and eudaimonia. The hedonic approach defines well-being as happiness (or subjective well-being). It centers on aspects like life satisfaction, pleasure, enjoyment, and comfort, emphasizing short-term positive emotions. Conversely, eudaimonic well-being is linked to meaningful and valuable actions or activities, embodying a sense of purpose and meaning, authenticity, personal growth, self-development, psychological functioning, full engagement, autonomy, and vitality (Saari et al., 2023).	<p><i>“The relationships between happiness, wellness tourist motivation, and tourism destination among Finnish wellness travellers: insights from the world’s “happiest nation”</i> (Saari et al., 2023)</p> <p><i>“The impact of the wellness tourism experience on tourist well-being: the mediating role of tourist satisfaction mindfulness levels among yoga retreat participants”</i> (Liu et al., 2023)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finnish happiness seems largely based on eudaimonic-oriented meaning-seeking, consisting of meaningful and valuable actions or activities, rather than hedonic-oriented pleasure-seeking. The main sources of happiness include relationships, nature, rest and relaxation, and health and well-being. Relationships – family, friends, children, and pets – are Finns’ most important sources of happiness. The esthetic, escape, and entertainment, dimensions have a positive and significant influence on tourists’ eudaimonic and hedonic well-being, while the educational dimension predominantly affects eudaimonic well-being. The entertainment, esthetic, and educational dimensions demonstrate a significant and positive impact on tourist satisfaction. Tourist satisfaction, as a mediating variable, can enhance the positive impact of the wellness tourism experience on tourist well-being.
Destination image	Destination image reflects an individual’s psychological perception, comprising physical and intangible aspects. It represents a system of ideas, beliefs, expectations, and impressions associated with a specific place (Goyal & Taneja, 2023; Tiwari & Hashmi, 2022).	<p><i>“Integrating concepts of destination image, travel motivations, expectation, and future behavior to create a model of wellness travel intentions”</i> (Tiwari & Hashmi, 2022)</p> <p><i>“Electronic word of mouth for the choice of wellness tourism destinations image and the moderating role of COVID-19”</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wellness destination image, specifically the wellness infrastructure and professionals, is determinant in shaping tourists’ expectations of such destinations. The destinations’ expectations significantly enhance intrinsic and extrinsic motivations for wellness travel. While intrinsic and extrinsic motivations positively influence tourists’ travel behavior, extrinsic motivation emerges as a stronger predictor of behavior. Tourists’ expectations of a wellness destination strongly and significantly predict their travel behavior. The wellness destination’s image significantly impacts the satisfaction levels of wellness tourists as well as their electronic word of mouth. Wellness tourist’s satisfaction levels have a significantly influence on their electronic word of mouth intentions.

		<i>pandemic</i> ” (Goyal & Taneja, 2023)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourist satisfaction is a significant mediator in the relationship between the post-visit destination image and electronic word of mouth intentions. • The perceived health risks associated with the COVID-19 pandemic significantly moderate the relationship between pre-travel electronic word of mouth and electronic word of mouth intentions.
Service quality	Service quality refers to the assessment of how effectively a provided service aligns with customer expectations. Understanding service quality helps in offering exceptional services that fulfill customer needs, ultimately leading to enhanced satisfaction, word-of-mouth, and customer loyalty (Sangpikul, 2022).	<p>“<i>Thai wellness tourism and quality: comparison between Chinese and American visitors’ behaviors</i>” (Han et al., 2020)</p> <p>“<i>Obtaining an in-depth understanding of the assurance dimension of SERVQUAL in the spa industry: a case of spas in Bangkok</i>” (Sangpikul, 2022)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality of wellness spa tourism indirectly impacts revisit and recommendation intentions through destination price perception and brand love. • Destination price perception shapes revisit and recommendation intentions through brand love. • The framework of spa assurance can be classified into four categories: staff assurance, product assurance, process assurance, and physical assurance. • Perceived hygiene during the COVID-19 pandemic is included into the assurance attributes of spa service quality.
Tourist perceived restorativeness	Restoration refers to the ability to restore an individual’s body and health, characterized by a series of psychophysiological changes (Xue & Shen, 2022). Perceived restorative environments promote a recovery form of attention. Natural environments allow for recovery and healing by alleviating psychological fatigue (Backman et al., 2023).	<p>“<i>Middle-aged and elderly adult wellbeing: connection to travel motivation as restorative servicescapes</i>” (Huang, 2022)</p> <p>“<i>Engaging with restorative environments in wellness tourism</i>” (Backman et al., 2023)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical and built environments of the wellness resort are crucial for restoration. • In addition to fulfilling middle-aged and elderly adults needs for rejuvenation and healing, wellness resort establishments can be important restorative venues for creating positive feelings in travel experiences, thus promoting subjective well-being of middle-aged and elderly adults. • Perceived restorative environments positively influence memorable experience, positive emotions, life satisfaction, and loyalty intentions of wellness tourists. • Memorable experiences significantly influence positive emotions, life satisfaction, and loyalty.
Sustainable behaviour intention	Sustainable behavior intention in tourism settings refers to the conscious and purposeful inclination of individuals to engage in activities and make choices that promote environmental, social, and economic sustainability (Wang et al., 2021).	“ <i>The sustainable development of organic agriculture: the role of wellness tourism and environmental restorative perception</i> ” (Xue & Shen, 2022)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceiving an environment as restorative contributes positively to fostering attachment to a place, promoting a positive destination image and loyalty. • The practice of organic agritourism facilitates a restorative perception enhancing tourists well-being and facilitating the shift from rural to wellness tourism.
Mindfulness	Mindfulness involves cultivating a specific quality of attention towards present-moment experiences and has emerged as a valuable tool for individuals to cope with emotional distress and maladaptive behaviour (Zafeiroudi et al., 2022).	“ <i>Yoga as serious leisure activity: socio-demographic differences in mindfulness levels among yoga retreat participants</i> ” (Zafeiroudi et al., 2022)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yoga is a significant leisure pursuit that involves substantial engagement in both personal and work life. • Tourism providers have the opportunity to emphasize mindfulness as a central theme within the wellness tourism sector, thereby enhancing and refining the quality of the yoga retreat experiences.

Source: Own elaboration.

3.5 Discussion

A systematic literature review based on the PRISMA guidelines (Page et al., 2021) was conducted to analyse the publications on wellness tourism research over the last five years. Specifically, the objectives were a) to identify the theoretical models and methodological frameworks involving wellness tourism, b) to identify prominent and emerging themes, and c) to provide directions for future investigations. Therefore, a search for wellness tourism publications was performed in December 2023 through the Web of Science and Scopus electronic databases. After applying the inclusion and exclusion criteria, the final database yielded 72 peer-reviewed empirical articles published in English academic journals between January 2019 and December 2023.

Tourist motivations emerged as fundamental in understanding wellness tourism behaviours. Motivational frameworks, like push and pull motivational theory (Dann, 1977) and self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000), explain how intrinsic factors, including self-improvement, stress relief, and self-indulgence, drive wellness tourists' decision-making processes (Aleksijevits, 2019; Baloglu et al., 2019). These intrinsic motivations also contribute to the formation of memorable experiences, highlighting their foundational role in the wellness tourism experience (Baloglu et al., 2019).

The wellness tourism experience has positively influenced tourist satisfaction, well-being and destination loyalty (Huang et al., 2019; Liu et al., 2023; Singh et al., 2022). Most studies reviewed assess these experiences using the Tourism Experience Scale (Oh et al., 2007), derived from the experience economy model (Pine & Gilmore, 1999). For example, Singh et al. (2022), employing top-down and bottom-up well-being theories (Diener, 1984) alongside the experience economy model, found that wellness tourism experiences positively impact tourists' well-being and destination loyalty. Similarly, Huang et al. (2019), applying the top-down and bottom-up well-being theories (Diener, 1984), demonstrated the strong connection between wellness spa experiences, subjective well-being, and loyalty. These findings underline the relevance of economic models in tourism and their synergy with well-being theories for understanding wellness tourism experiences.

Emerging themes highlight the role of destination image in shaping wellness travel behaviour, as destination expectations strongly enhance intrinsic and extrinsic motivations (Tiwari & Hashmi, 2022) and significantly influence tourist behaviour (Goyal & Taneja, 2023; Tiwari & Hashmi, 2022). Moreover, attributes such as safety (Aleksijevits, 2019) and restorative qualities (Huang, 2022) were identified as key factors in fostering tourist well-being (Huang, 2022) and destination loyalty (Xue & Shen, 2022). Service quality also emerged as an

important theme, as tourists' perceptions of it directly influence their satisfaction and loyalty (Warangkana & Supawat, 2020). Notably, Sangpikul (2022) verified that within the five SERVQUAL dimensions, the assurance dimension could be further subdivided into four categories, staff assurance, product assurance, process assurance, and physical assurance, to gain a deeper understanding of safety in the spa industry. This categorisation refined the concept of the assurance dimension and underscored its significance in enhancing service quality within the wellness tourism sector.

Beyond these key themes, another emerging trend in wellness tourism is the rise of sustainable behavioural intentions, which encourage destinations and service providers to integrate environmental, social, and economic considerations (Wang et al., 2021) in line with the triple bottom-line framework (Elkington, 1994). Additionally, the increasing focus on mindfulness activities highlights the transformative role of practices such as yoga and meditation in supporting travellers' self-discovery and emotional restoration (Zafeiroudi et al., 2022). These trends reflect a broader movement within wellness tourism, where holistic well-being, sustainability, and mindfulness shape the future of travel experiences.

Integrating multiple theoretical perspectives has proven essential for capturing the complexity of wellness tourism. For instance, Huang (2022) integrated push and pull motivational theory (Dann, 1977), attention restoration theory (Kaplan & Kaplan, 1989), and top-down and bottom-up well-being theories (Diener, 1984) to explore the relationships among motivations, restorative experiences, and overall well-being. This interdisciplinary approach demonstrates how motivations interact with environmental elements to foster cognitive recovery, emotional restoration, and holistic well-being. These findings reinforce the multidimensional nature of wellness tourism, highlighting the interconnected psychological and environmental factors that collaboratively shape travellers' holistic well-being.

This study extends its contributions to the methodological domain by identifying the predominance of quantitative approaches in wellness tourism research. The widespread use of structured data collection methods, such as questionnaires, demonstrates their efficacy in collecting standardised responses and enhances the reliability and validity of the research findings. However, the limited application of qualitative and mixed methods signals a need for deeper explorations.

Furthermore, certain studies have developed context-specific scales to capture the unique features of wellness tourism. For instance, Kessler et al. (2020) introduced the Wellness Tourism Motivation Scale to analyse motivational drivers unique to this segment. Li et al. (2023) emphasised the need for a customised scale for wellness tourism experiences, as most

existing studies rely on general tourism experience scales. Their work resulted in the Wellness Tourism Experience Scale, which identifies three dimensions: “regain health”, “escape from stress”, and “discover oneself”, reflecting Maslow’s hierarchy of needs (Maslow, 1943). Similarly, Chen et al. (2023) developed a scale to precisely measure the spa hotel experiencescape, grounded in the stimulus-organism-response theory (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974). These author-developed scales contribute significantly to advancing research in wellness tourism by addressing gaps left by general-purpose tools.

These findings illustrate the multidimensional nature of wellness tourism, emphasising the importance of interdisciplinarity in research and its unique contributions to academic and practical discussions on health and well-being. This study provides actionable implications for wellness providers, emphasising the need to create personalised, sustainable offerings that align with individual psychological needs and cultural contexts. These advancements enhance customer satisfaction and position the wellness tourism sector as a key driver of sustainable and inclusive travel.

3.6 Conclusion

3.6.1 Main conclusions

The findings of this systematic literature review show a growing interest in wellness tourism research in recent years, as noted in the literature (GWI, 2018; Huang et al., 2019). Despite the decline in publications during 2020 and 2021, likely due to the COVID-19 pandemic and its associated lockdowns (Kim & Yang, 2021), the field experienced a notable growth in the number of publications between 2022 and 2023, indicating sustained interest in wellness tourism research. Based on theoretical and empirical evidence, this study validates and extends existing frameworks and provides actionable directions for future research and industry practice, supporting the sector’s evolution as a dynamic and impactful area of tourism research.

3.6.2 Theoretical contributions

This study offers several theoretical contributions to advancing wellness tourism research. To date, no prior study has conducted a systematic review of the literature focusing exclusively on wellness tourism without including other segments of health tourism, such as medical tourism (e.g., Dini & Pencarelli, 2021; Kazakov & Oyner, 2019; Kemppainen et al., 2021; Suban, 2022; Zhong et al., 2021). Furthermore, no existing literature reviews have comprehensively examined the theoretical and methodological frameworks employed in wellness tourism research over the past five years. By addressing these gaps, this study offers valuable insights

and provides guidelines for future research based on the most frequently researched themes and emerging topics in the field.

The temporal evolution of publications uncovering dynamic trends that underscore wellness tourism's rapid growth and adaptability to societal and industry shifts. This progression demonstrates how wellness tourism, as a niche segment, has been widely recognised as an integral component of the broader tourism industry. Likewise, the geographical distribution of wellness tourism research underscores its global relevance, particularly emphasising Asia and Europe as dominant regions. This finding highlights the international diversity of wellness practices and cultural influences, prompting further exploration into regional and cross-cultural variations in wellness tourism behaviours and preferences.

The study highlights that psychological frameworks form the foundation for understanding wellness tourists' behaviours, with motivations often centred on rest, escapism, and indulgence (Damijanić, 2019, 2020; Huang et al., 2019). These insights align with theories emphasising emotional and cognitive processes that promote tourist well-being (Backman et al., 2023). Importantly, this research demonstrates that wellness experiences are not confined to the individual but also a social phenomenon. Sociological theories such as Bourdieu's field theory (Bourdieu, 1977) highlight how social interactions among tourists, service providers, and local communities profoundly influence the wellness experience. These interactions contribute to holistic wellness, encompassing social and environmental dimensions (Mueller & Kaufmann, 2001; Voigt et al., 2011), reinforcing the understanding of well-being as a multifaceted construct. Moreover, economic theories such as the Kano model (Kano et al., 1984) and the three-factor theory of customer satisfaction (Matzler & Sauerwein, 2002) offer valuable insights into the role of service quality and consumer satisfaction in wellness tourism. These frameworks highlight how economic and psychological considerations intersect to create experiences combining personal fulfilment and economic value. They provide a foundation for examining how wellness tourism markets evolve and how they can sustain growth by balancing customer satisfaction and business performance (GWI, 2018, 2021).

Methodologically, this study underlines the importance of employing diverse research approaches tailored to wellness tourism's multifaceted nature. While quantitative studies dominate current literature, this study advocates for qualitative and mixed-method designs, which can capture the complexities of tourist experiences and wellness dimensions (e.g., Dilletta et al., 2021; Kotur, 2022; Forlani & Pencarelli, 2022). Integrating descriptive, thematic, and interdisciplinary methods enables more nuanced theoretical insights, particularly in areas

where quantitative methods fall short. Additionally, the study highlights the importance of employing scales developed explicitly for the wellness tourism context, such as the Wellness Tourism Motivation Scale (Kessler et al., 2020), Wellness Tourism Experience Scale (Li et al., 2023), and Wellness Tourism Experiencescape Scale (Chen et al., 2023). These tailored scales provide a more accurate and nuanced understanding of the unique dimensions of wellness tourism, ensuring that the evaluation of such experiences aligns with the field's distinctive attributes.

Thematic patterns analysis identified 66 different variables, emphasising the multidimensional nature of the field. Motivational factors reveal the importance of understanding the motivations behind wellness tourists' behaviours (Aleksijevits, 2019; Baloglu et al., 2019) to provide specialised services that align with their needs and expectations. This study also highlights the importance of the tourism experience (Huang et al., 2019; Singh et al., 2022) in promoting tourist satisfaction and well-being within wellness tourism, as these factors are essential in fostering destination loyalty (Liberato et al., 2021; Warangkana & Supawat, 2020; Wisitnorapatt & Sirirat, 2023). Such findings underscore the integral role of a positive destination image in shaping tourists' decision-making processes (Tiwari & Hashmi, 2022). Furthermore, the study identifies emerging research avenues of great interest for future exploration. One particularly salient area is the centrality of restorative environments in wellness tourism. These environments play a pivotal role as they are designed to rejuvenate and restore overall health and well-being, which aligns closely with the fundamental objectives of wellness tourism (Backman et al., 2023; Huang, 2022). By advancing our understanding of how these settings contribute to the wellness experience, future studies can provide valuable insights into designing more effective and holistic wellness interventions.

3.6.3 Practical contributions

As this systematic review outlines, recognising and analysing global wellness tourism trends offers invaluable insights for industry stakeholders, policymakers, and researchers. By understanding these trends, decision-makers can devise informed strategies, plan future initiatives, and adapt to the evolving dynamics of wellness tourism, ensuring alignment with market demands and societal needs.

The regional concentration of studies, particularly in Asia, such as China, India, Taiwan, and Thailand, reflects the long-standing tradition of wellness offerings in these countries. However, the prominence of countries like the USA and Portugal outside the Asian context highlights untapped opportunities for growth and diversification in wellness tourism research.

Policymakers and industry leaders in these regions can capitalise on this potential by fostering the development of wellness tourism infrastructure, promoting local practices, and supporting targeted research initiatives.

Regarding theoretical application, the review underscores the importance of selecting appropriate theoretical frameworks to inform research designs. For practitioners and academics, the interdisciplinary nature of these frameworks invites collaboration across diverse fields such as sociology, psychology, and economics. Such partnerships can enrich wellness tourism research and encourage innovative approaches catering to this sector's complexity.

From a methodological standpoint, this study provides valuable guidance for researchers by outlining potential research methods based on a systematic review of past studies. For instance, understanding the balance between quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-method approaches allows researchers to tailor their methodologies to the specific objectives of their studies, thereby enhancing the robustness and applicability of their findings.

This study also emphasises the role of wellness tourism experience in fostering holistic well-being, addressing physical and mental health and social and environmental dimensions. For example, nature-based restorative environments, such as forest bathing programs or coastal meditation retreats, can directly reduce stress and enhance psychological renewal. These practices rejuvenate individuals and reinforce the connection between well-being and the natural environment, which is central to the concept of wellness tourism (Backman et al., 2023).

Similarly, social connections can also be promoted by designing programs that foster meaningful interpersonal interactions. Wellness tourism experiences encouraging group participation, such as collective mindfulness retreats or communal farm-to-table dining experiences, tap into tourists' growing desire for social engagement and inclusion. These interactions help tourists build a sense of belonging and connection to others, an increasingly recognised component of overall wellness.

Moreover, wellness resorts can prioritise eco-friendly operations by reducing their carbon footprint and adopting renewable energy sources, aligning with the growing sustainability demand (Xue & Shen, 2022). Similarly, integrating local cultural practices into wellness experiences (Kan et al., 2023), such as yoga retreats rooted in Indian tradition or hot spring therapies inspired by Japanese culture, provides authentic and transformative experiences and strengthens the connection between tourists and local communities.

Ultimately, this study's systematic identification of trends and frameworks offers a roadmap for future research and industry development. These practical contributions can help

researchers and stakeholders navigate the complexities of the wellness tourism sector while fostering innovation and sustainability in this growing field.

3.6.4 Limitations and future research

This systematic review was limited to peer-reviewed articles published in English-language academic journals. As a result, relevant studies published in other languages or other sources, such as books, may have been excluded. Furthermore, this study focused exclusively on peer-reviewed articles with samples comprising tourists. Future research could include samples of stakeholders, local communities, or policymakers, as they play a crucial role in wellness tourism. Moreover, given the diverse nature of wellness tourism demographics, future studies should investigate how different age groups, genders, and socio-economic backgrounds engage with and perceive wellness tourism. This will help create more inclusive, sustainable, and culturally sensitive wellness offerings.

Based on the findings of this systematic review, several promising avenues for future research emerge, each offering opportunities to deepen our understanding of wellness tourism and its evolving role in the tourism landscape. Some examples of recommended future research topics include how wellness tourism providers can enhance the personalisation and customisation of experiences to supply diverse individual preferences and needs, considering factors such as wellness-related lifestyle, motivations, and travel behaviours (e.g., Damijanić, 2019, 2020; Kotur, 2022; Subathra et al., 2019). Explore deeper into psychological factors influencing wellness tourism, such as openness to experience (e.g., He et al., 2023), emotions (e.g., Rodrigues et al., 2020) and life satisfaction (e.g., Kan et al., 2023). Delve into the role of mindfulness practices in wellness tourism (e.g., Zafeiroudi et al., 2022), examining how focused attention could improve the perception of restorative environments (e.g., Backman et al., 2023) and recovery perception (Wang, G. et al., 2022). Furthermore, investigate the impact of mindfulness on tourist satisfaction and well-being (e.g., Liu et al., 2023). Study the importance of culture and local engagement in wellness tourism by exploring the impact of destination image, satisfaction, and loyalty (e.g., Kan et al., 2023). Examine the integration of sustainability principles in wellness tourism, focusing on sustainable behaviour intentions, restorative perception of environmental attention, and destination loyalty (e.g., Wang G. et al., 2022; Xue & Shen, 2022). Additionally, it investigates the relationship between sustainable practices in promoting tourist well-being and their quality of life (Guerra et al., 2022; Liu et al., 2023). Investigate the role of emerging technologies, such as virtual reality, mobile applications, and wearable devices, in shaping the wellness tourism experience (Dimova &

Velikova, 2022). Explore how technology could improve tourist satisfaction, well-being (e.g., Baloglu et al., 2019), tourist engagement, perceived value (e.g., Baloglu et al., 2019), and electronic word-of-mouth (e.g., Anannukul & Yoopetch, 2022; Goyal & Taneja, 2023). Finally, examine how wellness tourism preferences and experiences vary across different demographic groups, considering age, gender, and socio-economic status (e.g., Forlani & Pencarelli, 2022; Singh et al., 2022).

The future of wellness tourism research presents numerous opportunities to deepen our understanding of this rapidly growing segment. The recommendations outlined, ranging from exploring personalised wellness experiences and psychological factors to the role of mindfulness, cultural engagement, and sustainability, reflect the diverse and evolving nature of wellness tourism. As travellers seek experiences promoting holistic well-being, adapting services to meet their unique preferences and needs becomes increasingly important. Furthermore, investigating the impact of emerging technologies and demographic variances will provide valuable insights into how wellness tourism can evolve in a more inclusive, tech-driven, and sustainable direction. By addressing these future research priorities, the wellness tourism sector can be better enriched to meet the demands of a changing world while remaining aligned with its core focus on health and well-being.

Acknowledgement

This paper was financed by National Funds provided by FCT – Foundation for Science and Technology (Portugal) through project UI/BD/150799/2020.

Disclosure Statement

The authors report that there are no competing interests to declare.

3.7 References

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CHAPTER 4

STUDY 3 – BUILDING DESTINATION LOYALTY IN WELLNESS TOURISM: THE IMPACT OF SAFETY PERCEPTIONS, TOURIST WORRY, RESTORATIVE ENVIRONMENTS, WELL-BEING, AND LIFE SATISFACTION

BUILDING DESTINATION LOYALTY IN WELLNESS TOURISM: THE IMPACT OF SAFETY PERCEPTIONS, TOURIST WORRY, RESTORATIVE ENVIRONMENTS, WELL-BEING, AND LIFE SATISFACTION³

Abstract

Wellness tourism, a rapidly expanding sector within global travel, focuses on experiences designed to maintain or enhance individuals' well-being. This study builds on the Safety System Theory and Attention Restoration Theory to examine the dynamics of destination loyalty in wellness tourism. Specifically, it explores the interactions between destination loyalty and tourist perceived safety at destinations (TPSD), tourist worry, tourist perception of restorative environments (TPRE), well-being, and life satisfaction. An online survey yielded 217 valid responses, and the data were analysed using PLS-SEM with SmartPLS 4.0.8.2 to estimate and validate a complex model with second-order constructs. The results reveal that TPSD positively influences destination loyalty, with TPRE crucial in enhancing tourists' well-being, life satisfaction, and destination loyalty. Additionally, while tourist worry negatively affects TPSD, it paradoxically positively impacts destination loyalty, suggesting an area for further exploration. This study provides new insights and offers theoretical and practical implications for tourism stakeholders. It also highlights Portugal's growing potential to position itself as a premier international destination for wellness tourism, laying the groundwork for further exploration in this evolving field.

Keywords: Destination Loyalty, Restorative Environments, Safety Perceptions, Tourist Worry, Wellness Tourism, Well-being

4.1 Introduction

Wellness tourism has arisen as a rapidly expanding niche within international tourism, recognised for its capacity to diversify market offerings (Pereira et al., 2023), enhance visitor expenditures, and attract investments to rural and underdeveloped regions (Global Wellness Institute [GWI], 2024a). This market segment has shown remarkable resilience, rebounding from a significant decline during the COVID-19 pandemic and exhibiting robust growth between 2020 and 2022. Projections suggest that wellness tourism spending will exceed \$1

³ Article in revision for the European Journal of Tourism Research.

trillion by 2024, underscoring its increasing importance in global tourism dynamics (GWI, 2024a).

Well-being and good health, recognised as part of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (United Nations, 2015), have gained heightened significance after the COVID-19 pandemic. This global health crisis has underscored the importance of improving and maintaining mental and physical health (Dini & Pencarelli, 2022; Li et al., 2023; Parakkal et al., 2024; Yao et al., 2023). Meanwhile, the tourism industry has witnessed an upswing in demand for health-oriented travel experiences (Ahn & Kim, 2024) as more travellers seek opportunities for relaxation, rejuvenation, and stress relief (Goyal & Taneja, 2023). As a result, wellness tourism has experienced remarkable growth (GWI, 2024a), promoting a comprehensive approach to enhancing well-being (Kim et al., 2024; Li & Gao, 2023). This segment emphasises preventive, proactive measures (GWI, 2024b; Lopes & Rodríguez-López, 2022; Yao et al., 2023) to harmonise the spirit, mind and body (Backman et al., 2023). A key appeal of wellness tourism lies in its ability to address travellers' physical and mental recovery needs (Dini & Pencarelli, 2022; Li et al., 2023; Parakkal et al., 2024; Yao et al., 2023), making it a cornerstone for destinations aiming to cultivate a unique competitive advantage. While often associated with luxury resorts and spas (Backman et al., 2023; Chen et al., 2023; GWI, 2024a; Park et al., 2021), wellness tourism encompasses a far broader range of experiences (GWI, 2024a; Xie et al., 2022). Visitors can enjoy nutritious cuisine, connect with nature, participate in meditation and yoga sessions, attend spiritual retreats, visit thermal and mineral springs, and engage in cultural experiences. These activities are integral to the wellness journey, offering restorative benefits travellers seek (Dini & Pencarelli, 2022; GWI, 2024a; Xie et al., 2022; Yao et al., 2023).

According to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, safety needs occupy the second level of the pyramid, emphasising a person's need for security and protection (Maslow, 1958). In tourism, this fundamental need translates into safety and security as essential elements of the destination image (Jo, 2024; Xie et al., 2020). These factors significantly influence tourists' decision-making (Boakye, 2012; Toker & Emir, 2023) and significantly impact destination loyalty (Xie et al., 2020). Furthermore, wellness tourism is closely interconnected with fulfilling fundamental human needs and pursuing a balanced, enriched life (Jo, 2024). Peaceful and tranquil environments foster this sense of well-being, essential for enhancing destination loyalty (Backman et al., 2023).

Pitakaso et al. (2024) emphasise that implementing effective security measures enhances the attractiveness of wellness tourism destinations. Worry, a complex cognitive

activity with a strong emotional component, has also been identified as a critical factor influencing individuals' cognitive processes and behavioural responses (Brun et al., 2011). Higher levels of worry are linked to increased risk perceptions (Chien et al., 2017), which can negatively affect destination loyalty (Handler, 2022). Given the growing body of research on the influence of tourist worry on their risk perception in tourism and hospitality (e.g., Chien et al., 2017; Handler, 2022; Jin et al., 2016), Handler and Kawaminami (2023) emphasise the need for further investigation into travel-related worries in wellness tourism.

Recent bibliometric mapping on tourism safety and security by Toker and Emir (2023) highlights how tourist perceived safety has emerged as a prominent topic in academic literature. Despite growing interest in wellness tourism, limited research has explored how tourist safety perceptions influence this sector. The available studies primarily focus on COVID-19 and health-related risks, particularly perceived hygiene (e.g., Goyal & Taneja, 2023; Li & Huang, 2022; Majeed & Ramkisson, 2020), rather than exploring the broader dimensions of perceived safety (Xie et al., 2020). Moreover, several investigations suggest further exploring how tourist safety perceptions impact destination loyalty (e.g., Xie et al., 2020; Zou & Meng, 2020; Zou & Yu, 2022).

Current studies have highlighted restorative environments as an important area of interest in wellness tourism research (Backman et al., 2023; Jeong, 2024). Drawing from the Attention Restoration Theory (ART) proposed by Kaplan and Kaplan (1989), restorative environments are characterised by their ability to mitigate directed attention fatigue, support emotional and mental recovery, and restore cognitive function (Chen et al., 2023; Lehto, 2012; Lehto et al., 2017; Lin & Yang, 2024; Sun et al., 2023). These environments have been considerably studied in wellness tourism contexts (e.g., Backman et al., 2023; Chen et al., 2023; Gill et al., 2018; Jeong, 2024; Liu et al., 2024; Sun et al., 2023; Zhou et al., 2024), demonstrating their importance in promoting life satisfaction, well-being and destination loyalty (Backman et al., 2023). Moreover, findings from Stragà et al. (2023) indicate that perceived safety predicts perceived restorativeness.

Destination loyalty holds significant importance in wellness tourism investigation (Chua et al., 2024; Han et al., 2017), which delves into the psychological factors influencing tourists' commitment and repeated visits to wellness destinations (Kim et al., 2017). Han et al. (2018) assert that understanding wellness tourists' loyalty is essential for ensuring tourism destinations' competitiveness and sustainable growth. Recent research (e.g., Al-Ansi et al., 2024) highlights that studies on loyalty in wellness tourism have primarily focused on specific services, such as hot spring hotels and spas. However, limited attention has been given to

understanding tourist loyalty within the context of wellness tourism at the destination level (Al-Ansi et al., 2024). This study aims to fill this gap by examining destination-level loyalty within the context of wellness tourism experiences.

Therefore, building on Safety System Theory and ART, this study investigates destination loyalty in wellness tourism and their interplay with tourist perceived safety at destinations (TPSD), tourist worry, tourist perception of restorative environments (TPRE), tourist well-being, and life satisfaction. Specifically, the study focuses on Portugal, a destination with significant yet underexplored potential in the wellness tourism market. While prior research on wellness tourism in Portugal has primarily centred on thermal experiences within the broader framework of health and wellness tourism, which also encompasses medical tourism (e.g., Brandão et al., 2021; da Costa Guerra et al., 2022; Loureiro et al., 2013; Loureiro et al., 2023; Lopes & Rodríguez-López, 2022; Mota et al., 2023; Pereira et al., 2023; Pina & Martins, 2022; Quintela, 2023), this study focuses exclusively on wellness tourism experiences contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of this niche segment.

4.2 Conceptual Framework and Research Hypotheses

4.2.1 Destination loyalty

Jacoby and Kyner (1973) characterised loyalty as the consistent, biased behavioural patterns displayed repeatedly by individuals, with these responses significantly influenced by psychological processes. Yasami et al. (2021) argue that loyalty is multidimensional, including attitudinal and behavioural aspects. Assessing these dimensions together strengthens the overall understanding of loyalty. Attitudinal loyalty reflects consumers' emotional attachment of affection for a product or service, while behavioural loyalty is demonstrated through consistent, repeated patronage over time (Kim et al., 2017).

Loyalty research within the tourism sector emerged in the late 1980s (Campón-Cerro et al., 2017). However, it has gained significant momentum in recent decades, drawing increased attention from tourism researchers, particularly in its conceptualisation (Zaman et al., 2021). Destination loyalty is an essential metric for recreational site managers, as it helps to understand visitor expectations and predict future demand and revenue (Akroush et al., 2016; Cheng et al., 2022). Therefore, destination loyalty indicates destination performance (Cheng et al., 2022; Ren & Pan, 2024). It is typically operationalised through three dimensions: behavioural, attitudinal, and a combination of both. This loyalty often manifests in tourists' willingness to repurchase, intention to revisit and positive recommendations to others (Cheng

et al., 2022; Padrón-Ávila et al., 2022; Ren & Pan, 2024; Yasami et al., 2021; Zaman et al., 2021).

The importance of destination loyalty in ensuring tourism destinations' success has been widely acknowledged, prompting extensive research into the factors that shape travellers' loyalty (e.g., Han et al., 2017; Ren & Pan, 2024; Solis-Radilla et al., 2021). Ren and Pan (2024) highlight that loyal tourists exhibit lower price sensitivity and, consequently, a stronger intention to purchase. This loyalty often results in stable economic returns and effective word-of-mouth promotion through informal networks such as family and friends. Furthermore, Solis-Radilla et al. (2021) emphasise the significance of novelty as a key predictor of customer satisfaction and loyalty. Despite high satisfaction from past experiences at a specific destination, tourists often prioritise novelty-seeking and variety-seeking in their activities. This inclination drives them to explore new places, even amidst uncertainty and the potential for negative experiences with unfamiliar locals (Ren & Pan, 2024).

In today's competitive global tourism landscape, it is essential for destinations to comprehend how loyalty is formed among international wellness travellers and what factors contribute to it (Han et al., 2018). As Al-Ansi et al. (2014) noted, wellness tourism is primarily chosen for its ability to support and restore health and well-being, making it likely that tourists will return to a destination if it effectively satisfies their wellness expectations. Ashton (2018) investigated the revisit intentions among spiritual retreat visitors in the Asia-Pacific context of wellness tourism. The author concluded that destinations offering a peaceful atmosphere positively influence tourists' return intentions. Furthermore, Han et al. (2017) researched wellness spa tourism in Thailand, highlighting the importance of offering diverse service options or programs in building destination loyalty.

4.2.2 Tourist perceived safety at destinations

The concept of travel safety is typically described as the opposite of travel risk, which refers to the potential for encountering danger or being aware of security risks during travel. According to Xie et al. (2020), "travel safety is defined as the degree of risk that can be tolerated during travel, which is a collective term for tourism activities in a balanced, stable, and orderly condition" (p. 1). For Chauhan (2007), travel safety implies experiencing without threats, losses, or injuries, with tourists' assessments forming their perceived safety at destinations.

Quintal et al. (2010) state that perceived safety reflects an individual's degree of confidence when facing uncertainty. Zou and Meng (2020) argue that the sense of safety within the tourism setting focuses on individuals' emotional experiences. Consistent with this view,

Xie et al. (2020) introduced the term TPSD, measured as a subdimension of destination image, which is a subjective psychological experience shaped by individuals' feelings and perceptions of objective occurrences based on their past experiences and the influence of external information about destination stability (Ding & Wu, 2022; Xie et al., 2020; Zou, 2023). TPSD involves tourists' emotional changes (Zou, 2023) and continuous cognitive assessments aligned with destination systems' intricate and dynamic nature (Zou, 2023; Zou & Meng, 2020). This perception is strongly linked to an individual's perception of destination safety before engaging on their trip, during and upon their return (Zou & Meng, 2020). According to the literature, the most significant risk factors influencing TPSD are natural disasters, terrorism, political and social instability, public security, and health hazards (George, 2010; Hsu et al., 2017; Zou & Meng, 2020; Zou, 2023). Furthermore, individuals' assessments within specific behavioural contexts (e.g., wildlife tourism vs rural tourism) and distinct destination environments (e.g., littoral regions vs mountain regions) also impact TPSD (Xie et al., 2020).

Multiple theories have been proposed to address safety, risk, and accidents in general. However, as a unique risk environment, tourism lacks a specific safety theory. To fill this gap, Xie et al. (2020) suggested applying the Safety System Theory to explore TPSD. Biologist Ludwig von Bertalanffy is recognised for developing the foundations of general system theory (Khayal & Farid, 2017). According to this theory, systems should be approached holistically rather than focusing on their components (Larsson et al., 2010; Singh & Azman, 2022). Following a systems perspective, the Safety System Theory is an integrated perspective to understanding accidents and safety management (Gao et al., 2023; Hughes et al., 2015). The theory focuses on two key concepts. First, the accident system, which encompasses unsafe conditions of facilities, the dangerous behaviour of humans, insufficient management measures and environmental risks, is referred to as the "4M" elements. Second, the safety system includes human safety abilities, the safety and reliability of equipment and environments, the safety functions of energy production processes, and the flow of safety-related information safety information (Xie et al., 2020). As a result, TPSD reflects tourists' perceptions of a "travel safety system", a complex and evolving cognitive process influenced by the interplay of the 4M elements (Xie et al., 2020). This framework has been widely applied in tourism research. For example, Bentley et al. (2001) examined adventure tourism safety levels in New Zealand using the 4M analysis framework. Moreover, Xie et al. (2020) researched the construction of the Tourist Perceived Safety Scale (TPSS) grounded on the 4M analysis framework and the Safety System Theory.

According to several investigations, the relationship between TPSD and destination loyalty should be investigated (e.g., Zou & Meng, 2020; Zou & Yu, 2022). In their study on tourists' sense of safety at travel destinations, Zou and You (2022) found that visitors are likelier to remember destinations with notable safety characteristics or experiences. Additionally, the authors concluded that when a destination's safety conditions are better than expected, tourists are more likely to revisit, share the experience with prospective tourists, and recommend the destination to others. Liu et al. (2021) found that visitors' safety concerns about Thailand's natural environment, public health context, and political climate had a negative impact on tourists' willingness to return. In Kong et al. (2024) investigation of tourists who participated in a night tour in South Korea, the authors verified that perceived safety is an antecedent of revisit intention. Considering the importance of understanding destination loyalty and the absence of studies in the wellness tourism literature exploring the relationship between TPSD and destination loyalty, the following is proposed:

H1: Tourist perceived safety at destinations has a direct positive effect on destination loyalty.

4.2.3 Tourist Worry

According to the American Psychological Association (APA) Dictionary of Psychology (2018), worry is "a state of mental distress or agitation due to concern about an impending or anticipated event, threat, or danger" (para. 1). Although worry and anxiety are closely related, they represent distinct psychological constructs, whereby worry represents a cognitive component of anxiety (Chien et al., 2017). Anxiety is "an emotion characterised by apprehension and somatic symptoms of tension in which an individual anticipates impending danger, catastrophe, or misfortune" (American Psychological Association [APA] Dictionary of Psychology, 2018, para. 1). Worry is described as a realistic or specific concern that problem-solving can address. Conversely, anxiety tends to be more generalised, undermines problem-solving confidence and is linked to adverse psychological outcomes (Chien et al., 2017).

Worry encompasses cognitive processes with an emotional component (Brun et al., 2011; Crowley-Cyr et al., 2022), reflecting individuals' persistent thoughts about future events (Kiatkawsin et al., 2021). Those who rely on explicit evidence in decision-making may find it challenging to cope with ambiguous or indeterminate outcomes, thus initiating chains of thought about potential unknown results (Kiatkawsin et al., 2021). There is a common belief

that worry is a determinant factor in prioritising risk reduction strategies, enhancing individuals' sense of control over potential outcomes (Larsen et al., 2009).

In tourism, worry is typically associated with the intolerance of uncertainty, a trait likely shared by tourists due to the inherent unpredictability of travel experiences (Wolff & Larsen, 2013). In agreement with Larsen et al. (2009), worry manifests as a negative affect and uncontrollable streams of thoughts and images driven by uncertainty about future events (Brun et al., 2011; Chien et al., 2017; Handler, 2022; Larsen et al., 2009). This uncertainty prompts tourists to engage in mental problem-solving concerning potential negative outcomes of their trips (Goo et al., 2022). As per the findings of Goo et al. (2022), tourists who experience worry, especially during their trip planning phase, are more likely to face a negative travel experience.

The role of emotions in shaping risk perceptions has become an increasingly recognised area of interest in psychology (Chien et al., 2017). Research has shown that the emotional dimension is the most reliable predictor of risk estimates, with worry often emerging as the most salient emotional factor influencing risk perception (Brun et al., 2011; Chien et al., 2017; Handler, 2022). According to Chien et al. (2017), the extent to which individuals experience worry significantly shapes how they perceive health risks associated with travel. In particular, heightened concern about potential hazards is linked to an increased perception of travel-related risk. Brun et al. (2011) concluded that following terrorist attacks, tourists' worries related to terrorism and conflict increased considerably. Jin et al. (2016) concluded that Chinese tourists visiting Australia worried most about language and culture and errors with reservations and tickets. In the wellness tourism context, Handler (2022) conducted a psychographic segmentation of senior travellers who visited Japanese hot springs and concluded that worry negatively impacts their intention to revisit. Although numerous researchers have investigated how tourist worry relates to risk perceptions, the concept of TPSD remains underexamined. Building on Handler and Kawaminami's (2023) recommendation for further research on travel-related worry in wellness tourism, this study proposes the following:

H2: Tourist worry has a direct negative effect on tourist perceived safety at destinations.

H3: Tourist worry has a direct negative effect on destination loyalty.

4.2.4 Tourist perception of restorative environments

Restoration comprises revitalising an individual's health and body due to consecutive psychophysiological transformations (Xue & Shen, 2022). In environmental psychology research, restoration refers to the renewal or recovery of cognitive, affective, physical, and

social resources (Dai & Tang, 2023; Lin & Yang, 2024; Packer, 2021; Sun et al., 2023) that were depleted during the adaptation process to the external environment (Dai & Tang, 2023).

James's (1892) concepts of involuntary and voluntary attention laid the groundwork for Kaplan and Kaplan's (1989) ART. ART suggests that fatigue from directed attention reduces one's ability to perform cognitive tasks accurately and regulate emotions effectively (Lehto et al., 2017; Packer, 2021; Xue & Shen, 2022; Zhou et al., 2023). The theory distinguishes between involuntary attention, an automatic reaction to fascinating stimuli, and directed attention, which demands an effort to concentrate on less engaging activities (Chen et al., 2023). While directed attention is essential for cognitive and emotional functions, such as problem-solving without distractions, it can deplete, leading to irritability and stress (Chen et al., 2023; Lehto, 2012; Zhou et al., 2023). Kaplan (1995) suggests that engaging, aesthetically pleasing environments stimulate attention, promote recovery, and enhance concentration, promoting overall well-being (Backman et al., 2023; Chen et al., 2023). ART explains the benefits of natural environments on human health and well-being (Backman et al., 2023; Lehto, 2012; Lehto et al., 2017; Lin & Yang, 2024; Zhou et al., 2023). These environments are termed perceived restorative environments as a result of how individuals perceive and experience them (Qiu et al., 2021; Zhou et al., 2024).

Grounded on Kaplan's ART (Kaplan, 1995; Kaplan & Kaplan, 1989), environments should feature four qualities to facilitate the recovery of directed attention. Being away implies disconnecting physically and mentally from daily routines, thus decreasing the need for directed attention (Chen et al., 2023; Hartig et al., 1997; Yoon et al., 2023) and allowing for restorative rest (Xue & Shen, 2022). Extent refers to an environment's ability to offer richness and coherence to stimulate the mind and provide a restorative experience (Lin & Yang, 2024; Packer, 2021) over a prolonged period (Packer, 2021). Fascination refers to appealing and pleasant elements (such as natural landscapes) that engage an individual's involuntary attention, whereby their directed attention is deactivated and re-established (Chen et al., 2023; Lehto, 2012; Zhai et al., 2023). Compatibility is the alignment between an individual's objectives and preferences and the requests imposed by the environment (Chen et al., 2023; Hartig et al., 1997), as well as the availability of supportive information for purposeful activities (Hartig et al., 1997).

Drawing on the ART framework, Backman et al. (2023) found that TPRES contributes to determining loyalty intentions. TPRES can influence tourists' likelihood of revisiting wellness hotels and recommending them to others. Based on these findings, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H4: Tourist perception of restorative environments has a direct positive effect on destination loyalty.

Perceived safety is a fundamental precondition to truly experience the restorative qualities of destination experiences (Stragà et al., 2023). Although the link between feelings of safety and environmental restorativeness has been suggested as necessary, it remains underexplored in the existing academic literature (Stragà et al., 2023). Stragà et al. (2023) test the roles of the four basic ART dimensions (fascination, being away, compatibility, and extent), reflection, and safety in predicting overall perceived restorativeness. Among the several results, the authors found that perceived safety directly predicts overall perceived restorativeness. Therefore, this study aims to analyse the relationship between TPSD and TPRES resulting from wellness experiences, as no studies were identified. Based on this, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H5: Tourist perceived safety at destinations has a direct positive effect on tourist perception of restorative environments.

4.2.5 Tourist well-being and life satisfaction

Academic interest in well-being emerged during the 1970s, particularly within North American and European contexts. This early wave of research was shaped by economic and sociological perspectives grounded in the social indicators movement (Chang et al., 2022). Subsequently, in the 1980s, psychology academics such as Ryff (1989) and Diener (1984) conducted respectively investigations focused on individuals subjective and psychological well-being (Smith & Diekmann, 2017; Yan et al., 2024). Although initially centred on psychology, contemporary well-being studies are often interdisciplinary (Chang et al., 2022).

The term “well-being” is commonly used in everyday language, but its definition is often unclear and conceptually ambiguous, encompassing multiple dimensions (Liu et al., 2023; Pomfret et al., 2023; Yan et al., 2024). Scientific research frequently employs the term broadly to include happiness, life satisfaction, quality of life, and related concepts (Chang et al., 2022; Yao et al., 2023). Drawing from the field of positive psychology, the scientific exploration of human flourishing (Seligman, 2004), well-being can be understood through two main perspectives: hedonia and eudaimonia (Chang et al., 2022; Huang et al., 2024; Rahmani et al., 2024; Ritpanitchajchaval et al., 2023; Yan et al., 2024). The hedonic perspective, originating from the 4th-century Greek philosopher Aristippus, posits that the purpose of life is to maximise pleasure and minimise pain (Smith & Diekmann, 2017; Rahmani et al., 2024).

According to this view, happiness is the sum of one's hedonic experiences (Smith & Diekmann, 2017). Hedonic well-being, advocated by positive psychologists like Diener (1984), is measured by subjective well-being, which includes happiness, positive and negative affect, and life satisfaction (Kim et al., 2020; Ritpanitchajchaval et al., 2023; Yan et al., 2024). In contrast, the eudaimonic perspective, associated with Aristotle, emphasises the pursuit of a meaningful and fulfilling life, both physically and spiritually, aiming to realise one's true potential (Ritpanitchajchaval et al., 2023; Yan et al., 2024). Eudaimonia involves personal growth (Liu et al., 2023; Rahmani et al., 2024) and living a meaningful life (Huang et al., 2024; Rahmani et al., 2024), centred on psychological well-being through meaningful and valuable actions (Ritpanitchajchaval et al., 2023). The present investigation will consider both dimensions of well-being, eudaimonia and hedonia, in its analysis.

The concept of restorative environments is closely aligned with the objectives of wellness tourism, particularly in demonstrating how travel can enhance tourists' spiritual, psychological, and physical well-being (Liu et al., 2024). In Huang's (2022) investigation of middle-aged and elderly adult well-being, the author found that wellness resorts are important restorative venues for promoting subjective well-being. Fan et al. (2024) verified in their research about Chinese tourists who engaged in a domestic pleasure trip a significant positive correlation between perceived restoration during a trip and both subjective and psychological well-being experienced throughout the journey. Based on the concepts of eudaimonic and hedonic well-being, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H6: Tourist perception of restorative environments has a direct positive effect on tourist well-being.

Empirical evidence from prior studies has demonstrated a positive relationship between tourists' subjective well-being and their loyalty (e.g., Baloglu et al., 2019; Dekhili & Hallem, 2020; Huang et al., 2019). Nevertheless, few studies have tested the impact of psychological well-being on loyalty (e.g., Karagöz et al., 2024; Tsai, 2020; Vada et al., 2019). Moreover, the relationship between eudaimonic and hedonic experiences and tourist loyalty remains insufficiently explored in the current literature (Karagöz et al., 2024). Vada et al. (2019) and Karagöz et al. (2024) illustrated that hedonic experiences positively influence loyalty, whereas eudaimonic experiences did not demonstrate a significant impact. On the other hand, research by Tsai (2020), Al-Okaily et al. (2023), and Lee (2024) indicated that both eudaimonic and hedonic experiences have a positive influence on loyalty. To further explore the relationship

between hedonic and eudaimonic well-being and their impact on loyalty within the wellness tourism context, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H7: Tourist well-being has a direct positive effect on destination loyalty.

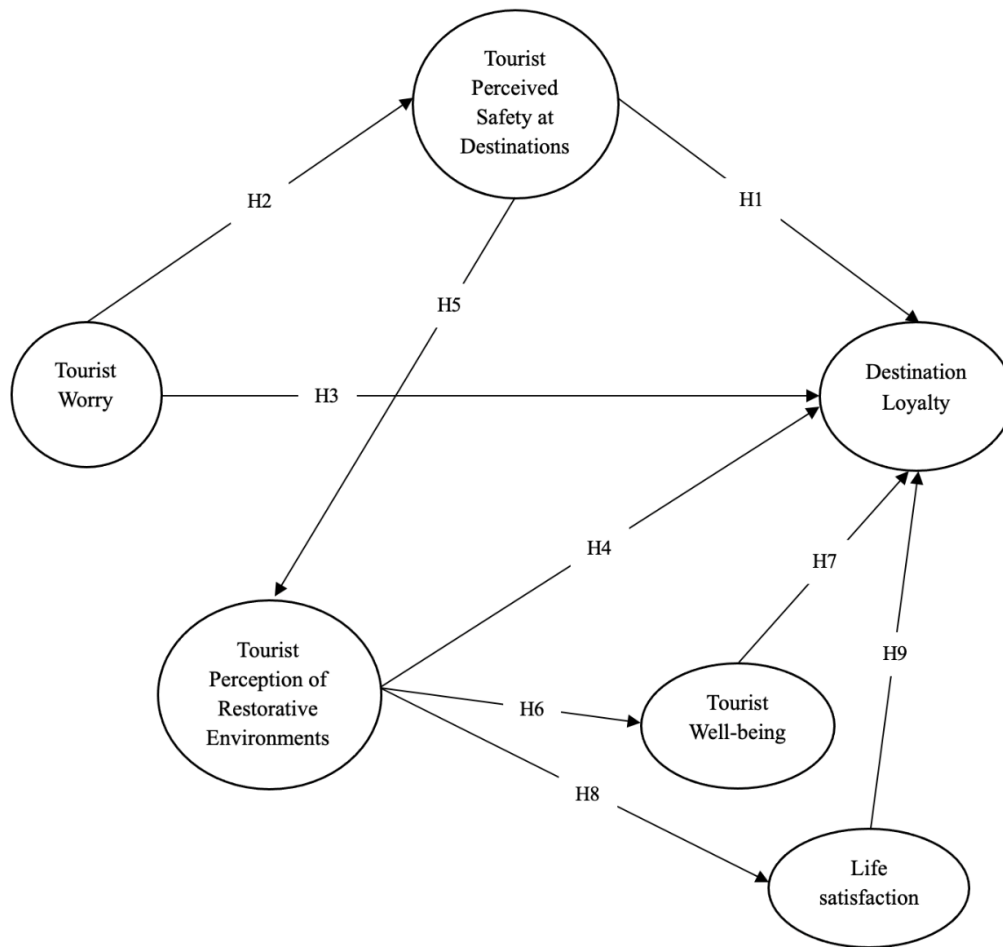
Life satisfaction reflects the cognitive and evaluative dimension of well-being, how individuals assess their lives based on their personal standards (Diener, 1984). While traditionally considered a component of subjective well-being, earlier investigations in wellness tourism characterised it as a single-factor measurement (Huang et al., 2019), a perspective adopted in this study. Backman et al. (2023) verified that perceived restorative environments in wellness tourism directly affected life satisfaction (e.g., Backman et al., 2023). Moreover, Huang (2019) found that life satisfaction positively influences destination loyalty, particularly in spa hotels. Drawing on these findings, this study proposes the following hypotheses:

H8: Tourist perception of restorative environments has a direct positive effect on life satisfaction.

H9: Life satisfaction has a direct positive effect on destination loyalty.

Therefore, the current study will estimate the conceptual model presented in Figure 4.1 to test the research hypotheses.

Figure 4.1. Conceptual model



Source: Own elaboration.

4.3 Methodology

4.3.1 Study area and target population

Located in Southern Europe, Portugal, officially known as the Portuguese Republic, was established in 1143 and occupies a total area of 92.212 km². The continent is positioned in the extreme southwest of the Iberian Peninsula, bordered north and east by Spain and the west and south by the Atlantic Ocean. The Portuguese territory also includes two autonomous regions: the archipelagos of Madeira and the Azores, located in the Atlantic Ocean (Visit Portugal, 2024).

Based on the 19th report by the European Travel Commission (ETC), published in June 2024, Portugal ranked as Europeans' 9th favourite destination in Europe (European Travel Commission [ETC], 2024). Recognised as one of Europe's most competitive destinations, Portugal, in 2023, international tourism revenues reached €25.1 billion, exceeding the figure recorded in 2022 by 18.9%. The results achieved in 2023 for this indicator also represented an

increase of 36.6% over 2019 (the pre-pandemic year), marking the highest value ever and confirming the full recovery of the sector (Turismo de Portugal, 2024b).

Portugal enjoys mild winters and warm summers, diverse natural landscapes, rich gastronomy, and profound cultural heritage, positioning it as an ideal location for wellness tourism (Moreira, 2018; Turismo de Portugal, 2024a). Complementing these attributes, Portugal's ranking as the 7th safest country globally, according to the 2023 Global Peace Index (GPI) (Institute for Economics & Peace, 2023), further underscores its potential as a privileged destination for wellness-focused travel.

Given the recent global emphasis on health and well-being, Portugal is well-positioned to attract wellness travellers. Thus, considering the travel restrictions during the 2020-2021 pandemic, the target population of this research are national and international tourists who have participated in wellness experiences in Portugal since 2022.

4.3.2 Measurement of constructs

A questionnaire was developed using previously validated scales to assess the proposed hypotheses, ensuring the reliability and validity of the measurements. The first section comprises questions to identify the tourist profile, covering aspects such as age, gender, nationality, occupation, and the characteristics of the visit, including the wellness experience they most enjoyed in Portugal, when it took place and in which city. The second section's questions evaluate the model's constructs: tourist worry, TPSD, TPRE, tourist well-being, life satisfaction, and destination loyalty. As detailed in the appendix, a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree) was employed to assess the first-order constructs' items.

Tourist worry was assessed using the Tourist Worry Scale (TWS) designed by Larsen et al. (2009) and tested in numerous investigations (e.g., Brun et al., 2011; Jin et al., 2016). This scale was developed to measure tourists' worries concerning potential adverse outcomes of their trips. The TWS consists of eight items, half relating to planning a vacation and the other half to potential events occurring during a vacation. TPSD was evaluated using the reliable TPSS developed by Xie et al. (2020). This scale is based on the Safety System Theory and 4M analysis framework (Xie et al., 2020), comprising 20 items across five factors: perceived safety of facility and equipment elements (PSFE), perceived safety of human elements (PSH), perceived safety of social environments (PSSE), perceived safety of natural environments (PSNE), and perceived safety of management elements (PSM).

TPRE was measured in four factors, extent, being away, compatibility, and fascination, by adopting the 14-item Perceived Restorativeness Scale (PRS). This scale is grounded on the ART and is based on the studies from Hartig et al. (1997), Purcell et al. (2001), and Laumann et al. (2001). Backman et al. (2023) recently adapted the scale to the wellness tourism context. This measurement approach has since been widely adopted by researchers, with numerous studies confirming its four-factor structure (e.g., Backman et al., 2023; Cho et al., 2016; Huang, 2022; Xue & Shen, 2022).

Tourist well-being was evaluated using the 12-item scale created by Lengieza et al. (2019), which encompasses two factors of hedonia (avoid and pleasure) and two factors of eudaimonia (self-reflection and personal meaning) within travel experiences. Studies from Lee et al. (2024) and Karagöz et al. (2024) confirmed the validity of the measurement. Life satisfaction was gauged through the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) designed by Diener et al. (1985), comprising five items that evaluate an individual's overall cognitive judgement of their life satisfaction. Tourist destination loyalty was tested through seven items from Padrón-Ávila et al. (2022), encompassing behavioural and attitudinal dimensions.

Two questionnaire versions were administered: the original English version and a translated Portuguese version. To ensure functional and conceptual equivalence of the items in Portuguese, a back-translation procedure was employed, translating the content from English to Portuguese and then back to English. Subsequently, the Portuguese version was tested in a pilot study involving a convenience sample of 15 Portuguese residents engaged in wellness tourism within the country.

4.3.3 Data collection

Wellness tourism in Portugal remains largely underexplored, as it has not received significant attention from researchers, industry stakeholders, or policymakers. This underdevelopment is also reflected in the absence of official data to provide specific statistics for this sector. Consequently, determining a minimum number of cases to reach a representative sample was not feasible. Moreover, this tourism segment posed significant challenges in data collection. Efforts to gather data from hotels, thermal spas, or integrative therapy centres were largely unsuccessful. Without an adequate sampling frame, a convenience sampling method was adopted.

Data was collected through Google Forms, an online survey tool (<https://www.google.com/forms/about/>). The questionnaire link was subsequently shared on social media channels, including Facebook and Instagram, on the pages of hotels, spas, spiritual

retreats, and other wellness-related activities in Portugal. Data was gathered from November 2023 to July 2024.

The survey targeted national and international tourists aged 18 and above who had experienced wellness activities in Portugal since 2022. It included primary and secondary wellness travellers, those whose main motivation for selecting a destination is to pursue wellness and those who want to preserve their wellness routines or engage in wellness experiences during their leisure or business trips. Participants were required to complete the questionnaire, which included an introduction with informed consent, research objectives, and definitions of key terms for clarity. Out of the 271 questionnaires initially collected, a final sample of 237 was retained for analysis following a detailed data cleaning and screening process.

4.3.4 Data analysis

To estimate and validate the proposed model, the study employed Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) using SmartPLS version 4.0.8.2 (Ringle et al., 2022). This technique is widely recognised in tourism research for its suitability in analysing complex models, especially when dealing with non-normally distributed data and smaller sample sizes (Hair et al., 2019). Besides a relatively small sample size, our study involves a complex model with second-order constructs, and the data do not follow a normal distribution (Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests: p -values = 0.000).

Prior to proceeding with model estimation, we assessed potential common method bias (CMB), which is important given that all the constructs were measured on the same scale from 1 to 5. Such a design can lead to CMB, where respondents may provide consistent answers that could artificially inflate covariances between variables (Podsakoff et al., 2012). We first conducted Harman's (1976) single-factor test using SPSS to evaluate CMB. In this test, an Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was performed with all measurement items loading onto a single factor. The analysis indicated that the explained variance for the single factor was equal to 23%, therefore less than 50%, suggesting that CMB was not a significant issue for the dataset. As an additional test for CBM, the collinearity test was run (Kock, 2015). According to this test, the variance inflation factor (VIF) for the exogenous latent variables in the model should not surpass the 3.3 threshold, verified in our study.

The two-step method was adopted to estimate the reflective second-order constructs on the model (Hair et al., 2022). Firstly, scores for each dimension (first-order construct), which form the second-order constructs, were derived by running the PLS-SEM algorithm on a model

connecting all first-order constructs. These scores were then used in the subsequent phase to represent the associated second-order constructs. Following the validation of the measurement model through these two steps, the structural model was estimated, and the proposed hypotheses were tested.

4.4 Results

4.4.1 Sample Characterisation

The demographic characteristics of the sample are summarised in Table 4.1. Participants engaged in wellness experiences across Portugal between February 7, 2022, and July 1, 2024. The sample was predominantly female, with 81.9%, 17.7% male, and one respondent choosing the option “prefer not to answer”. Participants spanned all age groups ($M = 34.45$, $SD = 9.39$), ranging from 18-24 (11.4%) to 55+ (2.5%), and the most represented age group was 25-34 years (48.5%). Regarding residency, 46.4% were domestic tourists, while 53.6% were international visitors. A slightly larger proportion of respondents lived in Portugal (52.3%) compared to those residing abroad (47.7%). Regarding employment, the majority (66.2%) worked in the public-private sector. When asked about their preferred wellness experience during their trip, the most popular choice was walking in nature (28.3%), followed by yoga/meditation/mindfulness (21.6%) and thermal/mineral baths (20.3%). The settings where participants experienced wellness activities varied, with natural surroundings being the most popular (35.9%), followed by hotels (26.6%), retreat centres (17.7%), thermal centres (10.5%), and spas (5.1%). Geographically, most wellness experiences took place in the northern region of Portugal (21.5%), followed by the central region (17.7%), the Azores (16.9%), and the Lisbon region (15.6%).

Table 4.1. Background characteristics of the sample

Variables ($n = 237$)	<i>N</i>	Percentage
Gender		
Female	194	81.9
Male	42	17.7
Prefer not to answer	1	0.4
Age		
18-24	27	11.4
25-34	115	48.5
35-44	55	23.2
45-54	34	14.4
≥55	6	2.5
Nationality		
Portuguese	110	46.4
Other	127	53.6
Country of residence		
Portugal	124	52.3
Other	113	47.7
Occupation		
Self-employed	61	25.7

Public-private sector	157	66.2
Student	16	6.8
Unemployed	3	1.3
Favourite wellness experience in Portugal		
Nature walk	67	28.3
Yoga/meditation/mindfulness	51	21.6
Thermal/mineral baths	48	20.3
Massage	31	13.1
Nature cycling tour	7	3.0
Other	33	13.7
Setting where the wellness took place		
Nature	85	35.9
Hotel	63	26.6
Retreat centre	42	17.7
Thermal centre	25	10.5
Spa	12	5.1
Other	10	4.2
Region where the wellness experience took place		
Northern Portugal	51	21.5
Central Portugal	42	17.7
Lisbon region	37	15.6
Alentejo	30	12.7
Algarve	25	10.5
Azores	40	16.9
Madeira	12	5.1

Source: Own elaboration.

4.4.2 Assessing the measurement model

Table 4.2 shows the measurement model results for the reflective first-order latent variables. All factor loadings exceeded the commonly accepted threshold of 0.707, indicating an adequate level of individual reliability (Hair et al., 2011). In addition, “composite reliability” (CR) values ranged from 0.870 to 0.948, surpassing the minimum criterion of 0.7 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), thereby confirming internal consistency among all indicators corresponding to one construct. Concerning convergent validity, each latent variable’s “average variance extracted” (AVE) values reflecting the variance shared between each construct and its indicators were analysed. As a result, all AVEs exceed the recommended threshold of 0.5 (Hair et al., 2011). In addition, bootstrapping *t*-statistics revealed that the indicators of each first-order latent variable significantly measured the proposed latent variable, with all *t*-values exceeding 1.96 ($p < 0.05$) or 2.585 ($p < 0.01$), further corroborating convergent validity.

Table 4.2. Descriptive statistics of the measurement model (First-order constructs)

Dimensions and items	Mean ^a	Loading	CR	AVE	<i>t</i> -value	<i>p</i> -value
<i>Tourist worry (TW)</i>			0.870	0.573		
TW-1. When planning a vacation, I worry that hotel reservations, train tickets or other travel documents may contain mistakes	2.56	0.724			8.671	0.000
TW-2. When planning a vacation, I worry about the possibility of acts of terrorism or war at the destination	2.09	0.802			12.508	0.000
TW-3. When on vacation, I worry about petty crime (that someone will steal my belongings)	2.71	0.750			11.051	0.000
TW-4. When on vacation, I constantly worry that something may go wrong	2.00	0.785			11.926	0.000
TW-5. When on vacation, I worry that I’ll get lost or lose contact with my travel companions	1.86	0.722			9.176	0.000

<i>Perceived safety of social environments (PSSE)</i>			0.948	0.858		
PSSE-1. I rarely encountered fraud and theft at the destination	4.55	0.907			8.731	0.000
PSSE-2. I rarely encountered violence at the destination	4.60	0.956			9.364	0.000
PSSE-3. I rarely encountered public security problems at the destination	4.58	0.915			8.912	0.000
<i>Perceived safety of facility and equipment elements (PSFE)</i>			0.896	0.685		
PSFE-1. The facilities/physical space where the wellness tourism experience took place were reliable in performance	4.51	0.707			2.651	0.008
PSFE-2. The facilities/physical space where the wellness tourism experience took place seemed safe and secure	4.56	0.857			3.738	0.000
PSFE-3. The facilities/physical space where the wellness tourism experience took place was comfortable	4.49	0.805			3.019	0.003
PSFE-4. I did not encounter any danger when I used the facilities/physical space where the wellness tourism experience took place	4.55	0.926			4.970	0.000
<i>Perceived safety of management elements (PSM)</i>			0.917	0.847		
PSM-1. At the destination, I found clear information about the safety procedures to be adopted	3.82	0.951			2.638	0.008
PSM-2. The destination's public security forces seemed very effective to me	3.93	0.888			2.762	0.006
<i>Perceived safety of human elements (PSH)</i>			0.895	0.740		
PSH-1. Tourism professionals where the wellness tourism experience took place had a professional safety ability	3.73	0.795			2.297	0.022
PSH-2. Tourism professional where the wellness tourism experience took place provided service safely	4.26	0.919			2.323	0.020
PSH-3. Tourism professionals where the wellness tourism experience took place ensured my safety	4.29	0.862			2.221	0.026
<i>Perceived safety of natural environments (PSNE)</i>			0.893	0.807		
PSNE-1. The destination is less prone to natural disasters	3.63	0.881			2.550	0.011
PSNE-2. There was no need to worry about extreme natural conditions at the destination, such as weather	3.92	0.915			2.726	0.006
<i>Extent and compatibility (E&C)</i>			0.914	0.641		
E&C-1. I felt that the surroundings were harmonious	4.67	0.807			21.148	0.000
E&C-2. I felt that the different elements of the environment constituted a larger whole	4.55	0.854			28.474	0.000
E&C-3. I felt that the elements of the environment were interconnected	4.55	0.862			31.212	0.000
E&C-4. Many of the objects/elements caught my attention	4.43	0.755			19.779	0.000
E&C-5. I rapidly adapted to the setting	4.65	0.711			14.245	0.000
E&C-6. There was an accordance between what I like to do and the surroundings	4.61	0.805			23.810	0.000
<i>Fascination (FA)</i>			0.914	0.726		
FA-1. There was a lot to discover	4.30	0.857			38.811	0.000
FA-2. There were many things I found beautiful	4.68	0.830			28.045	0.000
FA-3. There was a lot I wanted to do	4.27	0.872			36.963	0.000
FA-4. The environment allowed me to do activities I like	4.56	0.849			29.993	0.000
<i>Away (AW)</i>			0.872	0.695		
AW-1. I did not have to think about my responsibilities while I was there	4.10	0.798			19.800	0.000
AW-2. Spending time there gave me a good brake from my daily routine	4.66	0.873			37.529	0.000
AW-3. I've been away from my obligations	4.42	0.828			19.356	0.000
<i>Meaning & reflection (M&R)</i>			0.930	0.689		
PG-1. The trip helped me think about my true potential	4.11	0.842			29.527	0.000
PG-2. The trip helped me grow as a person	4.13	0.852			34.175	0.000
PG-3. The trip gave me a sense of purpose in my life	3.68	0.821			31.978	0.000
PG-4. I experienced times when I could self-reflect	4.24	0.833			33.967	0.000
PG-5. I thought about the meaning of life on the trip	3.91	0.824			20.704	0.000
PG-6. I was able to think deeply about topics I care about	4.06	0.809			19.806	0.000
<i>Pleasure (PL)</i>			0.920	0.793		
PL-1. I had many laughs on the trip	4.49	0.892			36.792	0.000
PL-2. The trip was entertaining	4.52	0.913			56.447	0.000
PL-3. The trip made me happy	4.75	0.866			32.907	0.000
<i>Avoid (AV)</i>			0.902	0.755		
AV-1. The trip helped me forget the problems in the world	4.24	0.896			50.087	0.000

AV-2. The trip helped me get away from negative news in the papers, TV, internet postings, etc	4.44	0.852			27.950	0.000
AV-3. The trip allowed me to live like I did not have a care in the world	4.09	0.857			30.112	0.000
<i>Life Satisfaction (LS)</i>			0.900	0.643		
SWL-1. In most ways, my life is close to my ideal	3.83	0.805			17.315	0.000
SWL-2. The conditions of my life are excellent	3.91	0.752			12.794	0.000
SWL-3. I am satisfied with my life	4.07	0.869			30.573	0.000
SWL-4. So far, I have gotten the important things I want in life	4.07	0.833			30.124	0.000
SWL-5. If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing	3.68	0.743			14.107	0.000
<i>Destination loyalty (DL)</i>			0.905	0.705		
DL-1. I would repeat this trip	4.65	0.745			16.902	0.000
DL-2. I still refer this trip to others	4.39	0.873			38.548	0.000
DL-3. I encourage my family and friends to do this trip	4.30	0.847			29.134	0.000
DL-4. I recommend this trip to anyone who asks me	4.46	0.886			39.281	0.000

Note: CR = composite reliability; AVE = average variance extracted.

*Each item was asked on a 5-point Likert-type scale: 1 = strongly disagreed and 5 = strongly agreed.

Source: Own elaboration.

Table 4.3 presents the assessment of discriminant validity, which determines whether each construct represents a concept distinct from the others. Two established criteria were applied, the Fornell-Larcker criterion (Fornell & Larcker, 1981) and the “heterotrait-monotrait” (HTMT) ratio of correlations (Henseler et al., 2015). According to the Fornell-Larcker criterion, the square root of a construct’s AVE must be greater than its correlations with any other construct. The HTMT criterion, on the other hand, requires that inter-construct correlation ratios remain below the 0.9 threshold (Henseler *et al.*, 2015). The findings confirm that all constructs satisfy both criteria, supporting the discriminant validity of the measurement model. Consequently, the constructs demonstrate reliability and validity.

Table 4.3. Correlations among latent variables (First-order constructs)

Constructs	LS	E&C	FA	AW	PSSE	PSFE	PSM	PSH	PSNE	M&R	PL	AV	DL	TW
LS	0.802*													
E&C	0.280	0.801*												
FA	0.312**		0.852*											
AW	0.270	0.658	0.417	0.834*										
PSSE	0.306**	0.743**			0.926*									
PSFE	0.175	0.609	0.184	0.283	0.226**	0.427	0.392	0.827*						
PSM	0.206**	0.727**	0.497**	0.416**	0.206**	0.324	0.419**							
PSH	0.205	0.422	0.184	0.283	0.926*	0.226**	0.419**							
PSNE	0.226**	0.469**	0.206**	0.331**		0.231	0.427	0.827*						
M&R	0.231	0.427	0.259	0.324	0.392	0.263**	0.492**	0.300**	0.416**	0.419**				
PL	0.196	0.337	0.279	0.178	0.357	0.196	0.337	0.279	0.178	0.357	0.370	0.920*		
AV	0.227**	0.397**	0.317**	0.214**	0.417**	0.492**								
DL	0.194	0.360	0.300	0.258	0.361	0.517	0.454	0.860*						
TW	0.209**	0.420**	0.353**	0.309**	0.411**	0.633**	0.566**							
	0.064	0.165	-0.058	0.150	0.287	0.280	0.110	0.247	0.898*					
	0.111**	0.195**	0.092**	0.196**	0.343**	0.334**	0.149**	0.305**						
	0.268	0.422	0.441	0.237	0.029	0.222	0.301	0.243	-0.042	0.830*				
	0.311**	0.462**	0.478**	0.257**	0.061**	0.263**	0.341**	0.274**	0.066**					
	0.314	0.500	0.540	0.394	0.154	0.282	0.251	0.257	0.088	0.302	0.891*			
	0.349**	0.568**	0.617**	0.471**	0.170**	0.363**	0.306**	0.301**	0.107**	0.319**				
	0.205	0.447	0.360	0.514	0.158	0.222	0.261	0.237	0.186	0.335	0.451	0.869*		
	0.225**	0.511**	0.412**	0.630**	0.180**	0.303**	0.311**	0.282**	0.235**	0.357**	0.520**			
	0.288	0.563	0.530	0.425	0.252	0.257	0.311	0.349	0.122	0.364	0.571	0.367	0.840*	
	0.312**	0.632**	0.599**	0.501**	0.276**	0.343**	0.366**	0.410**	0.146**	0.387**	0.652**	0.415**		
	-0.164	-0.031	-0.023	-0.010	-0.190	-0.168	-0.084	-0.053	-0.063	-0.052	0.014	0.008	0.107	0.757*
	0.214**	0.089**	0.074**	0.108**	0.206**	0.161**	0.121**	0.080**	0.117**	0.091**	0.074**	0.132**	0.137**	

Note: LS: Life satisfaction; E&C: Extent and compatibility; FA: Fascination; AW: Away; PSSE: Perceived safety of social environments; PSFE: Perceived safety of facility and equipment elements; PSM: Perceived safety of management elements; PSH: Perceived safety of human elements; PSNE: Perceived safety of natural environments; M&R: Meaning and reflection; PL: Pleasure; AV: Avoid; DL: Destination loyalty; TW: Tourist worry

*Diagonal values corresponding to the Fornell-Larcker criterion, **HTMT values.

Source: Own elaboration.

Subsequently, the estimated scores for the first-order constructs were used as measurement items for the second-order factors of *TPSD*, *TPRE*, and *tourist well-being*. According to the results shown in Table 4.4, individual reliability was observed for most of the indicators, with loading values exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.707 (Hair et al., 2011), except for the construct “*meaning & reflection*” (0.670). However, since it was close to the reference value and its exclusion did not enhance the measurement model, the indicator was maintained in the analysis. Additionally, the construct “*PSNE*” was eliminated from the model, as its factor loading was below the minimum acceptable threshold of 0.4 (Hair et al., 2011). CR was confirmed, with coefficients from 0.801 to 0.879, exceeding the established threshold of 0.7 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). As for convergent validity, the assessment yielded robust results as all AVEs were above the 0.5 cut-off point (Hair et al., 2011), and bootstrapping revealed t-values greater than 2.585, indicating significance at the 1% level. The loadings, the CRs and the AVEs of the remaining first-order constructs (tourist well-being, life satisfaction, and destination loyalty), not presented in the table, are similar to those presented in Table 4.2.

Table 4.4. Descriptive statistics of the measurement model (Second-order constructs)

Constructs and dimensions	Mean	Loading	CR.	AVE	t-value	p-value
<i>Tourist perceived safety at destinations (TPSD)</i>			0.834	0.557		
Perceived safety of social environments (PSSE)	4.58	0.702			12.154	0.000
Perceived safety of facility and equipment elements (PSFE)	4.53	0.773			20.420	0.000
Perceived safety of management elements (PSM)	3.88	0.718			16.737	0.000
Perceived safety of human elements (PSH)	4.09	0.789			19.838	0.000
<i>Tourist perception of restorative environments (TPRE)</i>			0.879	0.709		
Extent and compatibility (E&C)	4.58	0.913			73.116	0.000
Fascination (FA)	4.45	0.832			25.863	0.000
Away (AW)	4.39	0.776			18.074	0.000
<i>Tourist well-being (TWB)</i>			0.801	0.575		
Meaning and reflection (M&R)	4.02	0.670			13.479	0.000
Pleasure (PL)	4.59	0.823			30.209	0.000
Avoid (AV)	4.26	0.773			24.102	0.000

Note: CR = composite reliability; AVE = average variance extracted.

*Each item was asked on a 5-point Likert-type scale: 1 = strongly disagreed and 5 = strongly agreed.

Source: Own elaboration.

Regarding the model’s discriminant validity, the square root of each AVE was greater than its correlations with other constructs, as shown in Table 4.5, suggesting adequate discriminant validity. Likewise, most HTMT ratio values remained below the recommended threshold of 0.9. The exception was the relation between the tourist well-being and TPRE (HTMT = 0.949). Given this higher than desirable HTMT value, the crossloadings for these two constructs were also observed as an additional measure of discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2022). The crossloadings analysis, not presented in this study due to space limitations, shows that items measuring tourist well-being and TPRE load more strongly on the intended

construct than on the other, supporting discriminant validity. Finally, since the constructs are also theoretically distinct, the measurement model was considered to present enough discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2022).

Table 4.5. Correlations among latent variables of the complete model

Constructs	LS	TPSD	TPRE	DL	TWB	TW
LS	0.804*					
TPSD	0.273	0.747*				
	0.335**					
TPRE	0.290	0.486	0.842*			
	0.342**	0.628**				
DL	0.284	0.394	0.608	0.839*		
	0.312**	0.484**	0.715**			
TWB	0.347	0.387	0.677	0.589	0.758*	
	0.460**	0.567**	0.949**	0.764**		
TW	-0.165	-0.168	-0.026	0.108	-0.010	0.755*
	0.214**	0.217**	0.088**	0.137**	0.140**	

Note: LS: Life satisfaction; TPSD: Tourist perceived safety at destinations; TPRE: Tourist perception of restorative environments; DL: Destination loyalty; TWB: Tourist well-being; TW: Tourist worry

*Diagonal values corresponding to the Fornell-Larcker criterion, **HTMT values.

Source: Own elaboration.

4.4.3 Assessing the structural model and testing the research hypotheses

The structural model was assessed prior to testing the proposed hypotheses, focusing on its explanatory power. First, the model's explanatory ability was examined through the coefficient of determination (R^2) for the dependent latent constructs (TPSD, TPRE, tourist well-being, life satisfaction, and destination loyalty). Hair et al. (2011) outlined that R^2 values of 0.75, 0.50, and 0.25 reflect high, moderate, and low levels of explanatory power, respectively. The coefficients for the construct's tourist well-being (0.456) and destination loyalty (0.049) indicate a moderate level of variance explained by the model's predictors. Path coefficients were computed for the second-order model to evaluate the proposed hypotheses, as shown in Table 4.6. The findings indicated that path coefficients ranged from -0.168 to 0.677 and were statistically significant at the 5% level. Based on the path coefficient results, all hypotheses 1-9 were supported, except hypothesis 3, which posited that tourist worry negatively impacts destination loyalty.

Table 4.6. Result of structural model and hypotheses testing

Hypotheses		Path coefficients	t-value	p-value	Results
Hypothesis 1	TPSD → Destination loyalty	0.124	1.766	0.039	Support
Hypothesis 2	Tourist worry → TPSD	-0.168	2.000	0.023	Support
Hypothesis 3	Tourist worry → Destination loyalty	0.153	3.269	0.001	Not support
Hypothesis 4	TPRE → Destination loyalty	0.332	4.167	0.000	Support
Hypothesis 5	TPSD → TPRE	0.486	8.203	0.000	Support
Hypothesis 6	TPRE → Tourist well-being	0.677	15.043	0.000	Support
Hypothesis 7	Tourist well-being → Destination loyalty	0.290	4.009	0.000	Support
Hypothesis 8	TPRE → Life satisfaction	0.290	5.053	0.000	Support

Hypothesis 9	Life satisfaction → Destination loyalty	0.078	1.649	0.050	Support
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R² for TPSD = 0.024; for TPRE = 0.233; for Tourist well-being = 0.456; for Life satisfaction = 0.080; for Destination loyalty = 0.449.
Source: Own elaboration.

4.5 Discussion

The findings reveal that the model is particularly robust in explaining tourist well-being (0.456) and destination loyalty (0.449). Additionally, the highest significant associations were between TPRE and tourist well-being (0.677), TPSD and TPRE (0.486), and TPRE and destination loyalty (0.332).

The results support hypothesis 1, indicating that TPSD significantly enhances tourist destination loyalty (0.124), aligning with Zou and You (2022), Liu et al. (2021), and Kong et al. (2024) investigations, which found that tourists who perceive destinations as safe are more inclined to revisit, share their experience and recommend it to others. Furthermore, these results follow Ashton (2018), who states that destinations offering a peaceful atmosphere positively influence wellness tourists' return intentions.

Hypothesis 2 was also supported, revealing that tourist worry significantly negatively influences TPSD (-0.168). This aligns with Chien et al. (2017) and Brun et al. (2011) investigations, which argue that worry predicts risk perception. Contrary to Handler's (2022) findings, which concluded that senior travellers visiting Japanese hot springs who experienced high worry negatively impacted their intention to revisit, hypothesis 3 was not supported in this study. Instead, tourist worry was positively correlated with destination loyalty (0.153). These results can be attributed to the distinction made in the present investigation, where tourists were asked about their general travel-related worries. At the same time, destination loyalty was evaluated specifically within their wellness tourism experience in Portugal. Consequently, although tourists may express general concerns about travel, they might not experience significant worry during these particular wellness trips in Portugal.

TPRE positively affects destination loyalty (0.332), confirming hypothesis 4. These findings resonate with Backman et al. (2023), who noted that restorative environments contribute to wellness tourists' behavioural intentions. Moreover, TPRE positively influences tourist well-being (0.677) and life satisfaction (0.290), supporting hypotheses 6 and 8. These results align with Backman et al. (2023), Huang (2022), and Fan et al. (2024) investigations, who confirmed that when tourists perceive the environment where the wellness experience occurs as restorative, their subjective and psychological well-being and life satisfaction increase. The most influential dimensions of TPRE are "extent & compatibility" (0.913). Kaplan and Kaplan's (1989) ART posits four restorative components: fascination, being away,

compatibility, and extent. The present findings identified three dimensions, once extent and compatibility had become a single factor. These results were not consistent with previous investigations (e.g., Backman et al., 2023; Cho et al., 2016; Huang, 2022; Xue & Shen, 2022) that validated the four-factor structure of the PRS.

The results revealed that TPSD positively influences TPRE (0.486), confirming hypothesis 5. This implies that tourists who perceive a destination as safe are more inclined to consider the environment of their wellness experience restorative. These outcomes are in line with Stragà et al. (2023), which demonstrated that TPSD predicts TPRE. The results also demonstrate that PSH is the most important dimension, when compared to the PSSE, PSFE, and PSM dimensions, in shaping TPSD (0.789). These findings are in line with Xie et al. (2020), whose study on the development of the TPSD scale revealed that PSH is one of the highest concerns among tourists within the TPSD system.

Tourist well-being (0.290) significantly contributes to destination loyalty, confirming hypothesis 7. Previous studies by Tsai (2020), Al-Okaily et al. (2023), and Lee (2024) have similarly found that hedonic and eudaimonic well-being positively impact destination loyalty. Among the well-being dimensions, pleasure (0.823) and avoid (0.733), corresponding to the hedonic dimensions, were the strongest predictors of tourist well-being. Although eudaimonic and hedonic well-being contribute positively to destination loyalty, hedonic well-being was a stronger predictor in this relationship. This finding aligns with Vada et al. (2019) and Karagöz et al. (2024), who reported that hedonia positively influences destination loyalty, whereas eudaimonia does not. It is worth highlighting that, contrary to the four factors structure suggested by Lengieza et al. (2019), this study identifies three factors: personal meaning and self-reflection have merged into a single factor. Hypothesis 9 was also confirmed once life satisfaction positively affects destination loyalty, as reported by the research from Backman et al. (2023) and Huang (2019).

4.6 Conclusion

This study provides important contributions to destination loyalty formation in wellness tourism research. Drawing on Safety System Theory and ART, this research highlights the interaction between key variables, including TPSD, tourist worry, TPRE, tourist well-being, and life satisfaction, to form destination loyalty. The findings underline the importance of mitigating tourist worries, strengthening safety perceptions, fostering restorative experiences, and enhancing tourist well-being and life satisfaction as effective strategies for improving destination loyalty in wellness tourism.

The results highlight that tourist worry negatively impacts TPSD, which is important for fostering positive wellness tourist experiences, particularly in shaping TPRE. The significant positive relationship between TPSD and TPRE underscores that safety perceptions are essential in enabling tourists to experience restorative benefits in wellness settings. Furthermore, the positive impact of TPRE on tourist well-being and life satisfaction reaffirms the transformative potential of wellness tourism in enhancing both eudaimonic and hedonic dimensions of well-being. The findings also show that TPSD, TPRE, tourist well-being and life satisfaction positively influence destination loyalty. Despite previous literature identifying a negative relationship between tourist worry and destination loyalty, the unexpected positive correlation found in this study invites further reflection.

Addressing existing gaps in wellness tourism research, the study advances theoretical understanding and delivers insights for stakeholders, including policymakers, marketers, and destination managers. These findings hold particular relevance for creating and promoting wellness tourism experiences that cater to the evolving needs of travellers while ensuring a sustainable competitive advantage in this growing industry. Ultimately, this investigation offers a starting point for future research on wellness tourism and highlights Portugal's potential to grow as a well-known international destination in this field.

4.6.1 Theoretical implications

This research provides a substantial contribution to the theoretical knowledge of wellness tourism. Firstly, it advances knowledge of tourists' decision-making processes by examining destination loyalty among wellness travellers, a subject of considerable interest in the academic literature (e.g., Ahn & Kim, 2024; Chua et al., 2024; Han et al., 2017; Han et al., 2018; Kim et al., 2017). Specifically, this investigation addresses the call by Al-Ansi et al. (2024) for further research into wellness tourism at the destination loyalty level since considerable of the existing studies centre predominantly on specific products or services within the sector.

Secondly, it approaches a significant gap in tourism research by shifting the focus from risk perceptions, the dominant theme in prior studies (e.g., Fuchs et al., 2024; Godovykh et al., 2021; Kim et al., 2023), to safety perceptions. Within the context of wellness tourism, this perspective remains largely unexamined since the limited studies available primarily focus on COVID-19 and health-related risks (e.g., Goyal & Taneja, 2023; Li & Huang, 2022; Majeed & Ramkisson, 2020), making the findings particularly relevant for advancing the field. Furthermore, this study is among the first to employ the TPSS developed by Xie et al. (2020) to evaluate TPSD, specifically in wellness tourism, extending the applicability of Safety

System Theory to this domain. This novel application not only underscores the robustness of the TPSS but also offers an empirical baseline for future investigations.

Thirdly, investigating the impact of tourist worry on TPSD offers novel insights. While prior research has frequently linked tourist worry to risk perceptions (e.g., Brun et al., 2011; Chien et al., 2017; Handler, 2022; Jin et al., 2016), its relationship with TPSD has remained underexplored. The findings of this study respond directly to Handler and Kawaminami's (2023) call for further research on travel-related worry in wellness tourism. Notably, the results indicate a nuanced interplay where worry negatively affects TPSD while simultaneously enhancing destination loyalty. This duality of tourist worry highlights a critical area for theoretical exploration, particularly in understanding how emotional states influence cognitive evaluation and subsequent behaviours.

Fourthly, this research offers a deeper understanding of restorative environments' benefits in wellness tourism. Following the suggestions of Backman et al. (2023) and Jeong (2024), it features the essential role of TPRE in shaping enriching wellness tourism experiences. Employing the ART and the PRS, the study demonstrates the robustness and applicability of these theoretical and methodological frameworks in understanding the dynamics of wellness tourism settings. Furthermore, the research explores the interaction between TPSD and TPRE, aligning with Stragà et al. (2023), who identified perceived safety as a prerequisite in enabling tourists to experience the restorative qualities of wellness experiences fully. This positive link suggests that improving TPSD maximises the TPRE of wellness tourism experiences.

Lastly, this research enriches the comprehension of tourist well-being by linking its hedonic and eudaimonic dimensions to destination loyalty. The findings confirm that while both dimensions influence destination loyalty, as reported by the studies from Tsai (2020), Al-Okaily et al. (2023), and Lee (2024), hedonic well-being, rooted in pleasure and enjoyment, has a stronger impact (Karagöz et al., 2024; Vada et al., 2019). This suggests that the tangible, immediate aspects of wellness experiences, such as relaxation and sensory enjoyment, are more significant in promoting destination loyalty than intangible aspects like personal growth (Chua et al., 2024). Nonetheless, addressing both dimensions ensures a more holistic approach to enhancing tourist destination loyalty (Al-Okaily et al., 2023; Lee, 2024; Tsai, 2020).

4.6.2 Practical implications

The results of this investigation offer important practical implications for wellness tourism stakeholders, including key industry players such as tourism marketers, business operators, and governmental agencies, as well as indirectly involved groups like local communities.

Wellness tourism has traditionally been linked with high-end resorts and luxurious spas (Backman et al., 2023; Chen et al., 2023; GWI, 2024a; Park et al., 2021). Therefore, most academic studies have focused on a specific wellness experience (e.g., Backman et al., 2023; Huang et al., 2022). In contrast, this study broadens the scope by addressing a variety of wellness activities, such as meditation, nature walks, thermal and mineral baths, yoga sessions, and massages. Considering this broader perspective, stakeholders can design inclusive, adaptable, and applicable strategies across various wellness tourism settings.

The destination's attractiveness is deeply influenced by its image, directly impacting tourists' decision-making processes. Maintaining and enhancing a wellness destination's competitiveness requires creating environments that foster a peaceful atmosphere, as such environments positively influence tourists' intentions to return. For instance, Ashton (2018) highlighted that peaceful settings are decisive in encouraging spiritual retreat visitors to revisit. Similarly, the findings of this research corroborate that safety and security measures are fundamental in promoting a destination's appeal. Wellness tourism stakeholders are encouraged to prioritise improvements to TPSD, focusing on human elements, which were found to be the most influential in this study, namely the ability of staff to ensure visitors' safety, deliver services securely, and respond effectively to emergencies are crucial. In addition, wellness tourism providers should not overlook the other dimensions of TPSD. Facility and equipment safety should be regularly reviewed and upgraded to meet high standards. Social environments must be managed to create a welcoming and safe ambience for visitors, while organisational management should foster trust through transparent communication about safety procedures to be adopted. For example, this could involve mandatory staff training on first-aid and conflict resolution, routine safety audits, and clear instructions for emergency scenarios. By investing in such comprehensive safety practices, destinations can build trust, enhance visitor satisfaction, and inspire destination loyalty.

Another crucial area of practical application is addressing tourist worries, which are often linked to the unpredictability of travel experiences. Goo et al. (2022) noted that travel-related worries negatively influence tourists' overall experiences, particularly during trip planning. To mitigate these concerns, wellness destinations should focus on clear, proactive communication through diverse channels. This could include detailed guides on transportation

systems, public safety information, and accessible contact points for visitors' inquiries. Providing digital platforms or mobile apps where tourists can access such information in real-time would enhance convenience and peace of mind.

Furthermore, the competitive advantage of wellness destinations lies in their ability to offer restorative environments that help tourists recover physical, mental, and emotional resources. To achieve this, destinations should actively create serene natural spaces promoting relaxation and recovery. This could involve developing scenic trails, setting up outdoor yoga decks, or maintaining mineral springs with eco-friendly infrastructure. Additionally, ensuring noise control and incorporating biophilic design elements into indoor spaces can help maximise the restorative benefits of the destination. Marketing campaigns should highlight these qualities, focusing on how the destination satisfies the growing demand for meaningful and rejuvenating travel experiences. For instance, stakeholders could create promotional content emphasising wellness retreats that combine nature immersion with cultural experiences, such as guided meditation in heritage sites or yoga sessions by the ocean.

Given that this research was conducted in Portugal, its findings underscore the country's potential as a leading wellness tourism destination. Portugal's rich natural landscapes, abundant thermal and mineral waters, and diverse cultural heritage create a unique value proposition. Policymakers and tourism boards have the opportunity to elevate Portugal's international reputation by collaborating with private enterprises and public organisations to develop initiatives like dedicated wellness routes or seasonal wellness festivals. Additionally, partnerships with international wellness tourism platforms and travel agencies could position Portugal as a preferred destination for wellness travellers. For example, regions with natural hot springs could be promoted through thematic packages combining spa visits, local culinary experiences, and nature exploration.

To summarise, the practical implications of this study underscore the need to combine safety measures, restorative environments, and well-being strategies to foster stronger tourist destination loyalty. Destinations that address travellers' physical, mental and emotional needs through thoughtful design, effective communication, and exceptional service will be well-positioned to flourish in the highly competitive wellness tourism market.

4.6.3 Limitations and future research

While this research provides valuable insights into wellness tourism, it is important to acknowledge its limitations, which also present opportunities for future exploration. One of the key limitations is the small sample size, primarily due to the challenge of collecting data from

wellness tourists in Portugal. This constraint reduces the extent to which the findings can be generalised. Future research should consider gathering larger datasets to enhance the reliability and applicability of the results.

Another limitation is the demographic imbalance in the sample, with a significant majority (81.9%) of participants identifying as female. Although this may reflect existing patterns within wellness tourism demographics, future research should strive to include more balanced gender representation to capture a broader spectrum of perspectives and preferences.

The sample included participants across a broad age spectrum, ranging from 18 to 55+ years, with the largest group being those aged 25-34 (48.5%). The reliance on an online questionnaire may have influenced these results, as the methodology predominantly attracted younger respondents who were more proficient with digital tools. To ensure greater diversity, future research should incorporate a range of data collection methods, including in-person interviews or offline surveys, to engage participants from various age groups and levels of digital literacy.

Moreover, the study's context is geographically and culturally specific, focusing solely on Portugal. This limits the applicability of the findings in different regional or cultural settings. Future studies should extend this work to other countries and cultural contexts to determine whether the observed patterns are universal or influenced by local factors.

As wellness tourism remains a relatively recent academic field, continuous research is essential to deepen understanding. One promising avenue is further studying the intricate connection between tourist worry and destination loyalty. While this study found an unexpected positive correlation between tourist worry and destination loyalty, additional studies are required to investigate the psychological processes that may explain this relationship. For example, qualitative studies could examine whether tourists who experience pre-travel worries later develop a stronger attachment to destinations that successfully alleviate these worries. Additionally, examining TPSD as a moderating variable between tourist worry and destination loyalty could provide further insights, as this study confirmed that tourist worry negatively impacts TPSD. Understanding TPSD's role in this dynamic could help clarify its significance in shaping destination loyalty.

TPSD is categorised as a sub-dimension of destination image (Xie et al., 2020). Future research could explore destination image as a potential antecedent of TPSD. Furthermore, Lever et al. (2024) found that safety perceptions tend to decline as travel distance from home increases. Future studies could explore variations in TPSD between domestic and international tourists, offering a comparative perspective.

Furthermore, while this study found that TPRE enhances tourist well-being, future research should investigate how different environmental elements contribute to this effect. Previous investigations (e.g., Chen et al., 2023; Hartig, 1993; Zhou et al., 2023) suggest that TPRE is more prevalent in natural environments than urban settings. However, unlike Western literature, Lehto et al. (2017) found that TPRE was more pronounced in urban environments. Similarly, Zhai et al. (2023) argue that temples, retreats or urban parks could also provide restorative experiences that enhance well-being. Employing field experiments that incorporate physiological indicators, for example, heart rhythm and cortisol concentration levels, could yield measurable insights into the restorative potential of different environments.

Acknowledgement

This paper was financed by National Funds provided by FCT – Foundation for Science and Technology (Portugal) through project UI/BD/150799/2020.

Disclosure Statement

The authors report that there are no competing interests to declare.

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CHAPTER 5
GENERAL CONCLUSION

5.1 Conclusion

The present thesis provided a comprehensive exploration of wellness tourism, focusing on its conceptualisation, identifying the diverse wellness-related activities, examining theoretical and methodological approaches, and proposing potential research themes for further investigation. The first two articles addressed these aspects by conducting a bibliometric review and a systematic literature review of wellness tourism publications. These reviews analysed the existing body of knowledge, offering a deeper understanding of wellness tourism's evolution and its distinction from other subcategories within the broader health tourism sector, such as medical tourism.

Building on the findings of the first two articles, the thesis further explored the factors that contribute to destination loyalty in wellness tourism, with a particular focus on the Portuguese context. Therefore, the third article adopted a quantitative approach to examine the relationship between destination loyalty and several key factors: tourist perceived safety at destinations (TPSD), tourist worry, tourist perception of restorative environments (TPRE), well-being, and life satisfaction. By investigating these dynamics, the research provided valuable insights into how wellness tourism destinations can foster long-term destination loyalty among visitors.

Table 5.1 summarises the three studies conducted to provide a clear and integrated thesis overview. This table highlights their respective objectives, methods, core contributions, and how they interconnect to form a coherent and cumulative body of knowledge on wellness tourism in Portugal. It also demonstrates the theoretical and practical value of approaching the phenomenon through a multi-method and multi-phase research design.

Table 5.1. Integrated summary of the thesis studies

Dimension	Study 1 – Bibliometric Analysis	Study 2 – Systematic Literature Review	Study 3 – Empirical Study
Objective	Map the wellness tourism field	Explore theoretical and methodological approaches, emerging themes, key trends, and future research directions in wellness tourism studies	Empirically test key variables within the context of wellness tourism in Portugal
Method	Bibliometric analysis (VOSviewer)	Systematic literature review (PRISMA)	PLS-SEM (SmartPLS)
Main contributions	Identification of most-cited articles, key contributing authors and countries, influential journals, keyword co-occurrence	Identification of theoretical and methodological approaches and future research directions	Development and validation of a model explaining destination loyalty formation in wellness tourism
Central topics	Evolution of wellness tourism literature and the impact of the pandemic	Theories, methodologies, and research gaps in wellness tourism	Perceived safety, tourist worry, restorative environments, well-being, life satisfaction, and destination loyalty

Articulation	Provides an overview of wellness tourism research and a clearer conceptualisation of wellness tourism	Deepens understanding through a structured analysis of theoretical and methodological approaches and recommendations for future studies	Empirically validates and extends findings from the previous studies
Contribution to the thesis	Conceptual mapping and groundwork	Theoretical depth and academic framing	Empirical validation and practical insights

Source: Own elaboration.

5.2 Main results

Chapter 2, based on a bibliometric analysis of 143 research papers published between 2013 and the first half of 2023, provided an extensive overview of wellness tourism research. The findings revealed a significant increase in publications over the past decade, with a notable surge after the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic's impact on wellness tourism research was evident in the research output, reflecting a renewed interest in wellness travel post-pandemic. While wellness tourism became a growing focus of academic inquiry, the bibliometric study highlighted the importance of further studies to reaffirm its interdependence with other health tourism sub-categories, such as medical tourism.

Chapter 3, a systematic literature review of 72 peer-reviewed empirical articles published from 2019 to 2023, explored theoretical and methodological frameworks, identified prominent and emerging themes, and provided directions for future investigations. The review highlighted that intrinsic factors, such as the desire for self-improvement, stress relief, and self-indulgence, played a crucial role in shaping wellness tourists' decision-making processes. Additionally, it was concluded that the wellness tourism experience positively impacts well-being, life satisfaction, and destination loyalty. Emerging themes emphasised the importance of destination image in influencing wellness travel behavior, with destination expectations significantly enhancing intrinsic and extrinsic motivations and impacting tourist behaviour. Furthermore, safety components and restorative qualities were key elements in promoting tourist well-being and fostering destination loyalty. The systematic review also pointed out the methodological trends in wellness tourism research, noting a predominance of quantitative studies and the need for more qualitative and mixed-methods approaches to capture the nuanced aspects of wellness tourism experiences.

Chapter 4 provided valuable empirical insights into the ongoing discussion by examining the relationships between destination loyalty and TPSD, tourist worry, TPRES, well-being, and life satisfaction, grounded on the Safety System Theory and Attention Restoration Theory (ART). The study revealed that TPSD played a significant role in enhancing TPRES and destination loyalty. TPRES, characterised by relaxation, cognitive recovery, and a sense of

connection to the environment, strongly predicted tourists' well-being, life satisfaction, and intention to revisit or recommend the destination. Notably, the study found a positive relationship between tourist worry and destination loyalty, suggesting an area that warranted further exploration. Additionally, the research confirmed that both hedonic and eudaimonic well-being significantly contribute to destination loyalty, with hedonic well-being emerging as the stronger predictor. These findings align with previous studies (e.g., Karagöz et al., 2024; Vada et al., 2019) that highlight the importance of pleasure and enjoyment in cultivating tourist destination loyalty, particularly in wellness tourism, where the focus was on relaxation, rejuvenation, and well-being.

The findings from these three articles underscore the growing importance of wellness tourism as a key segment within the broader tourism industry. Once considered a niche market, wellness tourism has rapidly evolved into an increasingly mainstream global tourism economy, fueled by shifting consumer preferences and a heightened awareness of health and well-being (GWI, 2024). The research revealed that wellness tourists were driven by a blend of intrinsic factors, including the need for relaxation, stress relief, and self-improvement, as well as the desire for more meaningful, authentic experiences that resonate with their personal values. Furthermore, it was verified that extrinsic factors, such as safety and security, also determine the wellness experience, influencing destination loyalty (Aleksijevits, 2019).

Moreover, as perceived by tourists, the restorative qualities of wellness environments profoundly impacted their well-being, contributing to overall life satisfaction and increasing the likelihood of revisiting and recommending the destination. These results underscore the important role of wellness tourism within the broader tourism landscape. They offered a solid foundation for future research to explore further the psychological, social, environmental, and economic factors that will drive this sector's continued development.

5.3 Theoretical contribution

The theoretical contributions of this thesis provided significant insights into the field of wellness tourism, advancing our understanding of its dynamics and psychological foundations. Across the three studies, several key contributions emerged that expanded on existing research and offered new directions for future research.

First, the bibliometric review presented in Study 1 offered a thorough overview of the research landscape within wellness tourism. This study made an important contribution by highlighting research trends, collaboration patterns, and gaps in the current literature, enabling

scholars and industry stakeholders to understand the state of wellness tourism research better and refine their practices accordingly.

Building on this, Study 2 represented the first systematic literature review focused exclusively on wellness tourism, excluding other sub-categories of health tourism. This research made substantial theoretical contributions by examining the theoretical and methodological frameworks employed in wellness tourism studies. It emphasised the international diversity of wellness practices and cultural influences, suggesting the need for further exploration of regional and cross-cultural variations in wellness tourism behaviours and preferences. The study underscored that psychological frameworks were essential for understanding the motivations and behaviours of wellness tourists. Additionally, sociological and economic theories were identified as key components, reinforcing the value of an interdisciplinary approach to wellness tourism research. Moreover, the study highlighted the critical role of the tourism experience in fostering tourist satisfaction and well-being within wellness tourism, noting that these factors served as primary drivers of destination loyalty. The findings also indicated emerging research areas, with one auspicious direction being the exploration of safety perceptions and restorative environments in wellness tourism.

Finally, Study 3 significantly advanced the theoretical understanding of tourists' decision-making processes by focusing on loyalty at the destination level. It addressed a notable gap in tourism literature by shifting the focus from risk perceptions, which had previously dominated studies. Furthermore, this study was the first to apply the Tourist Perceived Safety Scale (TPSS), developed by Xie et al. (2020), to specifically assess TPSD within the context of wellness tourism, thereby extending the applicability of Safety System Theory to this domain. Additionally, the study provided valuable insights into the role of restorative environments in wellness tourism. Employing the ART and the Perceived Restorativeness Scale (PRS) demonstrated the robustness and applicability of these frameworks in understanding the dynamics of wellness tourism environments. Lastly, this research broadened the understanding of tourist well-being by exploring its hedonic and eudaimonic dimensions and their relationship to destination loyalty. These findings contributed to a more nuanced comprehension of how pleasure-based and meaning-driven well-being influence tourists' loyalty to wellness destinations.

5.4 Practical contribution

The practical contributions of this thesis provided valuable insights for researchers, industry stakeholders, policymakers, and destination managers in the wellness tourism sector.

Across the three studies, several key recommendations emerged that could be strategies for enhancing wellness tourism experiences and addressing emerging market demands.

This research offered crucial insights into current trends in wellness tourism, enabling stakeholders to identify the most studied topics and emerging areas of interest. By examining co-authorship and co-citation networks, the review encouraged research collaboration, fostering knowledge exchange that can help drive future innovations in wellness tourism. Understanding these evolving trends enabled practitioners to tailor their business strategies to stay relevant in a rapidly changing market. At the same time, policymakers could leverage these findings to design initiatives that support industry growth and sustainability.

Furthermore, this study revealed regional concentrations of wellness tourism research, particularly in Asia, while highlighting untapped opportunities in regions such as the USA and Portugal. This provided policymakers and business leaders in these areas with actionable insights to develop wellness tourism infrastructure, promote local wellness practices, and encourage targeted research initiatives. Additionally, by identifying the importance of interdisciplinary frameworks, the study encouraged collaboration across fields like sociology, psychology, and economics, enriching wellness tourism research and fostering innovative approaches that catered to the sector's complexity.

The empirical article extended the practical implications by providing actionable insights for wellness tourism stakeholders, particularly in destination management. The study emphasises the importance of wellness tourism activities beyond luxury experiences, such as nature walks, yoga sessions, and meditation, which could be applied across various wellness settings. Stakeholders are encouraged to design flexible strategies that cater to a wide range of wellness offerings, expanding the appeal of wellness destinations.

Furthermore, the study underscored the crucial role of safety and security measures in influencing tourists' decision-making. By improving TPSD, mainly through human elements like well-trained staff and secure service delivery, wellness tourism providers could build trust, enhance satisfaction, and foster destination loyalty. Another key practical implication was addressing tourist worries, which can negatively affect travel experiences. Wellness destinations can mitigate concerns by offering clear, proactive communication through various channels, such as mobile apps or detailed travel guides, ensuring tourists feel well-informed and at ease.

Additionally, the study stresses the significance of creating restorative environments, such as serene natural spaces and biophilic designs, which promote relaxation and recovery.

Marketing campaigns should emphasise these qualities to appeal to tourists seeking rejuvenating experiences in tranquil settings.

Finally, in Portugal, wellness tourism has mainly been studied in the context of thermalism, also encompassing medical tourism (e.g., Brandão et al., 2021; da Costa Guerra et al., 2022; Lopes & Rodríguez-López, 2022; Loureiro et al., 2013; Loureiro et al., 2023; Mota et al., 2023; Pereira et al., 2023; Pina & Martins, 2022; Quintela, 2023). However, the research presented in Study 3 of this thesis goes beyond this narrow focus, incorporating a broader range of wellness activities such as nature walks, yoga, meditation and massage. This comprehensive approach offers a more nuanced understanding of wellness tourism in Portugal and challenges the traditional view of the sector. By including a diverse array of wellness activities, this study contributes to expanding the definition of wellness tourism in the country, which has often been confined to thermalism and medical tourism.

5.5 Limitations and suggestions for future research

This thesis provides significant insights into the wellness tourism sector; however, several limitations must be considered when interpreting the findings. Each of the three studies conducted in this thesis has limitations, which also serve as opportunities for future research to refine and expand the current understanding of wellness tourism.

Studies 1 and 2, as theoretical contributions through the bibliometric and systematic literature reviews, involved some degree of subjectivity, which may have influenced the results. Regarding Study 3, while the sample size was adequate for the study's scope, it remains relatively small, limiting the findings' robustness and generalizability. This limitation arises from the challenge of gathering data from wellness tourists in Portugal. Although this research highlights Portugal's potential as a wellness tourism destination, the results may not directly apply to other regions or countries with distinct cultural, social, or economic contexts. Future research should aim to expand the geographic focus, incorporating comparative studies across various countries or regions with diverse wellness tourism landscapes.

Several promising avenues for future research emerge from this thesis. Since wellness tourism remains a relatively new field, further exploration is needed into the antecedents and consequences of wellness tourism experiences. Based on the findings of this thesis, additional studies should seek to understand the unexpected relationship between tourist worry and destination loyalty. Furthermore, future research should better explore the various dimensions of TPSD and its influence on TPPE and destination loyalty.

The importance of restorative environments also warrants further exploration, particularly the differences between natural and urban settings. While this thesis touches on tourist well-being during the wellness tourism experience, future research could examine the long-term effects of wellness tourism on visitors' mental, emotional, and physical health. Studies could explore how frequent participation in wellness tourism activities influences overall life satisfaction and health outcomes.

Lastly, Portugal ranked 18th in wellness tourism expenditures for 2023, with a projected expenditure of \$3.9 billion. The country has an average annual growth rate of 16.5% from 2019 to 2023, showing a steady increase in wellness tourism. However, the number of trips is relatively low at 2.9 million, much smaller than leading countries like the United States or Germany. Despite this, Portugal's strong growth rate indicates a growing interest in wellness tourism. The sector's performance could continue to improve as wellness tourism gains popularity globally (GWI, 2024). Given this potential, it is crucial to research and invest in wellness tourism in Portugal to capitalise on its emerging growth and tap into an expanding market.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Peer-reviewed articles by variables measured

No.	Concepts	No. of studies
1	Motivations	20
2	Loyalty	19
3	Satisfaction	19
4	Well-being	13
5	Tourist experience	12
6	Service quality	6
7	Destination image	5
8	Tourist behaviour	5
9	Perceived restorativeness	5
10	Autonomy	4
11	Tourist engagement	4
12	Wellness tourism attributes	4
13	Positive and negative emotions	3
14	Place attachment	3
15	Recovery perception	3
16	Perceived value	3
17	Experiencescape	3
18	Life satisfaction	3
19	Wellness dimensions	3
20	Sustainable behaviour intention	3
21	Wellness attitudes	2
22	Tourist expectation	2
23	Mindfulness	2
24	Health goal salience	2
25	Travel benefits	2
26	Self-perceived health	2
27	Electronic word-of-mouth	2
28	Visual attention	2
29	Tourist inspiration	2
30	Memorability	2
31	Organizational identification	1
32	Food and beverage stimuli	1
32	Dissatisfaction	1
34	Wellness-related lifestyle	1
35	Perceived enjoyable	1
36	Altruistic value	1
37	Local culture sharing	1
38	Brand love	1
39	Authenticity	1
40	Cognitive appraisal dimensions	1
41	Trust	1
42	Commitment	1
43	Emotional well-being	1
44	Willingness to pay	1
45	Physical environment quality	1
46	Perceived risk	1
47	Perceived expertise	1
48	Tourism competitiveness	1
49	Quality of life	1
50	Spirituality	1
51	Meditation	1
52	Happiness	1
53	Solitude	1
54	Transformational experiences	1
55	Psychological ownership	1
56	Perceived health risks	1
57	Identity transition	1
58	Openness to experience	1

59	Marketing price	1
60	Novelty	1
61	Experience co-creation	1
62	Refreshment	1
63	Involvement	1
64	Subjective norms	1
65	Perceived behaviour control	1
66	Resource uniqueness perception	1

Appendix 2. Wellness Tourism Experience Questionnaire

Wellness Tourism Experience Questionnaire

Dear Tourist/Visitor

This questionnaire is part of a research project by the Doctoral Program in Psychology of the University of Algarve (UAlg).

This investigation aims to analyze the factors that influence well-being and destination loyalty in the wellness tourism sector.

The questionnaire is structured in two parts. In addition to collecting socio-demographic data, you will be asked to indicate your agreement with some of the statements that will be presented to you. **This questionnaire is intended exclusively for people who have experienced wellness tourism in Portugal.**

The Global Wellness Institute (2018) defines **wellness tourism** as travel associated with maintaining or enhancing mental, physical, psychological, emotional, spiritual, and social well-being. This trip can be primarily motivated by wellness or any trip where wellness activities occur. As examples of wellness tourism activities, there are thermal/mineral springs, spas, ayurvedic medicine (e.g., massage, yoga, meditation), spiritual/mindfulness retreats, healthy cuisine/detox, and nature activities (e.g., hiking, cycling).

Please participate by completing this **anonymous** questionnaire, which will take about **12 minutes**.

The results will be **confidential**, and your participation in this study is **voluntary**. For any questions, please contact Patrícia Martins (a70233@ualg.pt).

Thank you for your participation!

1. Information and Consent Form *

I declare that I have read the information provided above and agree to participate in this research voluntarily.

2. Consent to Data Processing *

I expressly authorize the processing of personal data by the University of Algarve to register and manage the "Wellness Travel Experience Questionnaire" by the terms of information on data processing and the Data Protection Policy available at www.ualg.pt. I am aware that I can withdraw my consent or exercise my data protection rights, namely the rights of complaint, access, rectification, opposition, limitation of processing, or erasure, by contacting the Data Protection Officer of the University of Algarve by email at rgpd@ualg.pt, and if I deem it necessary, submit a complaint to the National Data Protection Commission, through the contacts available at www.cnpd.pt.

3. Google Forms Privacy Policy *

I declare that I have read the Google Forms privacy policy.

1. Demographic Questionnaire

1. Gender *

Female

Male

Prefer not to answer

Other:

2. Age*

3. Nationality *

4. Country of Residence *

5. Occupation *

6. Which wellness tourism experience did you most enjoy in Portugal? **(Select only one option) ***

Thermal/mineral baths

Massage

Yoga

Meditation Mindfulness

Healthy cuisine/detox

Nature walks

Nature cycling tour

Other:

7. When did your wellness tourism experience occur? *

8. In which city did your wellness tourism experience take place? *

9. Where did your wellness tourism experience take place? **(Select only one option) ***

Thermal Centre

Hotel

Spa

Spiritual Retreat

Nature

Other:

Worry Scale

Using a scale from 1 to 5 (**1 - strongly disagree; 2- disagree; 3 - neither agree or disagree; 4 - agree; 5 - strongly agree**), please indicate your agreement with each statement by selecting the circle most representative of your opinion. Please be open and honest in your response.

1. I stay awake at night and worry when I plan a vacation *
2. When planning a vacation, I often think that tourists are more exposed to crime and accidents than the local people are *
3. When planning a vacation, I worry that hotel reservations, train tickets or other travel documents may contain mistakes *
4. When planning a vacation, I worry about the possibility of acts of terrorism or war at the destination *
5. When on vacation, I worry about petty crime (that someone will steal my belongings) *
6. When on vacation, I constantly worry that something may go wrong *
7. When on vacation, I worry that I'll get lost or lose contact with my travel companions *
8. When on vacation, I worry that the culture I visit is strange and scary *

Tourist Perceived Safety Scale

Please remember the destination where you had the most enjoyable wellness tourism experience in Portugal...

Using a scale from 1 to 5 (1 - strongly disagree; 2- disagree; 3 - neither agree or disagree; 4 - agree; 5 - strongly agree), please indicate your agreement with each statement by selecting the circle most representative of your opinion. Please be open and honest in your response.

1. Tourism professionals where the wellness tourism experience took place ensured my safety *
2. Tourism professionals where the wellness tourism experience took place had a professional safety ability *
3. Tourism professionals where the wellness tourism experience took place provided service safely *
4. Local people were friendly *
5. The facilities/physical space where the wellness tourism experience took place were reliable in performance*
6. The facilities/physical space where the wellness tourism experience took place seemed safe and secure *
7. The facilities/physical space where the wellness tourism experience took place was comfortable *
8. I did not encounter any danger when I used the facilities/physical space where the wellness tourism experience took place *
9. There were no safety hazards in the natural environment of the destination *
10. The destination is less prone to natural disasters *
11. There was no need to worry about extreme natural conditions at the destination, such as weather *
12. I rarely encountered overcrowded and messy conditions at the destination *
13. I rarely felt forced to consume at the destination *
14. I rarely encountered fraud and theft at the destination *
15. I rarely encountered violence at the destination *
16. I rarely encountered public security problems at the destination *
17. At the destination, I found clear information about the safety procedures to be adopted *
18. The destination's public security forces seemed very effective to me *
19. I felt safe in the constructions (buildings, monuments) of the destination *
20. I felt that the destination invested a lot of resources in the protection and safety of tourists *

Perceived Restorative Scale

Please remember the location where you had the most enjoyable wellness tourism experience in Portugal...

Using a scale from 1 to 5 (1 - strongly disagree; 2- disagree; 3 - neither agree or disagree; 4 - agree; 5 - strongly agree), please indicate your agreement with each statement by selecting the circle most representative of your opinion. Please be open and honest in your response.

1. I was in a different environment than usual *
2. I did not have to think about my responsibilities while I was there *
3. Spending time there gave me a good break from my daily routine *
4. I've been away from my obligations *
5. I felt that the surroundings were harmonious *
6. I felt that the different elements of the environment constituted a larger whole *
7. I felt that the elements of the environment were interconnected *
8. Many of the objects/elements caught my attention *
9. There was a lot to discover *
10. There were many things I found beautiful *
11. There was a lot I wanted to do *
12. The environment allowed me to do activities I like *
13. I rapidly adapted to the setting *
14. There was an accordance between what I like to do and the surroundings *

Eudaimonic and Hedonic Well-being

Please remember the trip where you had the most enjoyable wellness tourism experience in Portugal...

Using a scale from 1 to 5 (**1 - strongly disagree; 2- disagree; 3 - neither agree or disagree; 4 - agree; 5 - strongly agree**), please indicate your agreement with each statement by selecting the circle most representative of your opinion. Please be open and honest in your response.

1. I had many laughs on the trip *
2. The trip was entertaining *
3. The trip made me happy *
4. The trip helped me forget the problems in the world *
5. The trip helped me get away from negative news in the papers, TV, internet postings, etc.*
6. The trip allowed me to live like I did not have a care in the world *
7. The trip helped me think about my true potential *
8. The trip helped me grow as a person *
9. The trip gave me a sense of purpose in my life *
10. I experienced times when I could self-reflect *
11. I thought about the meaning of life on the trip *
12. I was able to think deeply about topics I care about *

Satisfaction with Life Scale

Using a scale from 1 to 5 (**1 - strongly disagree; 2- disagree; 3 - neither agree or disagree; 4 - agree; 5 - strongly agree**), please indicate your agreement with each statement by selecting the circle most representative of your opinion. Please be open and honest in your response.

1. In most ways my life is close to my ideal *
2. The conditions of my life are excellent *
3. I am satisfied with my life *
4. So far, I have gotten the important things I want in life *
5. If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing *

Destination Loyalty

Please remember the destination where you had the most enjoyable wellness tourism experience in Portugal...

Using a scale from 1 to 5 (**1 - strongly disagree; 2- disagree; 3 - neither agree or disagree; 4 - agree; 5 - strongly agree**), please indicate your agreement with each statement by selecting the circle most representative of your opinion. Please be open and honest in your response.

1. I would repeat this trip *
2. I would consider the destination where I had this experience my first choice for a vacation *
3. I would come back to this trip even if the prices increase *
4. I shared the vacation I had this experience on social media *
5. I still refer this trip to others *
6. I encourage my family and friends to do this trip *
7. I recommend this trip to anyone who asks me *