

Can Volunteer Tourism be a Sub-Segment of Wellness Tourism?

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Abstract: Wellness tourism is a segment of tourism that has been widely studied, including the motivations that undertake the trip. Throughout the literature review it was possible to observe that the motivations that are the origin of this type of tourism are diverse, highlighting, the achievement of physical and mental well-being, self-development and personal reward, relaxation and escape, exploration and reflection, and enjoyment of a new experience. Smith and Kelly, 2006 approach the concept from a broader perspective, encompassing several segments: new age tourism, nature tourism, adventure tourism, yoga tourism, spiritual and religious tourism, and voluntary tourism. Also, Ali-Knight (2009) and GWI (2018) consider voluntary tourism an integral segment of wellness tourism as well as thermal tourism, spa tourism, nature tourism, retreat tourism, and social tourism. In addition to the fact that the authors mentioned above consider voluntary tourism a sub-segment of wellness tourism, a study by Coghlan (2015) found, through a project of travel experience in the context of volunteering, in which various social activities were carried out, which can achieve a beneficial health outcome, in addition to an improvement in the well-being and mental health of participants. However, throughout the literature review, it was found that studies addressing the motivations of volunteer tourists are scarce, and none are known to address the relationship between the motivations of wellness tourists and volunteer tourists. In order to fill this gap, a qualitative approach was developed based on semi-structured interviews with individuals who have travelled in the field of voluntary tourism. Thus, we were able to compare the motivations recognized in these interviews with those verified in the literature review in the field of wellness tourism, and to realize that, from an altruistic perspective, the motivations of tourists from both segments are coincident. This finding allows us to consider that, from the perspective of motivations, voluntary tourism can comprise one of the sub-segments of wellness tourism. This study will contribute to increase knowledge about the motivations of wellness and voluntary tourism and understand the similarities between these types of tourism.

Keywords: volunteer tourism, wellness tourism, tourism motivations

1. Introduction

Wellness tourism is a segment of tourism that exhibits high growth rates, and in 2017 this rate was almost double, 6.5% (GWI, 2018) of the growth rate of global tourism. This segment of tourism comprises other segments more or less developed and with a reflection on the volume of visitors. Thus, within wellness tourism we find, among others, spa tourism, nature tourism, spiritual tourism, cultural tourism, retreat tourism (Diekmann and McCabe, 2016; Dini and Pencarelli, 2021). We easily deduce that the main and constant objective to all the tourism typologies mentioned is to achieve well-being, and that the motivations that aim to achieve that well-being are transversal to the same typologies: relaxation, self-exploration (personal development), authentic experience, rest, escape, only referring to the most verified in the literature review.

Despite the aforementioned typologies being part of wellness tourism, a study developed by Coghlan (2015) also brings to the discussion the possibility that voluntary tourism can integrate the typology of wellness tourism. Such consideration is due to the fact that this study suggested that there may be very positive effects on the well-being of individuals as a result of the practice of charitable actions

Taking as a starting point the results of the study by Coghlan (2015) - in which the author assumes that, if charitable activities result in feelings of well-being for the individuals who participate in these activities, so too does voluntary tourism, which is based on charitable activities, will translate into feelings of well-being in its participants - it was decided to investigate, from the perspective of motivations, the possibility that voluntary tourism could integrate well-being tourism.

In this way, we intend to assess the possibility that the motivations of voluntary tourism tourists are really similar to those of wellness tourism tourists, and, from this perspective, it can be considered that voluntary tourism is part of wellness tourism. In this follow-up, a qualitative methodology was adopted, through the realization of seven semi-structured interviews with Portuguese volunteer tourists who carried out their volunteer activities on the African and Asian continent, in the last 2 years and 8 months.

We begin the paper with a review of the literature on the most relevant concepts, as well as the motivations of wellness tourists. Then, the research methodology is presented, and the results are analysed. Finally, the most relevant conclusions, limitations of the study and recommendations for future research are presented.

2. Conceptual framework of wellness tourism

Wellness tourism is a segment that has significantly contributed to the growth of the tourism industry (Kim, Chiang and Tang, 2017).

Concerns about health and well-being have assumed great importance in the ranking of tourist concerns. Increasingly, individuals seek to enjoy and imbue themselves with higher levels of well-being in their daily lives, and this desire has also been materialized through travel, where the option for wellness products and services gain prominence (GWI, 2017).

In this sense, the GWI (2017) defines wellness tourism as a trip that is undertaken with the objective of maintaining or improving the individual's well-being. The same entity mentioned, in 2018, that wellness tourism is "The active pursuit of activities, choices and lifestyles that lead to a state of holistic health" (GWI, 2018:4).

Kim, Chiang and Tang (2017) and Karn and Swain (2017) consider that the unsettling daily lives in which restlessness, confusion, pressure and, often, frustration at work, as well as agitation in the family's daily life prevail, or even the vicissitudes of social contacts, among others (Dwyer, Edwards, Mistilis, Roman and Scott, 2009; Heung and Kucukusta, 2013), lead individuals to yearn for breaks where moments of tranquillity and relaxation take on a special role. In addition, the holistic way in which individuals began to integrate moments of well-being in their lives has extended to tourism activities. Thus, for the realization of these moments, individuals have resorted to the vast offer of products and services provided by the tourist activity in the well-being segment (Arpasi, 2018). In the same sense, Karn and Swain (2017) and Silva and Umbelino (2017) consider relevant the frequency with which, given a wide range of travel possibilities, individuals decide for those trips that provide them with moments of relaxation and serenity and, they even offer them techniques and therapies for physical and mental rejuvenation.

3. The motivations of wellness tourists

The growing and fast trend of the wellness tourism segment has led many researchers to focus on the various aspects of the spectrum of this tourism typology, such as the concepts that are at the genesis of wellness, its main practices and activities, as well as the characteristics and motivations of individuals who participate in this tourism typology. Table 1 illustrates the various studies that have been developed around these themes, and, specifically, shows the main motivations of health and well-being tourists.

Thus, and after analysing the studies presented in the table, we realized that the motivations for novelty, contact with nature, well-being with the family, relaxation, socialization, cultural learning, gastronomy, relaxation, the opportunity to meditating, living new experiences, self-exploration, development, rest, escape and entertainment, are the ones that deserved the most attention from the respondents of the various investigations carried out in this area.

Table 1: The motivations of wellness tourism

Article title	Authors	Main motivations observed
Effect of Health and Wellness Values on Festival Visit Motivation	Yoo, Lee and Lee (2015)	The objective of the article was to understand the motivations that lead travellers to visit a tourist destination due to a festival, and to undertake an effective tourism marketing strategy that would be a catalyst to attract festival participants. The study included field research at the Goomeri Pumpkin Festival, a typical Australian festival where participants can enjoy nature, culture, traditions, and local products, which can be enjoyed and appreciated in the various events that take place during the festival. The study focused on establishing a relationship between the perception of the level of health and well-being and the motivation that these variables give to the desire to participate in the festival. The results pointed to high levels in the health and well-being variable, and high levels in the items: novelty, contact

Article title	Authors	Main motivations observed
		with nature, well-being with the family, relaxation, socialization, cultural learning, and gastronomy.
Analysis of the determinants on the predisposition to visit a wellness tourism destination. Typologies of potential tourists	De la Hoz and Leiva (2016)	<p>This study aimed to understand the effect that the familiarity, motivation, and image variables have on the intention to visit a destination. The study also aimed to find out if tourists could be segmented by their psychological characteristics, namely, by motivations.</p> <p>Regarding the motivation variable, the study concluded that what most motivated tourists to choose the destination in question was relaxation. However, other variables obtained an above average vote, such as: health awareness, getting physical therapy sessions, socializing, enjoying recreational activities, obtaining improvements in quality of life, the reduced price of the activities, the attractiveness of the activities, and the opportunity to meditate.</p>
Visitor Motivational Factors and Level of Satisfaction in Wellness Tourism South Korea	Lim, Kim and Lee (2016)	<p>This study focuses on a tourist attraction for recreation and wellness in South Korea. The study aimed to analyse the differences between the motivations of wellness tourists and also to understand the differences in satisfaction among tourists who visit for the first time and those who are revisiting the destination. Among the 573 respondents, 211 (36.8%) were repeat visitors, and 362 (63.2%) were visiting the place for the first time. From the study, the following motivations for the first-time visitor can be concluded: "relaxation and rest", "new experience", "self-exploration" and "accessibility". Regarding the motivations for the visitor who was revisiting the place, the following motivations were obtained: the tours and the experience; the convenience for walking; self-exploration; accessibility; and on-site comfort.</p>
Spa-goers' Characteristics, Motivations, Preferences and Perceptions: Evidence from Elounda, Crete.	Trihas and Konstantarou (2016)	<p>This study aimed to identify and analyse the characteristics, motivations, preferences, and perceptions of spa users, to better understand the characteristics and expectations of a tourist looking for this type of spa tourism and wellness centre, thus providing a better understanding of the main characteristics of this type of behaviour and tourist expectations in a spa and wellness centre. It is concluded that the main reasons that lead tourists to visit a spa are: to relieve stress, relax, perform treatments that provide improvements in physical health, and other treatments in the field of beauty and aesthetics.</p>
Indulgence or therapy? Exploring the characteristics, motivations, and experiences of hot springs bathers in Victoria, Australia	Clark-Kennedy and Cohen (2017).	<p>This study intended, through analysis that involved descriptive statistics, to understand the motivations and experiences that lead users to spas in Australia. The most verified reasons that lead users to frequent the spas were: the attempt to remedy harmful behaviours for health, relaxation, escape from the tension and routine of everyday life, connection with nature and having some rest.</p>
Investigating wellness tourists' motivation engagement and loyalty in search of the missing link	Kim, Chiang and Tang, (2017)	<p>The objective of this study was to verify the tourists' motivation in the wellness tourism segment, and to understand how these motivations are related to the involvement and loyalty to the tourist destination. Four factors were studied to assess motivation - prestige and luxury; novelty and knowledge; self-development; relaxation and escape. The study confirmed the impact of tourists' motivation on engagement, which consequently leads to loyalty.</p> <p>The study concluded that wellness tourists seek novelty and aim to increase their levels of knowledge. It was also shown that tourists like activities related to relaxation and escape, so yoga and spa activities should be offered. The most important motivation for wellness tourism is self-development to achieve personal growth or learning experiences.</p>

Article title	Authors	Main motivations observed
Clustering of Health and Wellness Tourists Based on Tourism Motivation	Ting et al. (2021)	<p>The aim of this study was to segment health and wellness tourists according to their motivations.</p> <p>According to motivations, health and wellness tourists can be divided into the following push motives: knowledge and experience, social and health, and exploration and reflection. With regard to pull motives, health and wellness tourists can be divided into food and cultural activities, support and information facilities, natural and interpersonal environment.</p> <p>It can also be seen that health and well-being tourists can be divided into four types: those who seek trips to increase their knowledge and their health and well-being; those who prefer to enjoy the services and facilities; those who enjoy exploration and reflection activities; and those who enjoy travel nearby.</p> <p>Through this study it was also possible to conclude that health and well-being tourism also includes health and well-being provided by the sun, health and well-being provided by the forest, and health and well-being provided by the spring season.</p>
Travel Motivations as Criteria in the Wellness Tourism Market Segmentation Process	Damijanić (2021)	<p>This article aimed to segment wellness tourism tourists according to their travel motivations.</p> <p>The study concludes that motivations related to interest in learning new things, relaxation and reward are all very important for wellness tourists in general. It was also possible to determine nine motivations from the scope of Dann (1981), three of which were push motivations and six were pull motivations. Regarding the first classification, it was obtained - health trend, relaxation, reward, and novelty. On the side of pull motivations, the following motivations were found basic well-being, intangible well-being, and extra well-being as well as: cultural and natural heritage, entertainment, recreation, and landscape.</p>

4. Concept of volunteer tourism

Voluntary tourism consists of travellers choosing destinations whose residents need their help, more or less, specialized, such as educational support, medical assistance, construction, environmental conservation, disaster relief (Callanan and Thomas, 2005; Guttentag, 2009) and historic restoration (Wearing and McGehee, 2013).

Volunteer tourism is a positive transfer of cultural, educational, and scientific benefits between host communities and participants (Sin, 2009; McGehee, 2014). Still, Hallmann and Zehrer (2016) define volunteer tourism as an activity where volunteers exchange their time, skills, and dynamism for an experience. In this sense, the genesis of volunteer tourism lies in the possibility that tourists can, while traveling, experience authentic situations and feel good about themselves for being able to help resident populations (Wong, Newton and Newton, 2014).

From a less altruistic perspective Han et al. (2019) mention that voluntary tourism is commonly recognized as being practiced by people who travel to other countries with the aim of carrying out activities that give them condescension to their own mistakes and shortcomings, in addition to allowing them to broaden their cultural and social knowledge. In this sense, Wong, Newton and Newton (2014) consider voluntary tourism as an alternative way of doing tourism.

Among the various types of alternative tourism that have gained interest and developed over the years, Wearing and McGehee (2013) and Germann Molz (2016) consider that voluntary tourism is the fastest growing alternative form of tourism.

Volunteer tourism has assumed extreme importance for tourism over the years and this is reflected in the amount of studies that have been carried out in this area (Kim and Cuskelly, 2017). Magrinos, Kostopoulos and Powers (2021) corroborate what was mentioned by the previous authors when they mention that studies on voluntary tourism have proliferated for the last 20 years.

According to Stainton (2016), initially, voluntary tourism was considered a very residual segment of tourism, however, currently voluntary tourism is on the same level as other types of tourism, and has come to comprise

other smaller segments, such as tourism. medical volunteer, social volunteer tourism, environmental volunteer tourism, among others with a narrower and more specific scope.

5. Research methodology

The main objective of this study is to understand in a holistic and incisive way the motivations of the participants in voluntary tourism. This purpose leads us to opt for a qualitative approach using an interpretive paradigm, where we can understand the behaviour and, specifically, what makes the interviewees participate in these tourism trips. This option was validated by the conclusions of Pyke et al. (2016), who argue that the qualitative approach can contribute to a better understanding of the tourist experience in the context of wellness tourism.

7 interviews were carried out with known people, taking into account, however, that there was some diversity in terms of the scope of the volunteer activities carried out. Thus, from this point of view, the activities developed ranged from cooperation and technical assistance activities; training of trainers; building houses for the community; integration of the population in volunteer projects; ocean cleanup activities in the course of the oil spill; and non-formal teacher training.

Interviewee 1 (Int 1) is 53 years old and is a social policy technician; interviewee 2 (Int 2) is 39 years old and holds a PhD scholarship; interviewee 3 (Int 3) is 45 years old and is a statutory auditor; interviewee 4 (Int 4) is 42 years old and manages development cooperation projects; interviewee 5 (Int 5) is 55 years old and is a primary school teacher; interviewee 6 (Int 6) is 38 years old and is a secondary school teacher, and interviewee 7 (Int 7), is 71 years old and, although retired, was a primary school teacher.

The interviews were carried out in January 2022, through the zoom platform, and lasted between 15 and 25 minutes.

The interviews started with a question regarding the demographic data of the interviewees and then, they were asked which types of tourism their trips fit into. Within the scope of voluntary tourism, they were asked to describe the voluntary trips they had already taken, and the activities carried out during these trips. Finally, they were asked to share the motivations that led them to choose this type of tourism, and to describe the changes that took place in their behaviour or in their way of being, and to highlight the feelings of well-being, due to these trips.

Throughout the literature review, we exposed the main motivations of wellness tourists, reported in recent studies. Next, we will analyse the interviews with volunteer tourists, corroborate their content with the motivations of voluntary tourism found in the literature review, while we match each of the motivations of wellness tourism to the motivations of volunteer tourists, verified in the interviews. In this sense, the greater the correspondence between the motivations of wellness tourists, already verified - relaxation, self-exploration, socializing, cultural learning, authentic experience, escape, novelty, rest and meditate - and the responses of the motivations of volunteer tourists, the greater the degree of certainty with which we can say that voluntary tourism can be integrated into wellness tourism, from the perspective of motivations.

6. Results

In order to determine the motivations of volunteer tourists, Proyrungroj (2020) made an analogy with Dann's push and pull motives, where he matched the push factors to the intangible desires of tourists, and the pull factors to the tangible characteristics of tourist activities and the destination itself. We found that among the main motivations obtained in this study, the personal development and growth that refers to the motivation of self-exploration verified in the literature review of the motivations of wellness tourists, is one of the most evident reasons in the interviews with the volunteers. Thus, and in relation to this motivation, Int 2 mentioned that:

Living in a different country makes us (...), reflect on ourselves, on our limitations and get to know ourselves better. After the trips I've taken, I try to better understand the attitudes of emigrants and not make such hasty judgments as I used to.

Int 3 said: "In the end, there is always a process of internal growth, but this type of travel is not always pleasant, but those who make them know what they are going for"; Int 1 said: "these were remarkable trips that raised awareness of change in areas such as consumption, nature preservation and international cooperation"; Int 5

said: "...I also put myself to the test and personally value myself, in being able to get out of my comfort zone and overcome the obstacles inherent to these trips"; Int 4 said:

They made me a much more impatient person with some things and people, but much more tolerant with some situations", and "by being aware of voluntary tourism, it also makes me develop different sensations and perceptions, more aware that what I do is not meant to change the world, but to change myself

Int 6 mentioned "I value the life I have more and whenever I can contribute to helping others I feel more fulfilled".

Another motivation that stood out in the study by Proyrungroj (2020) was to feel immersive in the local culture. This motivation was also verified in the studies by O'Halloran (2020) and Proyrungroj (2021). In turn, the interviewees from volunteer tourism also found themselves in this motivation. In this context, Int 2 mentioned that: "Living in a different country makes us confront a history, a culture different from ours". And yet "in every trip there is a desire to know other countries, other cultures and understand them better" Int 1 mentioned: "these trips contributed to (...) the (reciprocal) sharing of cultures and knowledge"; Int 7 mentioned: "Getting to know new cultures and taking my own"; Int 4 mentioned: "knowing other cultures" and "it is a way of having contact with other cultures and thus learning more about them"; and Int 6 said:

All visits leave something, enrich and, in some way, change our way of seeing and/or being in the world. These changes are not always immediate or evident, but they are part of our sociocultural development.

Authentic experience motivation was also verified in the study by Proyrungroj (2020). Likewise, Kontogeorgopoulos (2017) adds that the main motive of the volunteer tourist is to have an authentic travel experience. On the other hand, Magrizos, Kostopoulos and Powers (2021) consider that volunteer tourists are looking for an extraordinary experience where aspects related to personal growth and self-fulfillment are achieved. Regarding this motivation, our interviewee Int 4 mentioned: "realizing how other people live in other parts of the world, makes me leave my "backyard" and realize that there is much more world beyond it."; and Int 6 said: "Whenever we come into contact with something new, we are enriched. There is at least one more perspective to see reality."

A final motivation is related to socialization, or making new friends and helping others, as found by Proyrungroj (2020), and also observed by O'Halloran (2020) and Proyrungroj (2021). In this context, Int 5 mentioned that the trips he made as part of volunteering made him "appreciate more human relationships and the spirit of mutual help"; Int 1 said: "I intend to continue to carry out voluntary tourism trips as they are related to a set of values that I intend to preserve: solidarity, between help, cooperation"; Int 7 mentioned: "willingness to help"; and Int 6 mentioned that: "it will make me feel that I can make a difference in someone's life and obviously this difference will be reflected in my life as well".

Finally, it is important to analyse the main motivation of wellness tourism – the attainment of physical and mental well-being – which translates into the set of positive results obtained in achieving the more specific motivations mentioned above. Thus, and in addition to the name of the typology itself highlighting the purpose of those who participate in the activities included in it, through the studies reviewed in this investigation - Yoo, Lee and Lee (2015); Correa and Leiva (2016); Lim, Kim and Lee (2016), Trihas and Konstantarou (2016); Clark-Kennedy and Cohen (2017); Kim, Chiang and Tang, (2017); Tinge et al. (2021); Damijanić (2021), it is also possible to see that the main motivation - obtaining well-being - is explicitly found in all studies.

Likewise, the motivation – obtaining well-being – was found in the testimonies of some volunteer tourists. In this regard, Int 4 said: "By being aware of voluntary tourism, it also makes me develop different sensations and perceptions, more aware that what I do is not meant to change the world, but to change myself"; Int 6 mentioned: "they have contributed to my personal well-being as I am more attentive to the different sociocultural realities inside and outside our country". Int 7 said: "I intend to continue, yes! Because it makes me happy to know that I can help People who weren't as lucky as I was...". Still, Int 5 said:

All these trips contributed to my personal well-being, especially emotionally, because when I was surprised by such disparate realities of the country in which we live and I adapted to the environment, customs and traditions and, in addition, being able to convey empathy, knowledge and security to all trainees was, without a doubt, a pleasant overcoming.

7. Conclusion

Wellness tourism is a tourism typology that comprises many tourism segments; adventure tourism, nature tourism, thermal tourism, retreat tourism (Diekmann and McCabe, 2016; GWI, 2018; Dini and Pencarelli, 2021).

As the name itself indicates, the main motivation of tourists who choose this type of tourism is to obtain physical and mental well-being. However, this main motivation is achieved by carrying out other more specific motivations, for example: relaxation, personal development, getting to know new cultures, socializing, among others.

Voluntary tourism has registered very high growth rates in the last two decades. What used to be a residual segment of tourism, now assumes the category of general typology, and has come to include other sub-segments, for example: voluntary medical tourism, voluntary social tourism and environmental tourism. This consistency gave it notoriety, which is substantiated in the large number of studies that have been developed in this area, of which we highlight those that studied the motivations of volunteer tourists. The similarities found by Coghlan (2015) between the motivations of voluntary tourism and wellness tourism, led us to analyse the motivations of voluntary tourism in the literature review and through interviews with volunteer tourists. Following these interviews, we were able to verify the similarity between some motivations of wellness tourism and voluntary tourism, namely: self-exploration, personal development and growth, immersion in the local culture, experiencing an authentic and extraordinary experience. , socialize and help others.

This finding of common motivations for both types of tourism make it evident how close the typologies are, from the perspective of motivations, leading us, therefore, to conclude that voluntary tourism can be integrated into wellness tourism. A sample that extended over a wider geographic space and, specifically, that acted in more critical scenarios of the human condition, would bring to the discussion greater representativeness and accuracy of the data and, consequently, would enrich the investigation. These results reflect revelations that may be representative for those responsible for marketing companies and other organizations that supply wellness products and services, which, by being aware of the similarities between the motivations of both typologies, will be able to develop marketing actions for this "new" market segment that participates in voluntary tourism, but due to common motivations, may become interested in and participate in wellness tourism.

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