



## Holistic Tourism: Motivations, Self-Image and Satisfaction

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### Abstract

Holistic tourism has become a new and alternative form of tourism and an important trend among tourists who seek programs and experiences that would allow them to achieve balance between mind, body and soul. Choosing holistic tourism means that a tourist can enjoy a different and full experience which goes beyond the simple contact with cultures, people, places or landscapes. It focuses on self-transformation and on an attempt of people understanding more about themselves. It is crucial we understand each person's view about this new type of tourism since this perspective will surely bring potential new investors to this product. Knowing what every tourist values, feels and needs- in terms of personal fulfillment- can turn this new type of tourism into a competitive one. This study includes an empirical research conducted through questionnaires to 300 holistic tourists in four different Portuguese destinations: Azores, Gerês, Lisbon and Algarve. The results allowed a better understanding of the holistic tourists' characteristics, their main motivations, self-image perception and satisfaction levels while taking part in holistic tourism.

### Keywords

Holistic tourism; Motivation; Evaluation; Satisfaction; Destination image

### Introduction

Tourism is an industry that truly contributes to the economic growth of a country. But it is also a socio-cultural phenomenon with great importance in the study of modern [1]. Nowadays, tourists seek new living experiences and not merely a simple contact with cultures, people, landscapes and/or places any more [2]. They are also focused on their self-transformation and on being part of a spiritual experience Holladay & Ponder [3]. Tourism is a spiritual journey Willson [4] and journeys can be ways of spiritual tourism. So the spiritual dimension is part of new forms of tourism: wellness [5,6] or holistic tourism are some of these new forms [7]. In the last decades, holistic tourism has gained strength in the modern world with tourists pursuing programs and experiences that they believe will bring balance to their lives. This growth is mainly due to the current human desire to focus on the "I" and on wellbeing Wang. The desire to escape their

routine, to disappear for a while to find one's inner self [5]. Holistic tourists represent a new segment for touristic spiritual experiences [3]. Tourists seek a holistic harmony between body, spirit and mind. Some researchers define this new tourism as a high-level wellbeing product [3]. In fact, holistic tourism is considered one of the most prospective tourism markets in the wellness industry representing about 6% (524.4 million) of all domestic and international trips and 14% (\$438.6 billion) of the money spent in that market. According to projections, this market is expected to grow by more than 9% per year throughout 2017, nearly 50% faster than what can be expected in the other tourism contexts [9]. Holistic tourists' main goals are to preserve or promote their body, mind and spirit health. They usually stay in specialized hotels or resorts that provide professional care, counseling and expertise similar to those wellbeing tourists are known to expect [9]. Some resorts and spas are exploring this high profile market offering expensive and luxurious packages to improve health (body), provide relief from pain and stress (spirit), and educate towards a wellbeing concept in life (mind) [8,10]. In addition, some destinations are revitalizing themselves, searching for uniqueness and distinction, establishing their image and offer in this "growing global leisure-based and self-conscious fitness lifestyle" [11]. Besides its growing importance, holistic tourism has been poorly studied [5,7], studies have focused on the wellness market and specifically on the holistic tourism. The studies that focused on how the spiritual movement influences tourists' motivations and experiences are scarce [4,12]. So, the aim of the present study is to fill this literature gap and to deepen the knowledge about this new form of tourism. This study also brings insights for holistic destination managers that will help them to explore this new luxury market as they will understand holistic tourists' motivations, self-image and satisfaction levels.

### Literature Review

Tourism is considered a spiritual journey [13]. Spirituality can be found through travelling, particularly when a person is looking for a greater meaning in his life, trying to understand more about himself as an individual [14]. The spiritual perspective describes what people look for in their lives, rather than defining what they expect. This can be seen as a connection between the person and the surrounding world, something that travelling offers [13]. Tourists are now looking for new experiences. More than a simple contact with other cultures, people, places or landscapes they want to live, experience something unique [2]. For this new generation of tourists, this spiritual dimensions of travelling as a lot to do with welfare [5,6], and living a holistic experience [7]. Holistic tourism has been growing in the last decades as a result of the individuals desire to focus on the "I" instead of on the "other" Wang. It comes from the desire and need to escape and to meet their inner self [5]. Holistic tourists are looking for a greater sense of life, trying to understand more about themselves as human beings [15]. Some researchers concluded that most individuals seek inner spirituality through travelling. In other words, individuals travel to give a greater meaning to their lives as they try to understand more about themselves as human beings [14]. However, few researchers have explored the experiences, motivations and behaviors of individuals involved in tourism spiritual movements [4]. In the holistic approach, the main goal of a tourism experience is to obtain balance between the wellbeing of his body, mind and

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spirit. In order to allow the knowledge and wellbeing adapted to each person's personal needs, holistic tourism offers a set of activities that connect counseling for spiritual development with therapies and treatments that involve body, mind and spirit [5]. In a holistic experience, tourists seek emotional pleasure parameters, cognitive stimulation, psychological growth, self-expression and common consciousness [3]. In fact, the balance between body, spirit and mind is the key for those who look for a holistic experience. Wellbeing contributes to the overall harmony of a person's health and is related to changes in lifestyle and to the pursuit of new possibilities for a healthier life [10]. Purchasing a particular touristic product or service involves several processes in the tourist's future purchase decision. The decision to travel is the result of an intersection of personal, social and commercial factors [16], namely motivations, self-image and satisfaction. Motivations are important forces that influence tourists' buying decisions [16] which makes its study crucial to understanding tourists' behaviors. Holistic tourism is considered a search for the inner self [5] conducted by high profile individuals that look for a balanced wellbeing and a healthier lifestyle [10]. Within this context, the self-image of these peculiar consumers becomes an important factor to be analyzed. Determining and evaluating the satisfaction level that holistic tourists have regarding destinations that offer holistic products is very important if we want to attract and satisfy this kind of consumers [17]. That's why describing holistic tourists, mainly their motivations, self-image and satisfaction when consuming holistic products is a main goal of this study.

### Motivation for holistic tourism

Motivation is defined as psychological needs and wants which include internal forces that trigger, direct, and integrate individuals' behaviors and actions [18-20]. Motivation analysis helps to understand why humans decide to do something, for how long and with what commitment they do it and thus has a strong impact on consumers' behavior [16]. It is also associated with psychological needs and desires [21,22] emotional and cognitive reasons [21] or internal and external reasons [22]. Motivations are the basis of all behavior [23] and traveling is included in these behaviors [24]. In fact, motivation is accepted as being the central concept in understanding tourists' behavior particularly when it comes to travel and destination choice process, trip planning and tourists' consumption. Tourism motivations influence tourists' buying process since all their decisions are based on fulfilling their needs and their desires [25]. Tourists travel for many and various reasons [26]. They travel according to their needs, hoping to achieve personal satisfaction [27]. Past research highlights the desire to escape from their daily life, resting and relaxing as the most important tourists' motivations [28], particularly since the stress and tension can be eased through tourist experiences [23]. On the other hand, getting away from work, community and even nature has become an extrinsic motivating factor in tourism [29], which contributes to seek new experiences and new environments [30]. Holistic tourism being the quest for the perfect balance between body, mind and soul, it provides an intense and existential experience that goes hand in hand with knowledge, novelty seeking, utilitarian and maximizing reward' motivations [30-35].

### Self-Image in holistic tourism

Consumer self-image is known to have a strong impact on consumers' behaviors and choices since "a product-user image interacts with the consumer's self-concept thus generating a subjective experience" [36]. The main focus is put on the image

projected by a particular product. The consumer is influenced to select a product through a certain image. The ideal self-image reflects how tourists want to be perceived by others, while the real image reflects the perception tourists have about themselves [36]. Previous research states that self-image may dictate certain behavior standards like the purchase of certain products since the main choices are made under the influence of a strong symbolism. It is accepted that self-image plays a leading role in influencing consumers' behavior, that it facilitates positive attitudes towards brands or products, influences the individual's choices, attitudes, brand quality perception, brand preferences and loyalty. Tourists pay for a whole range of services during their holiday and vacation experience. They base their judgments of the quality of the services on the satisfaction they got from the service value chain. Self-image embraces a variety of things which range from personal attributes to fantasies. They mainly seek a destination to express themselves [37]. In fact, past research suggests that the harmony existing between consumers' self-image and the image they held from a product can be an important factor in any initial purchase and long-term loyalty [38]. Consumers' self-congruence and functional consistency with the product they purchase are essential to understand a consumer's decisions and behaviors so that efficient marketing strategies can be developed in the end [39]. Tourism is considered a superior good, sometimes seen as a luxury product. Thus tourists' attitudes regarding a destination or any other tourism product are influenced by the correspondence they perceive between those and their own self-concept [39]. In other words, consumers attribute a certain meaning to a product, a brand or destination and they feel that this meaning can be transferred to themselves as they buy it [38]. Self-image is related to and can explain many aspects of the buying process and behavior, like satisfaction, positive attitudes towards products or destinations, perceived quality, preferences for a given product and loyalty to the product itself Chon (1992). Every tourist seeks a unique, extraordinary and memorable experience, mainly because it has an impact on the image they seek for themselves [37]. Holistic Tourism is recognized as a luxury product, directed to upper-class tourists. In this sense it is important to understand how this product purchase affects tourists' self-image. Self-image perception includes five factors: Expressive Value perceptions, Hedonic value perceptions, Cost value perceptions, Value Consciousness and Economic value [40-45].

### Satisfaction in holistic tourism

Customer satisfaction is considered "a business philosophy" [46] that place customers in the center. We have to create value, anticipate their expectations and satisfy their needs [47]. Consumer's satisfaction is defined as "the consumer's fulfillment response, a judgment that a product or service feature, or the product or service itself, provided a pleasurable level of consumption-related fulfillment" [48]. Customer's satisfaction is seen as a judgment one makes about the qualities of a service which guarantees a pleasure level related to consumption [49]. In tourism industry, customers' satisfaction is crucial. It is the result of the comparison between the image that tourists have about a given destination, brands and products and what they really experienced. It's based on the relation between the amount of money tourists spend and the benefits they get from their purchase [50]. Thus maximizing the tourists' satisfaction is very relevant to business since it influences the destination choice, the products and services acquired and future decisions which may include to return to or to recommend that destination. In fact, satisfaction or dissatisfaction are related to a cognitive or affective reaction towards

product consumption [51] and play a leading role in future purchase decisions [52,53]. The improvement of consumers' satisfaction is widely considered one of the most important factors in tourism destinations and firms' development and survival. In hotels and accommodation industry customers' satisfaction is very important to the success and performance of companies and ultimately to their profitability [46]. Since holistic tourism is a luxury product, tourists' satisfaction regarding the services provided is of great importance [54-56]. Tourism products are in fact packages of several products and services. Tourists assess all those components, namely the hotels Staff, the Holistic Program, Holistic Singularity, Functional Holistic Value, Touristic Holistic Value and Overall Satisfaction [55].

### Methodology

To the empirical research undertaken, a survey approach applied to tourists in Portuguese destinations with tourism holistic offer was used. A scale to measure the three main concepts: motivation, self-image perception and satisfaction was developed. An initial version of the instrument was developed using previously existing scales to measure motivation Beard and Ragheb et al. available in literature. These scales were then discussed with people capable of understanding the nature of the concepts to be measured. Then the original scales were translated into Portuguese and then the instrument was translated back into English in order to validate the scales. After revisions, a pre-test sample of 30 tourism students in natural areas was used in order to test the reliability of the scales (through Cronbach alpha). The pre-test results were used to further refine the questionnaire. 12 items were used for motivation, 5 items for self-image, and 16 to satisfaction. All the items were measured with a five points Likert scale ranging from 1 - Strongly disagree to 5 - Strongly agree. The final data was collected between November 2014 and January 2015. We used a convenience sample collected from four holistic destinations in Portugal. We contacted some resorts in the four destinations that were offering packages of holistic tourism which included the three components: counseling, therapies and body, mind and spirit treatments, Smith & Kelly (2006) so we could contact tourists that would accept answering our questionnaire. Tourists were then randomly selected in loco across two resorts in each destination: Gerês, Lisbon, Algarve and Azores. The questionnaires were self-administrated and allowed a final sample of 300 valid responses. The sample profile is displayed in Table 1. The sample is composed mostly by women; the most prevalent age group is set between 31 and 40 years old (53.3%), 23% were between 41 and 50 years old; 14% were people between 21 and 30 years old and 6.7%, from 51 to 60; the least represented group was formed by people older than 61 (3%). As far as the respondents' marital status was concerned 25.3% were single, 22.7% were couples without children; the highest percentage, 49%, was formed by couples with children, only 3% were divorced. On average, each tourist has 2 or 3 trip periods per year (48% and 33.3% respectively). When it comes to monthly income, the group with less than 1000€ earned was formed by 13.7% of the respondents; the most represented group - 55.3%- declared to have earned a monthly salary ranging from 1001 to 2000€ and 26.3% of the sample had an income between 2001 and 3000€ and 4.7%. Earned over 3001€. 47% of the entire sample population mentioned visiting one of the four places in analysis once a year. However, there is a small percentage that was visiting those areas for the first time (12%). The tourists from our sample travel especially with a group of friends (35%), with other couples without children (19%) and couples with children (17%), within a trip period of 7 days (31.80%). Each tourist travels especially for leisure or for health and

welfare reasons (38.3% and 16% respectively), while 49% prefer free trips and 17.7% travel with tour packages (Table 2).

### Results

Based on a univariate analysis of the data collected during the investigation, those are the results for the motivation, self-image and satisfaction factors in holistic tourism. Regarding the motivation in holistic tourism, the mean values are above 3.32 in all variables. The higher mean values are associated with the desire to escape the routine of work, with getting away from daily life stress, experiencing something new and with the authenticity of this new form of tourism (4.75, 4.72, 4.31 and 4.43 respectively). These answers confirm escaping, seeking balance and well-being as the main motivations for holistic tourism. Regarding the self-image in this new type of tourism (Table 3), the most highlighted dimensions were not only the value for money attributed to holistic products, but also the way the product reflected the consumer's self-image. The least important dimension was the social status achieved with this product and the relationship between this product and a wealth sensation, which is an interesting result. When analyzing satisfaction in holistic tourism, the levels were globally high (Table 4), with mean values around 4. However, the most satisfying dimensions were the staff's kindness and their willingness to help (4.44 and 4.29) and the choice of a holistic product because it is considered a product that improves life quality and one's health (4.12 and 4.04). Tourists showed they were satisfied with the holistic destinations in general (4.06) stating that they loved visiting the chosen holistic destination. In order to understand and analyze what kind of impact motivations may have on holistic tourists' self-image and satisfaction, some exploratory

Table 1: Socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents.

| Socio-demographic profile             | Frequency | Percentage |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Gender:                               |           |            |
| - Male                                | 87        | 29%        |
| - Female                              | 213       | 71%        |
| - Total                               | 300       | 100%       |
| Civil Status:                         |           |            |
| - Single                              | 76        | 25.3%      |
| - Couple without Children             | 68        | 22.7%      |
| - Couple with Children                | 147       | 49%        |
| - Widower/widow                       | 0         | 0%         |
| - Divorced                            | 9         | 3%         |
| - Total                               | 300       | 100%       |
| Age Group:                            |           |            |
| - Between 21 and 30                   | 42        | 14%        |
| - Between 31 and 40                   | 160       | 53.3%      |
| - Between 41 and 50                   | 69        | 23%        |
| - Between 51 and 60                   | 20        | 6.7%       |
| - More than 61                        | 9         | 3%         |
| - Total                               | 300       | 100%       |
| Income / Yield:                       |           |            |
| - Less than 1000 Euro                 | 41        | 13.7%      |
| - Between 1001 and 2000 Euro          | 166       | 55.3%      |
| - Between 2001 and 3000 Euro          | 79        | 26.3%      |
| - More than 3001 Euro                 | 14        | 4.7%       |
| - Total                               | 300       | 100%       |
| Professional Occupation:              |           |            |
| - Individual Entrepreneur             | 28        | 9.3%       |
| - Liberal Professional                | 40        | 13.3%      |
| - Medium / High Framework             | 71        | 23.7%      |
| - Commercial or administrative worker | 57        | 19%        |
| - Pensioner / Retired                 | 34        | 11.3%      |
| - Housewife / Unemployed              | 24        | 8%         |
| - Other                               | 10        | 3.4%       |
| - Total                               | 36        | 12%        |
|                                       | 300       | 100%       |

**Table 2:** Variables – Motivations in holistic tourism.

| Variables – Motivations  | Mean | Mode | Median | Standard Deviation | 1 <sup>st</sup> Quartile | 3 <sup>rd</sup> Quartile |
|--|------|------|--------|--------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Possibility to try and experience something different                      | 4.31 | 4    | 4      | 0.615              | 4                        | 5                        |
| Character and authenticity of this new form of tourism                     | 4.43 | 5    | 5      | 0.695              | 4                        | 5                        |
| Product Image  | 3.98 | 4    | 4      | 0.610              | 4                        | 4                        |
| Product attractiveness   | 4.06 | 4    | 4      | 0.608              | 4                        | 4                        |
| Desire to escape the routine of work                                       | 4.75 | 5    | 5      | 0.521              | 5                        | 5                        |
| Desire to escape daily life stress   | 4.72 | 5    | 5      | 0.513              | 4                        | 5                        |
| Appeal of the retreats   | 4.02 | 4    | 4      | 0.560              | 4                        | 4                        |
| Recreational programs associated with the product                          | 4.01 | 4    | 4      | 0.586              | 4                        | 4                        |
| Superstructures associated with the product                                | 3.84 | 4    | 4      | 0.668              | 4                        | 4                        |
| Weight Loss  | 3.54 | 4    | 4      | 1.027              | 3                        | 4                        |
| Recovering body energy   | 4.34 | 5    | 4      | 0.835              | 4                        | 5                        |
| Disease Prevention   | 3.66 | 4    | 4      | 0.924              | 3                        | 4                        |
| Contact with Nature  | 4.09 | 4    | 4      | 0.628              | 4                        | 4                        |
| Seeking unity and a sense of well-being                                    | 4.03 | 4    | 4      | 0.678              | 4                        | 4                        |
| Looking for authentic experiences in order to revitalize personal identity | 4.07 | 4    | 4      | 0.510              | 4                        | 4                        |
| Seeking to develop personal and spiritual aspects                          | 3.32 | 4    | 4      | 1.031              | 2                        | 4                        |
| Self-realization   | 3.94 | 4    | 4      | 0.654              | 4                        | 4                        |
| Purifying oneself  | 3.93 | 4    | 4      | 0.675              | 4                        | 4                        |
| Achieving balance between body, spirit and mind                            | 4.14 | 4    | 4      | 0.658              | 4                        | 4                        |
| Looking for relaxation and meditation sessions                             | 4.05 | 4    | 4      | 0.719              | 4                        | 4                        |

**Table 3:** Variables – Self-Image in holistic tourism.

| Variables – Self-Image   | Mean | Mode | Median | Standard Deviation | 1 <sup>st</sup> Quartile | 3 <sup>rd</sup> Quartile |
|--|------|------|--------|--------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| I often enjoy products that reflect my image                   | 4.15 | 4    | 4      | 0.600              | 4                        | 4                        |
| I want to enjoy unknown products before others do it           | 3.93 | 4    | 4      | 0.756              | 3                        | 4                        |
| It is important for me to enjoy pleasant holistic tourism      | 3.62 | 4    | 4      | 0.660              | 3                        | 4                        |
| I think that a high price equals high quality                  | 3.75 | 4    | 4      | 0.932              | 3                        | 4                        |
| I travel to have a higher social status                        | 2.77 | 2    | 3      | 1.152              | 2                        | 4                        |
| When I buy my trips, I want my money to be well spent          | 4.65 | 5    | 5      | 0.542              | 4                        | 5                        |
| I choose holistic tourism only when prices are more affordable | 3.53 | 4    | 4      | 0.619              | 3                        | 4                        |
| I think this type of travel is synonymous with wealth          | 3.25 | 3    | 3      | 0.709              | 3                        | 4                        |

factorial analyses were done. Once the factors were identified, the scales' reliability was examined through Cronbach's alphas [56-58]. As a result, some factors were eliminated. Those were not included in the measurement because they presented alphas that were less than .65. After this process, 28 of the initial items remained, divided into nine dimensions, five related with motivations, one with self-image and three with satisfaction (Table 5). It was possible to find five dimensions of motivation in holistic tourism:

- Relaxation and escape
- Health and body
- Holistic motivation
- Recreation and wellbeing
- New experience and authenticity

One dimension for self-image: holistic and wealth self-image, and three dimensions for satisfaction:

- Satisfaction with holistic experience to life quality and wellbeing;
- Satisfaction with the holistic destination
- Satisfaction with the holistic experience's uniqueness.

After this process a Pearson correlation analysis between the factors was developed (Table 6). Results show that all motivations

for holistic tourism correlate with the self-image dimension. The *recreation and wellbeing motivation* is the only one which doesn't correlate significantly with the *holistic and wealth self-image*. The *self-image dimension* correlates positively with the *satisfaction with holistic experience to life quality and wellbeing*, and with the *satisfaction with the holistic destination* but not with the *satisfaction with the holistic experience uniqueness*. On the other hand, there is a positive and significant correlation between *satisfaction with holistic experience to life quality and wellbeing* and with almost all the motivations found for holistic tourism but *health and body motivation*. The *satisfaction with the holistic destination* dimension doesn't show a significant correlation with the *recreation and wellbeing motivation*. The factor of *satisfaction with the holistic experience uniqueness* doesn't correlate significantly with any motivation for holistic tourism.

### Conclusions and Implications

Currently, tourists are more and more demanding and critical when dealing with the trips they make. The purchase of a particular product or tourist service requires complex processes that can have an impact on future purchasing behaviors. In fact, the decision to travel, the process of buying and consumption are the result of a combination of personal, social and commercial variables [1]. Holistic Tourism is a new alternative product in the tourism industry. It is based on the desire to escape from routine and everyday life stress, the search for unity and the feeling of self-wellbeing as well as the

**Table 4:** Variables – Satisfaction in holistic tourism.

| Variables – Satisfaction   | Mean | Mode | Median | Standard Deviation | 1 <sup>st</sup> Quartile | 3 <sup>rd</sup> Quartile |
|--|------|------|--------|--------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| The Staff was kind   | 4.44 | 4    | 4      | 0.536              | 4                        | 5                        |
| The Staff was willing to help  | 4.29 | 4    | 4      | 0.620              | 4                        | 5                        |
| The holistic programs were varied  | 3.92 | 4    | 4      | 0.436              | 4                        | 4                        |
| The holistic programs were well organized and well managed                       | 4.02 | 4    | 4      | 0.420              | 4                        | 4                        |
| The concept of this holistic program was unique                                  | 3.65 | 4    | 4      | 0.763              | 3                        | 4                        |
| I enjoyed an unique experience in this holistic destination                      | 3.74 | 4    | 4      | 0.754              | 4                        | 4                        |
| Doing holistic tourism was economical  | 2.96 | 2    | 3      | 1.052              | 2                        | 4                        |
| Considering this holistic destination cost, it provided a lot of benefits        | 3.92 | 4    | 4      | 0.555              | 4                        | 4                        |
| The value of this holistic destination exceeded travel expenses                  | 3.86 | 4    | 4      | 0.742              | 4                        | 4                        |
| Visiting this holistic place evoked energy for my living and relieved my tension | 3.99 | 4    | 4      | 0.514              | 4                        | 4                        |
| Holistic Tourism was good for my health  | 4.04 | 4    | 4      | 0.503              | 4                        | 4                        |
| Holistic Tourism improved my life quality  | 4.12 | 4    | 4      | 0.585              | 4                        | 4                        |
| I am satisfied with my decision to choose holistic tourism                       | 4.12 | 4    | 4      | 0.471              | 4                        | 4                        |
| On the whole, I am happy with this holistic destination                          | 4.06 | 4    | 4      | 0.501              | 4                        | 4                        |
| Overall, I loved visiting this holistic destination                              | 4.02 | 4    | 4      | 0.526              | 4                        | 4                        |
| I enjoy and am passionate about this holistic destination                        | 3.93 | 4    | 4      | 0.510              | 4                        | 4                        |

**Table 5:** Factors, variables and Cronbach's Alpha.

| Factors   | Variables   | Cronbach's Alpha |
|---|---|------------------|
| I. Relaxation and escape motivation   | Desire to escape the routine of work.<br>Desire to escape everyday life stress.<br>Recovery of body energy.   | 0.805            |
| II. Health and body motivation  | Disease Prevention.<br>Weight Loss.   | 0.877            |
| III. Holistic motivation  | Self-realization.<br>Purifying oneself.<br>Achieving balance between body, spirit and mind.<br>Looking for relaxation and meditation sessions.  | 0.846            |
| IV. Recreation and wellbeing motivation   | Recreational programs associated with the product.<br>Superstructures associated with the product.<br>Contact with Nature.<br>Seeking unity and a sense of well-being.  | 0.807            |
| V. Motivation for new experience and authenticity                               | Possibility to try and experience something different.<br>Character and authenticity of this new form of tourism.   | 0.711            |
| VI. Holistic and wealth self-image  | It is important for me to enjoy pleasant holistic tourism.<br>I choose holistic tourism only when prices are more affordable.<br>I think that enjoying this type of travel is synonymous with wealth.   | 0.653            |
| VII. Satisfaction with holistic experience regarding life quality and wellbeing | Considering this holistic destination cost, it provided a lot of benefits.<br>Visiting this holistic place evoked energy for my living and relieved my tension.<br>Holistic Tourism was good for my health.<br>Holistic Tourism improved my life quality.<br>I am satisfied with my decision to go on holistic tourism. | 0.880            |
| VIII. Satisfaction with the holistic destination                                | On the whole, I am happy with this holistic destination.<br>Overall, I loved visiting this holistic destination.<br>I enjoy and am passionate about this holistic destination.  | 0.887            |
| IX. Satisfaction with the holistic experience uniqueness                        | The concept of this holistic program was unique.<br>I enjoyed an unique experience in this holistic destination.  | 0.936            |

search for authentic experiences in order to revitalize the individuals' personal identity [6]. By practicing and living a holistic experience, tourists seek to achieve a balance between body, spirit and mind, looking for their self-fulfillment, relaxation and meditation. The main goal of this study is to deepen the study of holistic tourism due to the lack of studies in this specific area. We analyzed the profile of tourists who choose holistic tourism, namely their motivations, self-image and satisfaction. As far as holistic market characterization is concerned it was possible to prove that the main motivations for choosing this type of tourism are the desire to escape the routine of work, to get away from everyday life stress, to experience something new, and the authenticity of this new form of tourism. All these conclusions confirm that the main motivations for holistic tourism

are the desire to escape, achieving balance and well-being [3,14]. The most highlighted dimensions of self-image - when practicing holistic tourism - were the value for money attributed to holistic products and the product reflecting tourists' self-image. These results are in consonance with other studies [37-39]. Due to the high profile of these tourists, their satisfaction levels were analyzed [56-59]. The levels were globally high but holistic tourists were more satisfied with the staff's kindness and willingness to help and the choice of the holistic product itself because it is considered a product that improves life quality and is good for people's health. Tourists also showed their satisfaction with the holistic destinations in general stating that they loved visiting those destinations. These are very important insights for managers, especially because holistic tourists are satisfied with the

**Table 6:** Factor Pearson Correlations.

|      | Relaxation and escape motivation (I) | Health and body motivation (II) | Holistic Motivation (III) | Recreation and wellbeing motivation (IV) | Motivation for new experience and authenticity (V) | Holistic and wealth self-image (VI) | Holistic satisfaction with life quality and wellbeing (VII) | Satisfaction with the holistic destination (VIII) | Satisfaction with the holistic uniqueness (IX) |
|------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------|--|--|-------------------------------------|---|---|--|
| I    | 1                                    |                                 |                           |  |  |                                     |   |   |  |
| II   | 0.370**                              | 1                               |                           |  |  |                                     |   |   |  |
| III  | 0.396**                              | 0.347**                         | 1                         |  |  |                                     |   |   |  |
| IV   | 0.523**                              | 0.304**                         | 0.365**                   | 1  |  |                                     |   |   |  |
| V    | 0.367**                              | 0.455**                         | 0.136                     | 0.258**                                  | 1  |                                     |   |   |  |
| VI   | 0.200*                               | 0.148                           | 0.447**                   | 0.176                                    | 0.250*   | 1                                   |   |   |  |
| VII  | 0.425**                              | 0.150                           | 0.517**                   | 0.249*                                   | 0.021  | 0.376**                             | 1   |   |  |
| VIII | 0.276**                              | 0.209*                          | 0.456**                   | 0.136                                    | 0.255*   | 0.273**                             | 0.602**   | 1   |  |
| IX   | 0.053                                | 0.066                           | 0.080                     | 0.090                                    | -0.184   | 0.013                               | 0.227*  | 0.171   | 1  |

This positive relationship indicates that, currently, more and more people seek new alternatives for tourism or to travel. They mainly desire to recover their energy levels and enjoy some quality time and rest.

choice of this kind of product. They are aware of its importance to their life and health quality as showed in previous research [8,10,11]. The human aspect of service providers was highlighted with the emphasize put on the staff's behavior. In this study the connections between holistic tourists' motivations; self-image and satisfaction levels were also analyzed. It was possible to conclude that there is a generic relationship between motivations, holistic and wealth self-image and holistic tourists' satisfaction. The holistic motivation is related with the relaxation and escape motivation, health and body motivation, with the holistic and wealth self-image, with the holistic satisfaction to get life quality and wellbeing and finally with the satisfaction with the holistic destination. This is a very interesting result, since it confirms previous studies that connect holistic tourism to the triangle formed by body, mind and wellbeing in a destination that offers quality [7,10,11]. However, it was not possible to prove the existence of a relationship between satisfaction with the holistic experience uniqueness and motivation for new experience and authenticity. This probably occurs because this product is too exclusive and differentiated from the other tourism products. This study allowed us to help filling a literature and research gap regarding a very prospective tourism product by analyzing the main characteristics of holistic tourists, specially their profile, motivations, self-image and satisfaction. Based on the results it is possible to point out some implications for firms and destination managers whose aim is to explore this luxury market. Therefore, a strategy for tourism destinations, attractions and accommodation structures depends on how and why tourists connect with products and destinations. Managers of holistic destination hotels and resorts that want to target these tourists should not only find strategies that will increase their offer for relaxation, escape, uniqueness and authenticity, but also positioning their offer focusing on the high value for money. These results can also provide some direction on how to better define an information-oriented business strategy. By identifying tourists' main motivations for holistic tourism, it becomes possible to define better marketing strategies to target this specific market segment and create differentiated strategies and to improve their implementation. It's fundamental for resorts and spas that want to explore this market to be aware of tourists' expectations so they can offer better options for their life and health quality and so that their staff might adopt the best possible behavior. Hotels, resorts and destination managers that want to target holistic tourists should build an offer that connects all these dimensions: body, mind and wellbeing; and base their main image and promotion on those components. Last but not least, the four Portuguese destinations where this study was made - Gerês, Lisbon,

Algarve and Azores should improve their positioning as holistic destinations since tourists showed high levels of satisfaction with those destinations for holistic tourism practice [59-62].

### Limitations and Further Research

There are some study limitations to be considered. The first limitation is that the final instrument (i.e. the questionnaire) may have created common method variance that could have inflated construct relationships. This could have been particularly threatening, if the respondents had been aware of the conceptual framework. However, they were not told the specific purpose of the study, and all the construct items were separated and mixed so that no respondent should be able to detect which items were affecting which factors. On the other hand, the study might omit and therefore not consider other eventually existing relevant motivations, self-image and satisfaction' dimensions regarding holistic tourism. Another limitation is related with the study setting; the data was gathered in four Portuguese destinations, which may limit the results' generalizability. To establish the data generalizability, it is suggested that data should be gathered in other potential holistic tourism destinations. Therefore, future research is encouraged in order to analyze new items and factors applicable to the same or other similar research settings and that other variables which might be related with the present constructs (lifestyles, place-attachment and/or involvement) can be taken into account. Taking the correlation results into account it could be interesting in future studies to analyze the causality between motivations and self-image and satisfaction. The analysis of satisfaction with the holistic experience uniqueness and with other motivations and personal image factors is also suggested. On the other hand developing a structural equation modeling, analyzing and studying the relationship between motivation, self-image and satisfaction is also suggested, particularly causal models that could explain the impact of motivations and self-image on the holistic tourists' satisfaction.

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