

# Travel motivation and well-being: Analysing the mediating role of mindfulness and memorable travel experiences of Portuguese travellers

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## Abstract

There is a common perception that tourism can directly or indirectly enhance well-being. The travellers' motivations could influence the connection between tourism and well-being. This study aimed to examine the relationship between travel motivations and well-being and the beneficial effects of mindfulness and memorable travel experiences (MTEs) on this relationship. The data were gathered using online questionnaires and included 256 participants. The findings suggested that travel motivation positively influenced well-being, mindfulness, and MTEs. The mediating role of MTEs and mindfulness in the relationship between motivation and well-being was verified. In conclusion, this study emphasises the importance of comprehending the influence of travel motivations, mindfulness, and MTEs in promoting and enhancing well-being. Understanding the psychological variables affecting well-being is crucial for researchers and tourism managers to incorporate effective methods for better management and marketing, considering that tourism offers are more suited to consumer demand.

**Keywords:** Memorable tourism experiences, mindfulness, travel motivation, well-being

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## 1. Introduction

Travel and leisure are commonly acknowledged as avenues for improving individuals' well-being (Asan *et al.*, 2023; Filep & Laing, 2019; Su *et al.*, 2021). Tourism has long been portrayed as an activity that directly improves the health and well-being of tourists (Connell, 2006) or indirectly, where tourists are motivated to alleviate anomalies caused by the greater society they live in (MacCannell, 1999). The COVID-19 pandemic has brought attention to how important it is to preserve overall health and well-being (Vada *et al.*, 2023). This environment has increased interest in life-changing travel experiences that improve individuals' life quality (Huang *et al.*, 2024). The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Report (Goal 3) recognises the importance of well-being in promoting and guaranteeing healthy lives for individuals of all ages (U.N., 2023). Concerning tourism studies, the concepts of satisfaction, life quality (Dolnicar *et al.*, 2012; Pearce *et al.*, 2010; Sirgy *et al.*, 2011), happiness (Nawijn *et al.*, 2010), and wellness (Voigt *et al.*, 2010) have become central to understanding well-being. However, little is known about how travel affects well-being due to the complexity of the interaction between tourism and well-being (Kim *et al.*, 2024).

A traveller's experience is a complex, multiphase concept encompassing a range of experiences before, during, and after their trip (Clawson & Knetsch, 1966). For instance, the subjective assessment and experience (e.g., cognitive, affective, and behavioural) of events related to one's tourist activities can be defined explicitly as the tourism experience. This evaluation and experience can occur before the trip (e.g., planning and preparation), during the trip (e.g., at the destination) and after the trip (e.g., recollection) (Tung & Ritchie, 2011). To better understand what could potentially influence well-being, it is essential to consider the different phases of a trip, which differ and complement each other. For this study, we propose to investigate the phase before the trip in which what motivates tourists to travel is considered, the phase during the trip in which mindfulness is considered, and to analyse a concept of the phase after the trip memorable tourism experiences (MTEs) was included to assess and reach the final result of well-being.

To date, tourism studies have addressed and investigated the constructs of motivation, mindfulness, MTEs, and well-being independently. The causal relationships between travel motivation, mindfulness, MTEs, and well-being have only been superficially discussed. Furthermore, there has been a lack of conceptual clarification and logical linkages between the constructs to comprehend better what could affect well-being. To investigate this topic further, it is essential to consider the nature of the motivational forces behind travel and the quest for well-being.

Travel motivation has been recognised as a main clarifying factor for travel intention and frequency (Karl *et al.*, 2020). The research on travel motivation identifies three crucial elements essential for tourism well-being (Moscardo, 2011). First, Maslow's hierarchy of human needs (Maslow, 1970) is a widely used framework for examining tourist motivation. However, tourism discussions on Maslow's hierarchy of needs have primarily concentrated on major classifications and arrangements, neglecting other dimensions such as motivations, personality traits, and locus of control (Huitt, 2007; Moscardo, 2011). Second, any tourist activity has multiple motives, including well-being-related purposes (Sirgy *et al.*, 2011). Third, recent dichotomies classify tourism well-being experiences with hedonic and eudaimonic approaches (Voigt *et al.*, 2011).

For the above reasons, exploring other dimensions that may be interconnected with tourists' motivation and well-being is essential. In this sense, mindfulness emerges as a possible avenue that could present a positive relationship due to the suggested benefits. For instance, a recent study noted the positive results of increased well-being and mindfulness levels after mindful meditation practices (Fincham *et al.*, 2023). Furthermore, another study emphasised the benefits of mindfulness in enhancing objective

and subjective well-being and life quality (Jones & Drummond, 2022). Stankov *et al.* (2020) argue that a change towards mindfulness-driven tourism is imperative in the post-pandemic era in light of mindfulness' benefits. Currently, a broad spectrum of mindfulness research, including research on mindful tourism experiences (Stankov & Filimonau, 2021) and conventional mindfulness practices (Wang *et al.*, 2021), is being conducted in tourism and hospitality.

Considering that visitor experiences in tourism are frequently proven to impact tourists' memories of travel, the subject of MTEs has been extensively investigated (Wang *et al.*, 2021). After a trip, the tourist experience is what travellers should think about the most (Kim *et al.*, 2021). Moreover, the most important source of knowledge for anyone deciding whether to go back to a destination is visitors' memories of their past travel experiences (Marschall, 2012). In light of this, offering visitors satisfying and unique experiences is crucial in the competitive travel industry. A recent literature review suggested that research on MTEs is at a growing stage of development (Hosseini *et al.*, 2023). For this reason, many unexplored areas still have not yet been addressed. Therefore, exploring the possible connections between well-being, motivation, mindfulness, and MTEs is essential. A more profound comprehension of the nature of the intentions and behaviours of travellers may be made possible by this comprehensive investigation of the causal links between the proposed constructs. Even though some of the constructs have been widely applied in tourism research, there are still challenges in identifying and examining the causal relationship between motivation, mindfulness, MTEs and well-being.

There is a gap in the research concerning the analysis of psychological variables that could influence tourists and the search for well-being. Presenting a better comprehension of these variables could be valuable for the marketing strategies of tourism companies. The main objective of this study is to analyse the constructs that may contribute to the well-being of Portuguese travellers, specifically the influence of travel motivation, the effects of mindfulness, and MTEs. This study aims to contribute to the literature on the tourism industry and psychology by seeking to understand, evaluate and measure the constructs that influence the well-being of Portuguese tourists during their travels. A new conceptual model will be proposed that integrates the factors influencing well-being, namely, travel motivation, mindfulness and MTEs. This model aims to incorporate the different phases that are part of a trip, i.e. to consider what happens before the trip, in this case, what motivates tourists to travel, to try to understand the influence of factors that occur during the trip, such as mindfulness, as well as the effects after the trip, such MTEs and having as a final result the well-being. On the other hand, the findings will assist marketers and destination practitioners in recognising the significance of well-being, a central theme in the experience economy paradigm. It also highlights how vital motivation, mindfulness, and MTEs are to enhancing well-being. It is also intended that the conclusions of this study will contribute with practical implications for tourism, allowing those responsible for marketing in the tourism companies to adapt more personalised offers to the needs of tourists who want to increase their well-being. Finally, from a practical perspective, the research results reinforce the notion that travel can help people experience well-being in their lives (Filep, 2012).

## **2. Literature review**

### *2.1. Well-being*

Well-being is a popular and influential term in various fields (Câmara *et al.*, 2023; Murtin & Zanobetti, 2024). Tourism studies, which are multidisciplinary, have also increasingly focused on well-being (Huang & Wu, 2024; Sirgy, 2019; Smith & Diekmann, 2017; Su *et al.*, 2021). The WHO (2021) defines well-being as a favourable condition that people and societies perceive. It encompasses quality of living and peoples' and communities' ability to impact the world meaningfully.

Subjective well-being is one of the most widely used concepts in tourism studies to describe life satisfaction (Liang *et al.*, 2021; Vada *et al.*, 2023). Additionally, there has been an increased demand for and supply of tourism experiences and services connected to well-being and health, establishing a unique variant of tourism known as wellness tourism (Smith & Puczko, 2014). Wellness tourism has been defined as utilising both a supply element, which includes particular destination features and services, and a demand element, which considers travel motivation connected to well-being and health (Moscardo, 2011). As a consensus has not yet been reached, instead of focusing on a specific definition, a different approach will be to focus on considering wellness in a broader context, assuming, as Smith and Puczko (2014) highlight, that all forms of tourism that focus on the various facets of well-being are included in the category of wellness tourism.

A wide range of benefits of tourism are documented in the literature, including how it improves the quality of life for people who create or consume goods and services related to tourism as well as for tourists and tourism destinations (Hartwell *et al.*, 2018; Uysal *et al.*, 2012). Additionally, prior studies show that tourism positively influences individuals' well-being (Moscardo, 2011). Smith and Pucko (2017) further discussed how tourism's well-being may profoundly impact environmental, psychological, physical, spiritual, emotional, and social aspects. However, Pyke *et al.* (2016) stated that well-being has not been sufficiently used for travel. It is still debated how to describe best how tourism improves travellers' quality of life. Thus, examining the philosophical foundations of well-being and their relationship to the motivation for and engagement in more fulfilling, transforming, or eudaimonic travel experiences can help us better understand tourism as a phenomenon (Smith & Diekmann, 2017). Nevertheless, researchers have not agreed upon a definition of well-being. As a result, the concept has become ambiguous, complex, excessively expansive, and controversial (Jayawickreme *et al.*, 2012; van der Deijl *et al.*, 2023). For instance, according to Ryan and Deci (2001), well-being is the most significant potential of psychological experiences and functioning. Other authors argue that the idea of well-being has evolved with time-based on hedonic and eudaimonic views. The hedonic view suggests life's goal is to experience pleasure and avoid pain. Happiness is characterised by enjoyment and the absence of discomfort, which typically reflects transitory improvements in affective states involving positive emotions (Smith & Diekmann, 2017). On the other hand, eudaimonia refers to a happy, authentic spirit and a good life that emphasises psychological well-being through meaningful actions, as opposed to vulgar pleasure-seeking (Wang *et al.*, 2023). Tourism studies have discussed the eudaimonic and hedonic concepts of well-being (Smith & Diekmann, 2017). For instance, Voigt *et al.* (2011) argue that beauty spas may provide more hedonic well-being experiences regarding wellness tourism, whereas spiritual retreats may provide more eudaimonic ones. Therefore, hedonism and eudaimonia are two different elements of well-being. Comfortable and relaxing activities typically affect hedonic well-being, although eudaimonic well-being is affected by meaningful inspiration from challenging oneself (Knobloch *et al.*, 2017; Su *et al.*, 2021).

The notion that vacations can provide longer-term life satisfaction and more than temporary hedonistic experiences is supported by Hoopes and Lounsbury's (1989) research. According to Nawijn *et al.* (2010), individual travel may produce happier experiences before a trip than after. While Chen *et al.* (2013) noted an increase in happiness shortly after a vacation, Kirillova *et al.* (2017) argued that many travellers return from their travels with lower levels of happiness than they had before they left. Furthermore, some authors have suggested that subjective well-being is directly influenced by one's level of contentment with one's leisure life or experience of leisure well-being (Kruger *et al.*, 2015; Newman *et al.*, 2013). Garcês *et al.* (2022) suggested that tourism can promote well-being for tourists and residents and that well-being can be an essential innovation opportunity for entrepreneurs. The Human Optimal Psychological Experience (HOPE) was conceptualised under the principles and models of positive psychology, such as the Positive emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment

(PERMA) model. Travelling can lead to a feeling of personal fulfilment known as self-compassion, which can be influenced by optimism, spirituality and creativity (Garcês *et al.*, 2020). Even though positive psychology has had a significant impact on tourism research, there are differing opinions regarding the influence of travel on well-being (Pearce, 2009). Therefore, avoiding focusing only on hedonistic elements and undervaluing travel's positive effects on well-being is essential.

Thus, the concept of well-being comprises multiple dimensions. Its relation to travel experiences can, therefore, be somewhat complex. Although some studies have shown links between general tourism experiences and well-being, it is still unknown how particular activities affect eudaimonic and hedonic well-being (Huang *et al.*, 2024). In travel, well-being encompasses a combination of hedonism, pleasure, and meaningful experiences. Considering that the literature is approaching well-being as associated with various aspects related to tourism, it is crucial to understand what can influence tourists and motivate them to travel and analyse some concepts that can contribute to higher levels of well-being. For instance, Filep (2012) discussed that revisions and refinements in research methods about well-being are needed. Furthermore, tourism researchers should integrate positive relationships with different travel elements and motivations with well-being themes, thus leading to an extended representation of tourism well-being (Filep, 2012).

## 2.2. Motivation

Studies on the reasons behind travellers' motivations have been conducted for a long time. Since it is one of the main topics in tourism research, travel motivations have been thoroughly studied (Carvalho, 2022). Psychological needs and wants have been used to characterise motivation, including an integral dimension that influences an individual's behaviour and activities (Dann, 1981). The main theoretical foundation for research on travel motivation is Maslow's (1970) hierarchy of needs theory, which divides human needs into five levels: psychological needs, security and safety, belongingness and love, self-esteem, and self-actualisation. Maslow (1970) distinguished between inner- and outer-directed individuals. Inner-directed individuals are self-sufficient and not influenced by the need for social acceptance. Conversely, those who are more outer-directed are more focused on following social norms and looking for indications from other people (Maslow, 1970). According to psychological theory and research, these dimensions likely mediate tourists' behaviours with identical underlying intentions (Crick-Furman & Prentice, 2000).

According to Pearce's (1982) approach-avoidance paradigm, travellers are drawn to vacation destinations to satisfy their needs for self-actualisation, belongingness, love, safety concerns and psychological needs. Furthermore, other theoretical themes emerged, such as the Travel Career Patterns and Travel Career Ladder frameworks (Pearce & Lee, 2005) and Plog's (2001) allocentric and psychocentrism model. The push-pull model (Crompton, 1979) and functional theory (Katz, 1960) are other proposals that attempt to explain visitors' motivations. The literature on Self-Determination Theory (SDT) emphasises intrinsic motivation, which refers to the innate sense of fulfilment that arises from task performance (Ryan *et al.*, 2021). Extrinsically motivated activities are prompted by externally appealing outcomes such as rewards, whereas intrinsically motivated behaviours are those individuals like engaging in (Jobbehdar *et al.*, 2022). As a result, various motivational levels can influence particular behaviours, and these same motives could satisfy individuals' psychological needs and desires (Houle *et al.*, 2005; Bočkus *et al.*, 2023).

Considering the extent of the literature on tourism motivations, some studies have centred on pull and push factors connected to travellers' motivations. Push motivation is the term used to describe an individual's inner state and growing desire to travel, and pull motivation is what draws people to a destination once they have decided to travel (Dann, 1981). For instance, Crompton (1979) presented two

push factors: a socio-psychological factor revealing motivations like the need to get away from a dull environment, including exploration, self-evaluation, prestige, relaxation and the promotion of social interaction, and a cultural factor revealing motivations such as novelty and education. Determining the push travel incentives that impact visitors' travel behaviour is crucial for developing sectoral management and marketing strategies for tourism trends.

According to Talib and Ramleeb (2020), the intrinsic motivations of young adults, which include relaxation, fitness and health, prestige, quick escape, knowledge advancement, communication with family and friends, and adventure and exploration, dictate their push motives. Additionally, Jiang and Wen (2020) researched how COVID-19 affected travellers' behaviour and lifestyle and found that slow and smart tourism may take the role of luxury travel as a tourist attraction and promote a healthy way of living. The significance of travel experiences has been embedded in people's lives in contemporary culture. When seeking to improve their quality of life, tourists frequently seek unique and original experiences (Chen *et al.*, 2008). There has been a focus on using tourism to motivate travellers to increase their well-being and improve their moods (Sirgy *et al.*, 2011).

### 2.3. Mindfulness

Mindfulness is about paying attention to and being aware of one's experiences, feelings, sensations, and thoughts in the present moment without worrying about the past or future (Kabat-Zinn, 2013). It has been described in different ways and seen as both a state that may be attained through mindfulness exercises and a trait that refers to individuals' tendency to be attentive in their day-to-day activities (Kiken *et al.*, 2015). According to Kabat-Zinn (2003), the initial goal of using mindfulness-based therapies in clinical settings was to minimise patients' stress. Bishop *et al.* (2006) suggested that mindfulness increases consciousness and effectively handles thought processes that lead to emotional suffering and unhelpful action. Thus, different individuals widely interpret mindfulness as a skill, therapy, or way of life. It can also be found everywhere, for instance, in classrooms, colleges, military installations, government buildings, and other settings (Kabat-Zinn, 2014). It has also gained acceptance as a strategy for healing many illnesses affecting contemporary cultures (Kristensen, 2018).

The tourism industry is progressively acknowledging the potential of mindfulness, and business applications have started to highlight the benefits of greater awareness in visitor experiences (McGoarty *et al.*, 2020). Researchers in the field of tourism have used mindfulness to help travellers learn and accomplish educational objectives (Moscardo, 2017). According to some studies, mindfulness has been linked to improved visitor well-being and transformative experiences (Kirwin *et al.*, 2019; Loureiro *et al.*, 2019). Additionally, it has been demonstrated to potentially impact employee performance and the tourism industry's sustainability goals (Jang *et al.*, 2020). The main arguments supporting the introduction of mindfulness in the tourism industry frequently centre around the sector's need to grow more sustainably (Errmann *et al.*, 2021) along with the rapid evolution of consumer lives and increasing levels of stress and demanding work environments (Stankov *et al.*, 2020).

Although the COVID-19 pandemic started as a health emergency, it soon spread worldwide and became a political, social, psychological, environmental, and economic problem (Stankov & Filimonau, 2021). Mindfulness practices were presented in tourism as a distinctive chance for the sector to capitalise on the mindfulness movement, which has become increasingly popular in Western society (Gotojones, 2013). COVID-19 enhanced the intensity of this movement, which decreased the pandemic's negative impacts (Stankov & Filimonau, 2021). For instance, the benefits of mindfulness techniques were suggested to enhance subjective well-being during lockdowns and offer mental relief (Roemer *et al.*, 2021).

#### 2.4. Memorable Tourism Experiences

Consumers highly value experience, which has been identified as a global shift (Caru & Cova, 2003; Mehmetoglu & Engen, 2011). There are numerous ways to define experience. For instance, academics have labelled experiences as transitional phenomena (Zhang & Xu, 2019) and everyday encounters (Caru & Cova, 2003). The importance of experience in postmodern society is highlighted by Pine and Gilmore (1999), who describe it as the final stage of economic growth following the stages of product, service and commodity. Experiences are prioritised over products or services to provide value and gain a competitive advantage. Experiences are the core and most important in the travel and tourism sector (Kim & So, 2022). In tourism, experiences have been described as transient phenomena and pleasurable, memorable, and engaging encounters (Volo, 2009). When travelling, tourists look for real, fulfilling, multisensory, transforming, and authentic experiences (Chirakranont & Sakdiyakorn, 2022; Kirillova *et al.*, 2017).

An MTE involves anything favourably remembered and recalled following an experience (Kim, 2010). Research shows that creating memorable trips has many advantages for travel operators (Stone *et al.*, 2018). For instance, visitors who have fulfilling and memorable experiences are more likely to make a connection with the place (Vada *et al.*, 2019), express feelings of well-being (Sthapit *et al.*, 2019) and present return intentions (Coudounaris & Sthapit, 2017). In addition to being theoretically relevant, research on MTEs is also advantageous for destination competitiveness (Stone *et al.*, 2018). Memory is crucial in the tourism context to comprehend how individuals recall travel experiences that are personally meaningful to them (Kim *et al.*, 2021). Tourists often reflect on their vacations, trips, or visits to a site. Therefore, memories retained in human memory are significant even though on-site tourist encounters are brief and generate temporary feelings (Kim, 2012). Kim *et al.* (2020) stated that major experiences that travellers have while at a destination cause mental, emotional and behavioural changes. Furthermore, MTEs are built selectively from travel experiences, relying on a person's evaluation of those events and strengthening and uniting the recall of enjoyable trip memories.

Previous research has proposed that past memorable events impact travellers' well-being. For example, Prayag *et al.* (2013) discovered that visitors' emotional events favour a destination's memorability, satisfaction, and recommendation. Tourism experiences are types of consumption that provide opportunities for social and personal growth and physical and mental rest (Liu *et al.*, 2023). Sie *et al.* (2018) also discovered that elderly travellers' general well-being is influenced by exciting and memorable parts of the destination's culture. Some authors claim that despite recent developments in the field, our understanding of the connection between memory and tourism remains incomplete (Hosany *et al.*, 2022; Jorgenson *et al.*, 2019).

### 3. Hypotheses development

Traveller motivation and the services produced and made accessible for buying interact in a complex and dynamic way to form tourism patterns (Moscardo, 2011). Furthermore, tourism products may act as stimuli, creating circumstances where certain visitors' motives precede others. Moscardo (2011) proposed a system of human wants that interact with personality attributes and are mediated by social and cultural conditions and opportunities when assessing demand or tourist motivation. Moreover, travel-related experiences and activities require substantial financial, time, and personal commitment. To help travellers and destination stakeholders make better decisions, it is imperative to understand these interactions between motives and opportunities and the conditions that drive them.

Travel experiences can elevate people's moods and, as a result, enhance their perception of well-being (Sirgy *et al.*, 2011). According to Ryan (2002), internal elements include travellers' motivations, experiences, knowledge of the location, and unique personalities. In contrast, external elements include

induced marketing images associated with the destination, travel activities, and individuals with whom the trip is shared. That said, changing the perspective with a focus on internal factors is essential. Thus, there is a need to pay more attention to personal features directly related to travel motivations.

Research has proposed that people's mental investment and perseverance in learning are influenced by motivation, which is why an individual begins, persists, and ends any given behaviour (Packer & Ballantyne, 2002). According to Totawar and Nambudiri (2014), it is essential to consider the effects on people's perceptions of what is significant and how strongly and actively they react to various internal and external stimuli. Individual and contextual factors play essential roles in mindfulness (Langer, 1993). Novelty, surprise, complexity, and ambiguity are characteristics of situations likely to draw attention to situational elements. In terms of personal aspects, individuals are more likely to be mindful when they feel in control, feel that their surroundings are important and are willing to pay attention to them (Langer, 1993). Additionally, people must meet their psychological needs to consciously influence their external environment and actively process information (Langer, 1993). Additionally, a key component of travellers' mindfulness is motivation, as is their tendency to approach new stimuli to investigate, comprehend, and integrate into their surroundings (Moscardo, 2011).

Novelty-seeking is a common reason people travel and is especially important in tourism (Dunman & Mattila, 2005). Additionally, the primary motivation of travellers is their desire to relax and escape from their daily routines (Wang, 1999). Ying *et al.* (2020) reported that intrinsic and extrinsic motivation are mindfulness facilitators. Furthermore, mindfulness emphasises developing more control over one's external and internal circumstances in addition to meaningfully engaging with them (Carson & Langer, 2006).

According to some studies, organised mass tourist typologies are giving way to unique and extraordinary tourism typologies (Uriely *et al.*, 2002). This shift in tourists' motivation comes from a desire for distinctive MTEs that allow people to feel more fully engaged in the environment and themselves and to gain a deeper understanding of both (Uriely *et al.*, 2002). Thus, it is believed that an experience where people withdraw from everyday life and norms and consider life's purpose will stay memorable for an extended period. Furthermore, it is anticipated that a tourism experience that allows individuals to reflect on their lives and meanings will positively impact people's happiness and well-being (Aydin & Ömüriş, 2020). For instance, Gilbert and Abdullah (2004) found that tourists are more likely to feel happy and fulfilled after a vacation. Another study revealed that travelling motivation significantly affects MTEs (Dagustani *et al.*, 2018).

Studies investigating the relationship between tourists' motivation and personal aspects such as mindfulness are scarce in the context of tourism. Therefore, there seems to be an excellent opportunity to explore the possible influence of motivation on mindfulness. Since experiences obtained during travel shape a person's decision to travel again (Larsen, 2007), the pre and post-travel phase approach is considered an appropriate method for examining the connections between motivation, mindfulness, MTEs, and well-being resulting from travel. Therefore, it is crucial to understand tourists' motivation to travel and personal factors to better comprehend their impact on tourism well-being. Hence, this study explored the following hypothesis:

- H1: Travel motivation positively influences tourism well-being.*
- H2: Travel motivation positively influences mindfulness.*
- H3: Travel motivation positively influences MTEs.*

Pine and Gilmore's (1999) research on the idea that an experience can be sought, purchased, and consumed has received greater attention in the tourism industry. A growing body of research has examined participants' perspectives that contribute to satisfying experiences. Psychological concepts have been employed to explain and predict consumer behaviour due to the renewed interest in experience as a driver of consumption (Moscardo, 2017). Experience is something that travellers construct depending on a series of actions or activities occurring in a specific context, offering some benefit and being unique from those encountered in ordinary situations (Moscardo, 2008).

Moscardo (2017), in his work, focuses mainly on mindfulness as a primary concept in tourist experiences. The dual processing method is illustrated by the social psychology concept of mindfulness (Langer, 1989). According to dual processing theories, humans typically process information deeply or shallowly while responding to a situation. According to these theories regarding unconscious thought, shallow processing is also known as automatic processing (Bargh, 2006). In line with mindfulness theory, deep processing is associated with awareness and shallow processing is associated with mindlessness. In positive psychology, dual processing is essential, where hedonic and eudaimonic well-being are distinguished (Ryan & Deci, 2001). The former is a temporary condition associated with little engagement with a situation. In contrast, the latter is a longer-lasting affective state linked to deep processing and similar circumstances to those observed for mindfulness (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

This latter condition will support overall health, enhanced life quality, and memories of travel experiences. Mindfulness is a reliable indicator of psychological well-being, emotional and behavioural regulation, cognitive function (including understanding, creativity and learning outcomes), and health (Langer & Moldoveanu, 2010). For instance, a study suggested that mindfulness improved eudaimonic well-being (Jobbehdar *et al.*, 2022).

Creating experiences is the essence of tourism (Cohen, 1979). The nature and structure of the tourism experience can be defined and analysed in various ways (Volo, 2009). For instance, Tung and Ritchie (2011) described a person's subjective assessment and considered the emotional, cognitive, and behavioural experiences of events associated with travel activity before, during, and following a trip. Travelling is often associated with unique experiences that stand out from regular living (Cohen, 1979). Given this line of thought, it is vital to examine the influence of mindfulness, which can be present during the experience of a given situation, on the memorable experiences of the trip and well-being that could be present later after travel.

According to some authors, there is a positive relationship between memory and mindfulness, meaning that travellers who are more mindful during the trip are more likely to have strong recollections of their travels (Dutt & Ninov, 2015; Lee & Kim, 2018).

Since mindfulness is linked to several better outcomes, it is a desirable condition that should be promoted for travellers (McIntosh, 2004). Hence, considering the above discussion, the following hypotheses are presented:

*H4: Mindfulness positively influences MTEs.*

*H5: Mindfulness positively influences tourism well-being.*

*H6: Mindfulness mediates the influence of tourism motivation on tourism well-being.*

The MTEs that impact people's lives are crucial to understanding modern tourist behaviour and motivation because they allow individuals to consider their existence and life purpose to enhance their

well-being and personal growth (Aydin & Ömüriş, 2020). Anticipating holidays or even thinking back on them afterwards might be more enjoyable and, as a result, happier than truly commemorating them (Gilbert & Abdullah, 2004).

It has been shown that MTEs positively affect well-being (Dolnicar *et al.*, 2012). Tourist experience significantly predicts older persons' subjective well-being (Sie *et al.*, 2021). Additionally, Vada *et al.* (2023) suggested that MTEs directly affect tourist well-being. Several outcomes of MTEs have been identified, including hedonic well-being (Sthapit *et al.*, 2019; Vada *et al.*, 2019), eudaimonic well-being (Vada *et al.*, 2019), and subjective well-being (Sthapit & Coudounaris, 2018). Beyond the travel experience, hedonic well-being can also increase. For instance, remembering positive MTEs has been shown to favourably impact hedonic well-being long after travellers have returned home (Jepson *et al.*, 2019). Experiences related to tourism enhance not only hedonic benefits but also eudaimonic well-being. This dimension highlights the long-lasting benefits of personal growth, fulfilment, self-improvement, complete involvement, and optimal performance of meaningful behaviour (Smith & Diekmann, 2017). Gilbert and Abdullah (2004) discovered that following their holiday, travellers are more likely to feel happy and content based on their assessments of their subjective well-being.

A few studies have analysed the mediating role of MTEs. For instance, Huang *et al.* (2019) found that MTEs act as a mediator between behavioural intentions and perceived value.

The destination's image and MTEs partially mediate the association between the quality of the cultural heritage rejuvenation experience and the intention to return (Zhou *et al.*, 2023). Furthermore, MTEs mediate the influence of tourist exchanges on behavioural intentions (Zhou *et al.*, 2023). It was also shown that memorable experiences mediated the relationship between life satisfaction and motivation in senior tourists (Sie *et al.*, 2021).

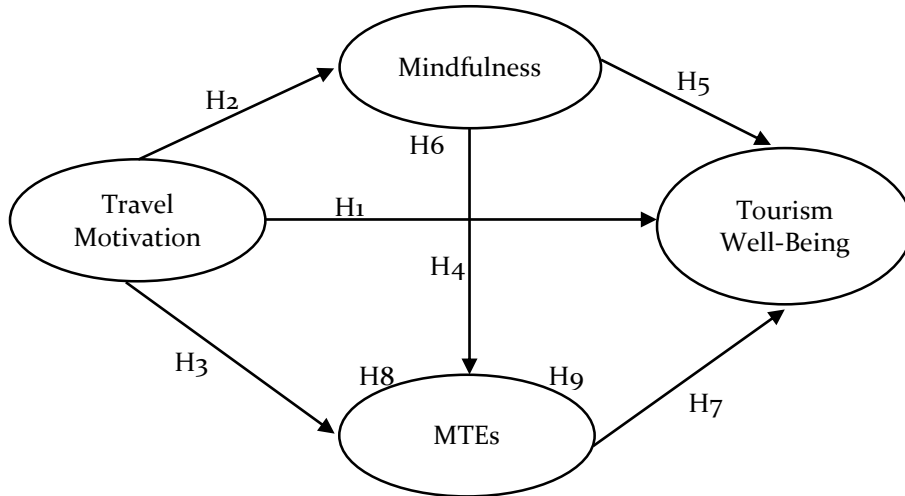
Sthapit and Coudounaris (2019) presented a paper identifying the antecedents and outcomes of MTEs. This article identified a gap in the literature and tried to respond by offering a conceptual model that analysed the different dimensions of MTEs and their impact on subjective well-being. However, there is a need for further studies that incorporate more variables than those already studied. Furthermore, considering the above discussion, this study attempts to address this gap and present a conceptual model that integrates tourists' motivations and their direct influence on well-being. It also analyses the potential mediating role of MTEs in this relationship. In line with this recommendation, the following hypotheses are presented:

*H7: MTEs positively influence tourism well-being.*

*H8: MTEs mediate the influence of tourism motivation on tourism well-being.*

*H9: MTEs mediate the influence of mindfulness on tourism well-being.*

Based on the theoretical background, this study proposes a conceptual model that integrates the constructs of travel motivation, tourism well-being, mindfulness, and MTEs (Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** *Conceptual model*

#### 4. Methodology

##### 4.1. Data collection and participants

An online questionnaire was the primary data collection tool. This study was appropriate for an online inquiry since it gave researchers access to data on attitudes and emotions, for example, that cannot be directly observed. Additionally, it gave the respondents the freedom to finish the questionnaire whenever and wherever they were pleased. An online panel made available by the international market research company EUSurveys was used to administer the survey. Online platforms are being used extensively in marketing and tourism research, and it has been shown that the data from these platforms are trustworthy with no bias in responses (Nayak *et al.*, 2019). Based on its reputation, research expertise, and application in the social sciences, EUSurvey was chosen for this study.

Email and social media sites, including Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp, were used to distribute the survey. Nonprobability convenience sampling was used to select participants. Snowball sampling was employed, and participants were requested to distribute the questionnaire to other participants. Written informed consent was given by each participant in order to take part in the survey. At the outset, the study's goals, anonymity, and voluntary participation were explained, along with the ability to withdraw from the questionnaire at any time. Each question also contained a required response to guarantee that all replies were complete and that no information was missing. The University Faculty Ethics Committee gave its ethical approval for this study.

The data were collected between February 2023 and February 2024 in Portugal and included travellers who had taken a trip in the last six months. The Portuguese economy is primarily driven by tourism, and the outcomes of 2016 have reaffirmed the significance of substantial investment and cooperative efforts between public and private institutions, which have been going on for more than ten years (Turismo de Portugal, 2020). The Tourism Strategy for Portugal (Tourism Strategy 2027) aims to prepare for the future by promoting long-term commitments teamwork, and anticipating challenges in the next decade, based on open discussions that everyone can participate in. According to the Tourism Strategy 2027, Portugal was indicated as an innovative and competitive destination at the top of the international rankings. Some global trends that impact tourism are presented, such as more informed and demanding consumers, a greater focus on customised offers, and the growing importance of well-being, health and

healthy habits (Turismo de Portugal, 2020). Portugal has been a popular tourist destination for many years, with European and international tourists.

The final sample included 256 participants aged 18 years or older. The sample included 76.2% females and 23.4% males; the mean age was 33.63 years, with a minimum of 18 years and a maximum of 82 years. Regarding professional status, 30.05% were students, 41% were employed, 23.8% were student-workers, 2.3% were unemployed, and 2.3% were retired. The sample used in this study is considered adequate, considering the recommendation of Kline (2005), who suggested that a sample over 200 is sufficiently large for structural equation modelling (SEM) analysis.

#### 4.2. Measurements

A self-administered survey was carried out using empirically verified instruments from the literature. The formal questionnaire used in the study consisted of two sections. The first section included the sociodemographic questionnaire. The second section included previously validated measurement items adopted from existing scales.

The MTEs were measured by adapting 11 items from the Memorable Tourism Experiences Scale by Kim *et al.* (2012), and Cronbach's alpha value for this scale in this study was 0.93. Travel motivation was assessed by adapting 12 items from the Wellness Tourism Motivation Scale developed by Kessler *et al.* (2020), and Cronbach's alpha value for this scale in this study was 0.92. The Freiburg Mindfulness Inventory, created by Walach *et al.* (2006), contained 14 items that were used to measure mindfulness, and the Cronbach's alpha value for this scale in this study was 0.89. Tourism well-being was examined through eight items from the Tourism Well-being Scale developed by Garcês *et al.* (2020), and Cronbach's alpha value for this scale in this study was 0.85. A detailed description of all four constructs and items is provided in the Appendix.

#### 4.3. Data analysis

This study used SPSS 28.0 and AMOS 24 for the data analysis. First, descriptive analyses were conducted to characterise the sociodemographic data and study constructs (travel motivation, tourism well-being, mindfulness, and MTEs). Then, common method bias (CMB) and normality tests were performed. Afterwards, a two-step structural equation modelling (SEM) process was conducted, as Anderson and Gerbing (1988) suggested. In particular, the validity and reliability of the variables were assessed using the measurement model, and the relationships between constructs were investigated using the structural model. Finally, bootstrapping approaches were used to examine the mediating effects.

In recent years, SEM has grown in popularity among academics and researchers due to its adaptability, generality, and capacity to produce an exact and accurate estimate when making predictions (Hair *et al.*, 2019). Mediation analysis is commonly carried out to determine the type of mediation in the model. Additionally, an extension analysis, the bootstrap approach, was employed to verify the type of mediation included in the model (Woody, 2011). The bootstrap approach is more reliable and accurate than other techniques for testing mediating effects (Hair *et al.*, 2019). Thus, the proposed model with a bootstrap approach was constructed by estimating 95% confidence intervals (CIs) with a 5000 sampling method to test the mediating effects.

## 5. Results

### 5.1. Common method bias and normality test

Common method bias (CMB) was ensured in this investigation before, during, and after the questionnaire was distributed. The selection of instruments was established on verified scales before data collection. During the data collection process, the survey was completed only by willing

participants who had been informed beforehand that their answers would be kept private. Following the data collection, a statistical test for CMB was conducted using Harman's single-factor test (Harman, 1967). The results revealed a 29.58% variation, less than the suggested threshold value of 50% (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2003). Thus, CMB was not a significant problem in this research.

Furthermore, a normality test was conducted. According to Curran *et al.* (1996), skewness values that are equal to or less than two ( $|sk| \leq 2$ ) and kurtosis values that are equal to or less than seven ( $|ku| \leq 7$ ) indicate that the normal distribution assumption is being respected. The study's findings, which showed skewness values between -0.06 and 1.53 and kurtosis values between -0.01 and 1.38, satisfied the normality assumption. The results indicated that the data in the study have a normal distribution. Thus, using SEM is not problematic.

### 5.2. Measurement model

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to test the measurement model. Factor loadings were evaluated for every item as part of CFA. It is expected that social science studies will yield smaller loadings ( $< 0.70$ ), even though factor loadings greater than 0.70 are desirable (Vinzi *et al.*, 2009). In this study, all the items had factor loadings above the minimum acceptable value of 0.50 (Hair *et al.*, 2016) except for three items (MI- "I am impatient with myself and with others"; MTEs- "Learned about myself"; TM- "To give me time and space for reflection"). Items with loadings between 0.40 and 0.70 are often only taken into consideration for removal if the deletion results improve the average variance extracted (AVE) or composite reliability (CR) above the suggested value (Hair *et al.*, 2016). In the present study, removing items with factor loadings below the recommended value increased the CR and AVE values. Hence, the three items were deleted due to low factor loadings.

The overall goodness of fit of the model was evaluated using the model-fit measures (CMIN/df, GFI, CFI, TLI, SRMR, and RMSEA), and each value was within the standard acceptable levels (Ullman, 2001; Hu & Bentler, 1998; Bentler, 1990). The data fitted well with the proposed model CMIN/df = 1.89, CFI = 0.90, TLI = 0.89, IFI = 0.90, SRMR = 0.07, and RMSEA = 0.05.

The discriminant validity of the constructs, convergent validity, and item reliability were examined to determine the measures' adequacy.

Construct reliability was measured using Cronbach's alpha, McDonald's omega ( $\omega$ ), rho\_A, and CR. The Cronbach's alpha ranged from 0.85 to 0.93, the McDonad's omega ranged from 0.85 to 0.93, the CR statistics ranged from 0.88 to 0.94, and the rho\_A ranged from 0.85 to 0.93 (Table 1). All the indicators have reliability statistics above the recommended threshold of 0.70 (Hair *et al.*, 2016). As a result, construct reliability was determined for each study construct.

The AVE was used to measure the scale items' convergent validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). When the AVE values exceed or are equal to the recommended 0.50, the items converge to assess the underlying construct (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). As reported in Table 2, the AVE values for this study are acceptable. Although the AVE values for mindfulness and tourism well-being were slightly below the reference value, Fornell and Larcker (1981) stated that if the AVE is less than 0.50 but the CR is greater than 0.70, the validity could be determined satisfactorily. Therefore, it can be concluded that the tourism well-being and mindfulness constructs were valid because the CR values for these constructs were significantly higher than the necessary value. As a result, the scales employed in this study showed the appropriate convergent validity.

**Table 1**

*Measurement model: reliability, validity and item loadings*

Construct	Items	Loadings	$\alpha$	$\omega$	rho_A	CR	AVE
Travel Motivation			0.92	0.92	0.93	0.93	0.57
	TM_1	0.60					
	TM_2	0.81					
	TM_3	0.85					
	TM_4	0.62					
	TM_5	0.71					
	TM_6	0.83					
	TM_7	0.86					
	TM_8	0.76					
	TM_9	0.76					
	TM_10	0.71					
TM_11	0.76						
Mindfulness			0.89	0.89	0.89	0.90	0.42
	MI_1	0.58					
	MI_2	0.68					
	MI_3	0.64					
	MI_4	0.62					
	MI_5	0.63					
	MI_6	0.74					
	MI_7	0.77					
	MI_8	0.63					
	MI_9	0.78					
	MI_10	0.77					
	MI_11	0.57					
	MI_12	0.71					
MI_13	0.61						
Tourism Well-being			0.85	0.85	0.85	0.88	0.49
	TW_1	0.70					
	TW_2	0.72					
	TW_3	0.70					
	TW_4	0.72					
	TW_5	0.64					
	TW_6	0.71					
	TW_7	0.76					
TW_8	0.65						
Memorable tourism experiences			0.93	0.93	0.93	0.94	0.61
	MTEs_1	0.74					
	MTEs_2	0.69					
	MTEs_3	0.76					
	MTEs_4	0.79					
	MTEs_5	0.83					
	MTEs_6	0.83					
	MTEs_7	0.80					
	MTEs_8	0.83					
	MTEs_8	0.77					
MTEs_10	0.79						

*Note.*  $\alpha$ =Cronbach's alpha,  $\omega$ =McDonald's omega, CR= Composite reliability, AVE= Average variance extracted

The criterion of Fornell-Larcker and the Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio (HTMT) (Henseler et al., 2015) was applied to test the model's discriminant validity. Discriminant validity is shown when a construct's square root of the AVE is higher than its correlation with other constructs (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). For every construct in this study, the square root of the AVE was higher than its correlation with the other constructs (Table 3). Kline (2011) proposed a cutoff of 0.85 or less for HTMT. The results revealed that all the HTMT values were less than 0.85 (Table 2). Hence, the results of this study showed no issues relating to discriminant validity, offering strong evidence to support discriminant validity's establishment.

**Table 2**  
*Fornell-Larcker Criterion and the HTMT*

	<b>1.</b>	<b>2.</b>	<b>3.</b>	<b>4.</b>
1. Mindfulness	<b>0.65</b>	0.23	0.33	0.21
2. MTEs	0.25	<b>0.78</b>	0.84	0.51
3. Tourism well-being	0.33	0.76	<b>0.70</b>	0.62
4. Travel motivation	0.22	0.49	0.55	<b>0.75</b>

Note. The square roots of the AVE are diagonal and italicised. The correlations between the construct values are shown below the diagonal elements. The HTMT values appear above the diagonal elements. The HTMT ratios display the correlations between the model's constructs in the table, where an HTMT value of less than 0.85 shows discriminant validity.

5.3. *Structural model*

The structural path was assessed to evaluate path coefficients and their statistical significance once the measurement model was evaluated. This study employed a structural model using maximum likelihood estimation to evaluate the hypotheses. The SEM results revealed an acceptable level of model fit: CMIN/df = 1.86, CFI = 0.91, TLI = 0.90, IFI = 0.91, SRMR = 0.07, and RMSEA= 0.05.

Hypotheses were evaluated in addition to the goodness of fit assessment to determine the importance of the associations. The results (Table 3) showed that all proposed direct effects (H1-H5 and H7) were supported. Specifically, travel motivation positively and significantly influenced tourism well-being ( $\beta = 0.22, p < 0.001$ ), thus supporting H1. Similarly, travel motivation positively and significantly influenced mindfulness ( $\beta = 0.22, p < 0.001$ ), indicating that H2 is supported. Travel motivation also significantly influenced MTEs ( $\beta = 0.46, p < 0.001$ ), supporting H3. Furthermore, H4, which proposed that mindfulness positively influences well-being, was supported ( $\beta = 0.15, p < 0.001$ ). Similarly, mindfulness positively and significantly influenced MTEs ( $\beta = 0.13, p < 0.001$ ), supporting H5. Finally, MTEs positively and significantly influenced well-being ( $\beta = 0.61, p < 0.001$ ), supporting H7.

5.4. *Mediation analysis*

5.4.1. *Mindfulness*

Mediation analysis was conducted to evaluate the mediating role of mindfulness in the relationship between travel motivation and tourism well-being. The findings revealed a significant indirect effect of travel motivation on tourism well-being through mindfulness ( $\beta = 0.03, t = 2.4, p < 0.001$ ). The total impact of travel motivation on tourism well-being was significant ( $\beta = 0.55, t = 12.55, p < 0.001$ ); with the inclusion of the mediator, the effect of travel motivation on tourism well-being was still significant ( $\beta = 0.22, t = 5.02, p < 0.001$ ). Thus, mindfulness has a complementary partial mediating role in the relationship between travel motivation and tourism well-being. Hence, H6 was supported (Table 4).

5.4.2. Memorable Tourism Experiences

The mediating role of MTEs in the relationship between travel motivation and well-being and the mediating role of MTEs in the relationship between mindfulness and well-being were assessed. The results revealed a significant indirect effect of travel motivation on tourism well-being through MTEs ( $\beta=0.28, t=8.54, p<0.001$ ). The total impact of travel motivation on well-being was significant ( $\beta=0.55, t=12.55, p<0.001$ ). The influence of travel motivation on the well-being of tourists remained even after the MTEs mediator was considered ( $\beta=0.22, t=5.02, p<0.001$ ). Thus, in the relationship between travel motivation and well-being, MTEs play a complementary partial mediation role. Hence, H8 was supported (Table 4).

A significant indirect effect of mindfulness on tourism well-being through MTEs was found ( $\beta= 0.09, t=2.77, p<0.001$ ). The total impact of mindfulness on tourism well-being was significant ( $\beta= 0.22, t= 4.56, p<0.001$ ). With the inclusion of the MTEs mediator, the effect of mindfulness on tourism well-being was still significant ( $\beta= 0.13, t=3.22, p<0.001$ ). Thus, MTEs have a partial complementary mediating role in the relationship between mindfulness and tourism well-being. Hence, H9 was supported (Table 4).

**Table 3**  
*Path coefficients and hypotheses*

Hypothesis	Path	Coefficient	M	SD	t value	Result
H1	TM -> TW	0.22*	0.22	0.05	5.02	Supported
H2	TM -> FMI	0.22*	0.23	0.06	3.64	Supported
H3	TM -> MTEs	0.46*	0.46	0.05	9.72	Supported
H4	MI -> MTEs	0.15*	0.16	0.05	2.94	Supported
H5	MI -> TW	0.13*	0.14	0.04	3.22	Supported
H7	MTEs -> TW	0.61*	0.61	0.04	13.96	Supported

Note. M= mean, SD= standardized deviation, MI= mindfulness, TW = tourism well-being, MTEs= memorable tourism experiences, TM= travel motivation, \* =  $p<0.001$

**Table 4**  
*Mediation Analysis Results*

Hypothesis	Path	$\beta$	SD	T-value	p-value	CI 95%		Result
						5%	95%	
H6	TM-> MI ->TW	0.03	0.01	2.34	0.001	0.01	0.05	Partial mediation
H8	TM-> MTEs -> TW	0.28	0.03	8.54	0.001	0.23	0.34	Partial mediation
H9	MI -> MTEs -> TW	0.09	0.03	2.77	0.001	0.03	0.14	Partial mediation

Note. SD= standardized deviation, CI= percentile bootstrap 95% confidence interval, MI= mindfulness, TW = tourism well-being, MTEs= memorable tourism experiences, TM= travel motivation

**6. Discussion and conclusion**

According to Pyke *et al.* (2016), well-being hasn't been utilised for travel purposes enough. Exactly how tourism raises the standard of living for travellers is still up for discussion. Filep (2012) discussed the necessity for adjustments and improvements to well-being research methodologies. This study sought to respond to this call and create a more comprehensive picture of tourism well-being by studying

tourism and incorporating positive relations between various travel-related factors and motivations with well-being themes.

This study aimed to fill the gap in the literature by investigating a conceptual model to determine whether travel motivation influences tourism well-being, explore the positive influence of mindfulness and MTEs, and enhance the understanding of the influencing factors on tourism well-being. Furthermore, this study aimed to identify the mediating roles of mindfulness and MTEs on the influence of travel motivation on tourism well-being and to analyse the mediating role of MTEs on the influence of mindfulness on tourism well-being. Based on these objectives, the suggested theoretical model integrated four constructs to understand better the influence of travel motivation, mindfulness, MTEs, and tourism well-being. The proposed model was tested using data collected from Portuguese travellers. The validity and reliability of the model of the path relationships between the constructs influencing tourism well-being and the mediating role of MTEs and mindfulness were supported by all the hypotheses.

The main findings of this research supported prior studies suggesting that tourism positively influenced well-being (Moscardo, 2011). Additionally, according to Sirgy *et al.* (2011), there has been an emphasis on utilising tourism to encourage visitors to enhance their well-being and elevate their positive emotions.

First, the results of this study suggested that travel motivation positively influenced tourism well-being, supporting the first hypothesis. This result is supported by previous research by Sirgy *et al.* (2011). However, the relationship between travel motivation and well-being was partially mediated by mindfulness and MTEs. Some studies have analysed the mediating role of MTEs on different aspects of travel (Huang *et al.*, 2019; Sie *et al.*, 2021; Zhou *et al.*, 2023), but none have explored the mediating role between travel motivation and well-being. Thus, the findings suggest that mindfulness may influence motivation and well-being. Second, the results revealed that travel motivation positively influenced mindfulness. Hence, this is a new result since no previous studies have explored the connection between travel motivation and mindfulness in tourism. Previous research has shown that intrinsic and extrinsic motivation are mindfulness facilitators (Ying *et al.*, 2020). This finding is consistent with the mindfulness literature and suggests a close connection between mindfulness and motivation. Third, travel motivation has also shown a positive influence on MTEs. While there has not been much research done in this area, this result is in accordance with Dagustani *et al.* (2018), who found that travel motivation significantly influences MTEs. Fourth, mindfulness positively influenced MTEs. This result aligns with earlier studies demonstrating the beneficial relationship between mindfulness and MTEs (Dutt & Ninov, 2015; Lee & Kim, 2018). Fifth, mindfulness had a positive influence on tourism well-being. This finding aligns with previous results that support a positive association between mindfulness and well-being (Jobbehdar *et al.*, 2022; Kirwin *et al.*, 2019; Loureiro *et al.*, 2019). Furthermore, interestingly, MTEs have been found to mediate the relationship between mindfulness and tourism well-being. Finally, MTEs positively influenced tourism well-being. This result supports previous research, such as that of Jepson *et al.* (2019), Sthapit and Coudounaris (2019), Vada *et al.* (2023), and Vada *et al.* (2019), that suggested a significant effect of MTEs on tourist well-being. This study allowed a better understanding of the constructs that influence the well-being of Portuguese travellers. In Portugal, the concept of well-being has been increasingly promoted in the tourism industry, with more and more personalised offers that draw tourists' attention to the importance of taking care of their health and increasing their levels of well-being. The Portugal Tourism Strategy includes well-being as an emerging asset combining healthy living, health, well-being and mindfulness (Turismo de Portugal, 2020).

### 6.1. Theoretical implications

This research offers new quantitative insights by contributing to the literature extension. It also contributes to filling the gap identified in the literature by trying to answer the call to understand better how tourism can influence well-being and identify the constructs that may influence this concept. First, this study is one of the few that investigated the psychological factors that could influence tourists' well-being. The results highlighted the positive contribution of travel motivation to tourism well-being. Additionally, mindfulness and MTEs were shown to influence tourism well-being positively. More interestingly, the positive influence of travel motivation on tourism well-being was partially mediated by mindfulness and MTEs. Previous studies have investigated the effects of influencing factors on well-being using different theories. However, a conceptual model that integrates the four proposed constructs in this study and the mediating role of MTEs and mindfulness remains underexplored. Therefore, this provides the core theoretical contribution of this study.

The conceptual model confirmed the positive relationship and influence between travel motivation, mindfulness, and the MTEs on well-being, and it could thus help to understand the connection between these four concepts better. It shows how the concepts are all related and influence each other and includes the different pathways and factors that can help promote well-being. It will enable researchers to identify the variables that influence tourists' well-being and thus continue to explore the possible positive effects of this relationship. Furthermore, this model could be applied to future studies in the tourism field that aim to better understand which concepts might affect tourists' well-being. In addition, the proposed model could also be extended to different studies in the field of psychology, whose main objective is to study the concept of well-being and how it is influenced by motivation, mindfulness and memorable experiences.

This study also advances knowledge about the tourists' motivations and the positive influence of mindfulness and MTEs on tourism well-being. Additionally, the findings expand the understanding of how mindfulness and MTEs mediate the relationship between travel motivation and well-being, demonstrating that both mindfulness and MTEs influence this relationship. The results contribute to extending the theories that support the use of tourism as a way of motivating travellers to increase well-being (Sirgy *et al.*, 2011) and the positive impact of MTEs on well-being (Dagustani *et al.*, 2018; Sthapit *et al.*, 2019). The conceptual model also contributes to the advancement of knowledge regarding mindfulness theory, namely confirming the positive influence of mindfulness on well-being as previous studies have suggested (Jobbehdar *et al.*, 2022; Langer & Moldoveanu, 2010) and presenting the positive influence of motivation on mindfulness, corroborating the theory of Moscardo (2011). Therefore, these theoretical findings challenge existing knowledge by highlighting the significant factors influencing well-being.

### 6.2. Practical implications

This study has several practical implications, particularly for destination management and tourism marketing.

The Portugal Tourism Strategy 2027 focuses on strategic actions for national tourism, namely well-being and offers opportunities for a growing demand for healthy habits, health and well-being products (Turismo de Portugal, 2020). Given the objectives presented in Portugal's Tourism Strategy for 2027, in which one of the main points is the focus on the well-being of tourists, the results of this study could help tourism and marketing decision-makers to consider including the importance of travel motivation, mindfulness, MTEs and its positive influence on well-being in their offers. In addition, as a tourism strategy, the importance of tourists' motivations for travelling could be considered in order to provide an offer of tourist destinations that aimed at increasing well-being. An improved understanding of the

different variables that impact tourism well-being could help tourism managers and decision-makers focus on improving tourist well-being and quality of life. Stakeholders and tourist managers can use the study's findings to customise their marketing approaches and even include mindfulness and well-being in advertising.

The current study offers information defining the connection between well-being and travel motivation, highlighting the importance of MTEs and mindfulness of Portuguese travellers. Theoretically, the positive psychology and tourism literature are extended to the marketing discipline by the significant mediation influence of mindfulness on the relationship between travel motivation and tourism well-being. The results of this study confirmed that MTEs are essential for tourists' well-being, and this personal benefit may, at the same time, contribute to the intention to revisit a destination while serving as a reflection of loyalty for travel destination marketers. This study further explored the most significant source of information for someone considering revisit and word-of-mouth marketing: their memories of the trip (Marschall, 2012). Thus, offering positive, unforgettable experiences is essential to tourism businesses' competitiveness.

While tourists are active participants, tourism industry experts need to acknowledge the impact of psychological factors and the potential of visitor incentives to deliver a more customised experience and better services. While providing tourists with unique experiences is crucial to their well-being, these benefits can also be passed on to their intention to return, which indicates consumer loyalty to tourism management. Also, since achieving well-being has grown to be one of the most desirable objectives in modern society, it is crucial for those working in the tourism and hospitality sectors to understand travel's role in promoting this notion. As a result, destination managers can raise visitor well-being and the probability of their revisit and recommendation, which are marketing initiatives' ultimate objectives.

This study offers practical implications for relevant specialists and travellers. These findings have extended the understanding of some critical influencing factors in the search for well-being in tourism and provide insights for destination management concerning the significance of travellers' motivations to travel.

The finding of the significant positive influence of travel motivation, mindfulness, and MTEs on Portuguese travellers' well-being suggests that destination marketers have to concentrate on travel-related services to generate MTEs and consider tourists' psychological well-being when designing tourism products. Finally, tour operators should consider developing different travel packages that are adapted to engage different travellers according to their preferences.

### *6.3. Limitations and future research*

A few shortcomings of the current study point to potential directions for future investigations. First, travellers who had recently visited various locations were included in the sample. Future research should analyse travellers who have been to particular locations to obtain further insights and a more reflective understanding of the differences in specific destination contexts. Second, future studies should also consider exploring the hypothesised effects paths over time, offering a longitudinal approach to the proposed model, which would help to better understand these relationships over time. Future longitudinal studies may be conducted to comprehend the long-term impact of MTEs on the well-being of tourists. Third, because this study only collected data at one moment, it is suggested that future researchers take pre-post trip surveys into account. Evaluation designs often use these methods to assess participant attitudes, behaviours or knowledge changes following an intervention. Fourth, a qualitative approach would also be essential to investigate in more detail the opinions of travellers and

what factors they consider personally crucial in influencing their well-being. Finally, the results should be analysed considering that the data was collected in Portugal and the sample was made up of Portuguese travellers, so in order to generalise the results, it will be necessary for future studies to consider applying the conceptual model presented in different countries.

### **Declaration of Conflicting Interests**

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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### **Ethical Statement**

#### *Ethics Approval*

All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional and national research committee and with the 1964 Helsinki Declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards. The study, including the ethical standards, was approved by the Scientific Commission of the Faculty of Human and Social Sciences, University of Algarve, Portugal, with the reference number CEUAlg Pn<sup>o</sup>106/2023.

#### *Informed Consent*

Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

### **Data Availability Statement**

The datasets generated for this study are available on request to the first author.

## Appendix

### Scale items for each construct

Construct	Items
Tourism Motivation	<p>TM_1: To find my inner self.</p> <p>TM_2: To learn how to meditate.</p> <p>TM_3: To contemplate what is important to me.</p> <p>TM_4: To be at peace with myself.</p> <p>TM_5: To escape the demands of everyday life.</p> <p>TM_6: To return to everyday life feeling rejuvenated.</p> <p>TM_7: To find peace and quiet.</p> <p>TM_8: To learn about nutrition to make better decisions.</p> <p>TM_9: To learn how to better manage stressful situations.</p> <p>TM_10: To learn general ways to improve my overall health.</p> <p>TM_11: To learn how to overcome specific health problems.</p>
Mindfulness	<p>MI_1: I am open to the experience of the present moment.</p> <p>MI_2: I sense my body, whether eating, cooking, cleaning or talking.</p> <p>MI_3: When I notice an absence of mind, I gently return to the experience of the here and now.</p> <p>MI_4: I am able to appreciate myself.</p> <p>MI_5: I pay attention to what's behind my actions.</p> <p>MI_6: I see my mistakes and difficulties without judging them.</p> <p>MI_7: I feel connected to my experience in the here and now.</p> <p>MI_8: I accept unpleasant experiences.</p> <p>MI_9: I am friendly to myself when things go wrong.</p> <p>MI_10: I watch my feelings without getting lost in them.</p> <p>MI_11: In difficult situations, I can pause without immediately reacting.</p> <p>MI_12: I experience moments of inner peace and ease, even when things get hectic and stressful.</p> <p>MI_13: I am able to smile when I notice how I sometimes make life difficult.</p>
Tourism Well-being	<p>TW_1: I had lots of fun.</p> <p>TW_2: I faced this experience as a unique/original opportunity.</p> <p>TW_3: I found new ways of being that gave meaning to aspects of my life.</p> <p>TW_4: I felt good in the relationships I developed with new people.</p> <p>TW_5: I was able to see the positive side of the less agreeable situations that occurred.</p> <p>TW_6: I engaged in community activities (culture, events, etc.).</p> <p>TW_7: This experience was a dream come true.</p> <p>TW_8: I experienced a connection/relationship with something higher than myself.</p>
Memorable tourism experiences	<p>MTEs_1: I was thrilled about having a new experience.</p> <p>MTEs_2: I was indulged in the activities.</p> <p>MTEs_3: I really enjoyed this tourism experience.</p> <p>MTEs_4: It was exciting.</p> <p>MTEs_5: It was liberating.</p> <p>MTEs_6: I enjoyed a sense of freedom.</p> <p>MTEs_7: It was refreshing.</p> <p>MTEs_8: I felt revitalised.</p> <p>MTEs_9: I did something meaningful.</p> <p>MTEs_10: I did something important.</p>

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