

Positive Psychology, Well-Being, and Mindfulness: A Successful Partnership Towards the Development of Meaningful Tourist Experiences

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ABSTRACT

Tourism is going through a very challenging phase due to the current pandemic situation. In this context, psychology and tourism are a successful partnership to develop meaningful experiences considering tourists' needs, desires, and expectations. This interconnection is observed through the application of positive psychology in the context of meaningful tourist experiences. This approach comprises adequate indicators to explore the tourism field from the perspective of individuals' well-being. Positive psychology, positive tourism, well-being, and mindfulness constitute the theoretical foundations of this article, which intends to understand how they are intertwined to fulfil one goal: developing meaningful tourist experiences. This article offers a theoretical reflection on the connections between the referred theoretical foundations. In so doing, it proposes a preliminary diagram illustrating the theoretical links observed in literature, which acts as a first step towards the design of a systematic literature review on the antecedents and outcomes of meaningful tourist experiences.

KEYWORDS

Meaningful Experiences, Positive Psychology, Well-Being, Mindfulness, Positive Tourism.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 02 September 2021 Accepted 03 January 2022

1. Introduction

Tourism is going through a very challenging time in light of the psychological impact of the worldwide coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, which began in 2019. Wang and colleagues (2020) recognised that in China the psychological impacts were evaluated as moderate or severe (53.8%), characterised by intense anxiety symptoms (28.8%) and moderate to extreme stress levels (8.1%). A Portuguese study (Agência Lusa, 2020) concluded that 24.0% of the sample reported anxiety and sadness, and 82.0% felt at least one adverse mental health effect. It is imperative to focus on what makes life worth living by understanding what makes experiences meaningful.

This article intends to further explore a new path for tourism that acknowledges the potential of positive psychology, well-being, positive tourism, and mindfulness with respect to the development of tourist experiences that are meaningful and thus contributes to the reflection on this research topic. This theoretical discussion represents a first step towards the design of a systematic literature review on the antecedents and outcomes of meaningful tourist experiences. Some studies emphasise the connection between positive psychology and well-being in a tourism context (e.g. Filep, 2016; Filep & Laing, 2019; Garcês et al., 2018; Vada et al., 2020; Hao & Xiao, 2021). However, the literature suggests that more is needed to help to understand how stakeholders perceive a tourist experience as meaningful, in terms of both their triggers (antecedents) and their results in the short, medium, and long term (outcomes) (e.g. Garcês et al., 2018; Chen & Yoon, 2019). Also, the literature focuses on the immediate well-being results of the experiences (hedonic perspective) (see Nawijn, 2015; Voigt, 2017; Filep & Laing, 2019; Hao & Xiao, 2021; Allen et al., 2021), leaving behind the long-term results that have a substantial impact on individuals' lives. Finally, some research has shown the potential of mindfulness to create meaningful tourist experiences (e.g. Dutt & Ninov, 2016; Chen et al., 2017; Park et al., 2019; Tiberghien et al., 2020; Allen et al., 2021). Yet, research focused on the relationships between the theoretical approaches mentioned above is still scarce.

The article is organised into three main chapters. Chapter two offers the literature review, where the concepts of meaningful tourist experiences, positive psychology, positive tourism, well-being, and mindfulness will be explored. Chapter three explores the interrelated aspects between the analysed theoretical concepts that contribute to the promotion of meaningful tourist experiences, the instruments already developed to assess them, and the research gaps and future directions. The final chapter includes the theoretical and managerial implications and the main conclusions. Some future research directions are discussed, according to the main gaps found.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Meaningful Tourist Experiences

Meaningful experiences are related to the interpretation, narration, and transformation of individuals' lives based on the activities, events, and environments in which people engage (Packer & Gill, 2017) and are characterised by the level of attraction and impact on individuals' attention. They represent the sum of the experience, its evaluation, and all the contextual and environmental contingencies involving emotions and knowledge. Therefore, the interpretation of an experience is what makes it meaningful, as it involves solid emotions that predispose the individual to a process of self-reflection (Duerden et al., 2018).

In tourism settings, meaningful experiences are characterised by pleasure but also by how personally meaningful tourists found their holiday activities (Filep, 2014), which leads to solid emotions, relevant insights, significant opinions and memories, and knowledge (Duerden et al., 2018). Simultaneously, they represent a path to overcoming physical challenges and self-sufficiency in dealing and negotiating with those challenges as an opportunity to express individuals' identity (Packer & Gill, 2017), thus enabling positive and collaborative interactions. Additionally, meaningful experiences allow the development of a feeling of community, moved by attention, emotion, reflections, and discovery (Fredrickson, 2001; Newman et al., 2014).

Through travelling, people discover several things that make everyday life meaningful, such as relation-

ships with others, encounters with nature and recreational activities, and an opportunity to think about oneself and personal growth (Packer & Gill, 2017). Travelling offers meaning, mainly when individuals use it to mark a significant life event or a great change in their lives. So, not only does an activity retain its meaning associated with its impact, but it adds a personal meaning related to a sense of reward, recovery, or to being an indelible marker of a turning point in people's lives (Packer & Gill, 2017).

During the evaluation of the experiences, four pillars help to explain how individuals develop meaning: (1) belonging (relationship developed with others), (2) purpose (perception about life purpose), (3) storytelling (how the situation is evaluated), and (4) transcendence (connection to something bigger) (Laing, 1967). For Baumeister and Vohs (2002), the search for meaning fulfils four needs: (1) purpose, (2) values, (3) sense of efficacy, and (4) self-worth.

To understand how meaningful experiences are expressed, several instruments have been developed that address some of the aspects preconised by the literature associated with meaningful experiences, even though they do not fully assess the construct. Examples are (1) emotional component—Positive and Negative Affect Scale (PANAS) (Watson et al., 1988), Subjective Happiness Scale (SHS) (Lyubomirsky & Lepper, 1999), Scale of Positive and Negative Experiences (SPANE) (Diener et al., 2010); (2) positive relationships, purpose in life, well-being, self-discovery—Flourishing Scale (FS) (Diener et al., 2010), Questionnaire for Eudaemonic Well-being (QEWB) (Waterman et al., 2010), Tourism Well-being Scale (TWS) (Garcês et al., 2020); (3) personal expressiveness, flow experiences, and self-realisation—Personally Expressive Activities and Questionnaires (PEAQ) (Waterman, 1993); and (4) meaningfulness—Memorable Tourism Experience (MTE) Scale (Kim et al., 2012; Staphit & Coudounaris, 2018).

Meaningful experiences are a complex concept, focused on the self and the social, relational, and emotional dimensions. As such, what other theoretical foundations introduce an essential complement to the correct evaluation of meaningful experiences? The following sections introduce theoretical foundations that research has proven to be closely related to meaningful experiences and also with each other, giving strength to a possible new path of investigation.

2.2 Positive Psychology

Seligman (2002) founded positive psychology, the study of individuals' and communities' strengths, characteristics, and actions that explain their positive and significant results in their experiences (Garcês et al., 2020).

As a movement of perseverance, strength, and virtues, positive psychology encourages individuals to overcome challenges and develop a sense of independence that will lead to self-sufficiency and, thus, to compete for a sense of reward and independence (Packer & Gill, 2017). Thus, positive psychology induces in people the need to exacerbate their virtues and strengths (Seligman, 2002). Peterson and Seligman (2004) established the existence of six cross-cultural virtues, each one with their strengths (in parentheses): (1) wisdom and knowledge (creativity, curiosity, open-mindedness, love of learning, perspective), (2) courage (bravery, persistence, integrity, vitality), (3) humanity (love, kindness, social intelligence), (4) justice (citizenship, fairness, leadership), (5) temperance (forgiveness, modesty, prudence, self-regulation), (6) transcendence (appreciation of beauty and excellence, gratitude, hope, humour, spirituality).

Positive psychology has three pillars: (1) positive emotions, placed in time, as a *continuum*; from this perspective, positive emotions related to the past (e.g. satisfaction, contentment, fulfilment, pride, serenity), present (e.g. joy, ecstasy, calm, zest, ebullience, pleasure, flow, happiness), and future (optimism, hope, faith, trust); (2) positive individual traits, like subjective well-being, optimism, happiness, and self-determination (Ryan & Deci, 2001); and (3) positive institutions, like responsibility, nurturance, altruism, civility, moderation, tolerance, and work ethic (Seligman, 2002). The outcomes are associated with well-being, happiness, optimism, and life satisfaction (Garcês et al., 2020).

Positive psychology's mission is to understand the factors that lead individuals, communities, and societies to flourish. Emotions are elicited through the process of interpretation, evaluation, and appraisal of a determined individual experience, meaning that different people appraise the same stimuli in various manners, producing different emotional reactions (Scott et al., 2017). As such, positive emotions play a fundamental role in this process since they will trigger individuals to optimise their well-being in favour-

able conditions due to their intermediary role between psychological growth and improved well-being over time (Fredrickson, 2001).

One of the contexts in which positive psychology has been applied is tourism (Filep et al., 2017; Garcês et al., 2018, 2019; Vada et al., 2020; Volo, 2021). Travelling is an experience that since the beginning has had a strong meaning attached to it: it starts with the recognition of the need to satisfy something that is currently missing, the development of expectations, and destination choice (anticipation phase, the tourist experience itself, where individuals develop emotions, meanings, feelings, and memories [on-site phase], and the evaluation of the experience [reflexive phase] [Larsen, 2007]).

Tourism experiences are subjective, as people are not predictable in their actions, thoughts, and expectations, thus affecting the process of planification, interpretation, and storing of experiences. This plays an essential role in the associated emotions. Considering that to be remarkable an experience must be associated with powerful emotions (Volo, 2021), tourist experience is a product of past, travel-related events that evoke extreme and powerful emotions (Larsen, 2007). As such, increasing knowledge about the triggers (antecedents) of an experience can be the key element to promoting meaningful tourist experiences associated with powerful personalised outcomes.

From the previous foundations, another strong characteristic of positive psychology emerges: *the search for meaning and purpose in life*, the core contribution to happiness and pleasure through the pursuit of life satisfaction (Packer & Gill, 2017). The construction of meaning is central in positive psychology, in light of its close relation with well-being, life satisfaction, and positive affect (Packer & Gill, 2017). The search for meaning is a daily construction, in that that individuals seek the meaningful component of the experiences, which gives life a purpose.

Finally, the third component of positive psychology is related to *life satisfaction*, connected to seeking what makes life worth living, and thus it represents a decisive dimension for positive psychology since it is an individual process that involves individuals' needs, motivations, and characteristics, life purpose, and the meaning of each one's actions (Packer & Gill, 2017).

Overall, positive psychology is one of the most significant contributors to the development and engagement of individuals in meaningful experiences, considering its focus on the promotion of resilience and the search for meaning. One of the first attempts to join positive psychology and tourism was suggested by Filep (2016), with the proposal of a subfield called positive tourism.

2.3 Positive Psychology and Tourism: Positive Tourism

Positive tourism focuses on the hedonic and eudaemonic human well-being components, with the primary objective being to understand tourists', local communities', and tourism workers' flourishing, depending on the characteristics of meaningful tourist experiences, the relationship between tourists and the local community, and the kind of interactions between tourism industries and tourists, aiming to promote well-being through three pillars: (1) *positive tourism experiences*, which offer opportunities for social interactions, personal growth, identity development, and reflection on the purpose of life (Packer & Gill, 2017); (2) *positive host communities*, characterised by emotional commitment, feelings of moral obligation, interest in the welfare of others, and reduced uncertainty about the other's likely behaviour (Glover & Filep, 2017); (3) *positive tourism workers*, responsible for emotional engagement with clients, guiding roles that mediate experiences and facilitate life changes that help tourists achieve their goals, grow, and develop themselves. In turn, this provides tourism workers with a sense of meaning in life by transforming other peoples' lives (Saunders et al., 2017).

A vital characteristic of positive tourism is searching for meaning in individuals' activities. Vacations are considered a source of meaning that serves three purposes: (1) milestone markers, by introducing something that never happened before; (2) remedy or reward, in view of individuals' need to restore their strengths and see vacations as positive reinforcement of all their commitment; (3) change of life (Packer & Gill, 2017), related to the development of positive and more meaningful memories, positive emotions, pleasant sensations (Filep & Deery, 2010), and a higher sense of relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

In sum, looking at tourism in a positive, humanist-inspired way enables host communities to flourish, encourages workers to thrive and enhance the quality of the experiences (Filep et al., 2017), leading to the

development of a strong relationship between tourism, psychology, experiences, and well-being (Filep & Deery, 2010; Filep, 2014, 2016).

2.4 Well-being

Well-being is the core element of positive psychology (Seligman, 2002; Garcês et al., 2020). Applied to tourism, positive psychology promotes well-being for tourists, resident communities, and workers (Voigt, 2017; Garcês et al., 2018), which points out the need for industries and entrepreneurs to be aware of the characteristics associated with meaningful tourist experiences (Smith & Diekmann, 2017), turning well-being into the gold element of tourism industries (Garcês et al., 2020). In fact, well-being has been noted as being one of the strongest predictors for people to develop an emotional bond with a particular destination. In a broader perspective, tourist well-being promotes tourist health, considering that it enhances one's inner self, belongingness to a social world, and reinforces the ability to cope with the stress of everyday life (Vada et al., 2020). However, there are disagreements on what is the correct definition of well-being and how to measure it, resulting from the confluence of different disciplines (Voigt, 2017) and leading to the development of several perspectives (Garcês et al., 2019). The results point to one of the most crucial well-being perspectives that have served the foundations of positive psychology: the search for meaning under the immediate outcomes of the experiences—hedonic well-being—versus a broader perspective related to long-term benefits—eudaemonic well-being (Packer & Gill, 2017; Voigt, 2017; Vada et al., 2020).

2.4.1 Hedonic and eudaemonic well-being

The Greek Aristippus of Cyrene used the foundations of philosophy to express and examine feelings of “hedone” (“pleasure” in Greek) as the supreme good in life (Voigt, 2017), as the pursuit of happiness and avoidance of painful experiences. Hedonia is the immediate perspective of well-being related to the pursuit of happiness (Lyubomirsky & Lepper, 1999; Packer & Gill, 2017; Voigt, 2017), the development of positive and negative emotions (Bradburn, 1969; Watson et al., 1988; Waterman, 1993; Diener et al., 2010; Packer & Gill, 2017; Voigt, 2017), the search for enjoyment, pleasure, fun, relaxation, escape (Voigt, 2017), and sensory stimulation (Voigt, 2017).

Eudaemonia is characterised by excellence (Waterman, 2011), using individuals' virtues and strengths to undertake the best choices and actions (Laing & Frost, 2017). Discovering the true self is the central core of eudaemonia, meaning that the authentic eudaemonic experience presupposes the achievement of equilibrium between individuals' potential and the activities in which they engage (Voigt, 2017). Overall, eudaemonia defines a process of personal expressiveness, considering the way people should live and the positive cognitive-affective subjective condition (Waterman, 2011).

Huta and Waterman (2014) adopted four central eudaemonic perspectives: (1) growth (self-actualisation and personal goals), (2) *meaning* (purpose of life), (3) *excellence* (higher standards of individuals' behaviours), and (4) *authenticity* (connection with our inner selves).

To Ryff (1989), eudaemonia assesses six dimensions: (1) *self-acceptance* (self-actualisation and optimal functioning), (2) *positive relations with others* (trust, empathy, identification with others, and intimacy), (3) *autonomy* (self-determination, independence, and regulation of behaviour), (4) *environmental mastery* (create environments that suit one's psychic and mental conditions), (5) *purpose in life* (comprehension of life purpose and goals), (6) *personal growth* (ability to grow, actualisation, and openness to experience).

Csikszentmihalyi (1991) developed the flow theory, which compares flow to an optimal, transformational experience in which individuals engage with their full awareness. The best condition to induce a full sensation of flow is the full engagement in challenging activities allied with the individuals' skills, which gives rise to an optimal flow experience (Waterman, 2011).

Waterman et al. (2010) also emphasised intense involvement in activities. They developed a study where eudaemonia and other categories emerged, such as self-discovery, perceived development, purpose and a meaningful life, and enjoyment of activities as personally expressive.

Comparing the two perspectives, hedonia is oriented to the present, whilst eudaemonia is to the future. Hedonia is a function of self-regulation of the emotions, which helps people regulate affect. On the

other hand, eudaemonic activities develop a cumulative effect on positive affect and decrease distress. They can be associated with developing objectives that prevent the absorption of negative affect and with developing coping skills to deal with this adverse outcome. In sum, hedonia is related to purely affective outcomes, whilst eudaemonia leads to cognitive-affective feelings of significance and appreciation, a connection to the whole experience, and long-term outcomes.

Another perspective originated with Seligman (2011), with the PERMA model of flourishing.

PERMA Model (Seligman, 2011)

PERMA model is a valuable resource for positive psychology as a solid theoretical framework that is concerned with promoting well-being in a holistic way (Garcês et al., 2019). It is based on the Authentic Happiness Theory (2002), as authentic happiness is related to being cheerful and is measured by life satisfaction (Seligman, 2011).

Seligman (2011) defends that there are other elements that together with hedonic and eudaemonic well-being deliver a better and more complete definition of well-being. These elements are **(PERMA)**:

- **Positive emotions** (e.g. amusement, awe, compassion, contentment, gratitude, hope, interest, joy, love, and pride)
- **Engagement** (leads to flow experiences when individuals' strongest strengths match the challenges)
- **Relationships** (developing strong ties is a skill that leads to individuals' well-being and health improvements)
- **Meaning** (belonging to and believing in something bigger than oneself)
- **Accomplishment** (achievement, mastery, and competence)

Each of these elements is pursued by individuals, contributing to the overall experience of well-being (Seligman, 2011). Concerning the benefits of this approach, they are related to assumptions from eudaemonic well-being perspectives, such as self-acceptance, positive relations with other people, personal growth, and finding a purpose in life (Seligman, 2011).

As Filep (2016) acknowledged, the outcomes of PERMA have been projected onto tourism experiences in different phases of the trip. Filep and Deery (2010) considered that positive emotions could reach higher values when individuals imagine their travel, namely what they expect to find based on information searched or received through the advice of someone. This process promotes a more robust engagement with the travel experience and the development of meaning and purpose.

DRAMMA Model (Newman et al., 2014)

After the PERMA model, Newman and colleagues (2014) developed a new approach to subjective well-being. The authors defend that the fulfilment of determinant psychological experiences is the key to enhancing subjective well-being in leisure. The authors tried to understand how leisure affects subjective well-being in all its components—satisfaction, positive feelings, and negative feelings—given that the more positive psychological processes occur, the more subjective well-being can be approached (Newman et al., 2014).

The psychological components of this approach are detachment-recovery, autonomy, mastery, meaning, and affiliation (DRAMMA). Each one plays an essential role in mediating the relation between leisure and subjective well-being on account of their interrelated components (satisfaction, positive feelings, and negative feelings) and their impact on this relationship (Newman et al., 2014).

Detachment-recovery is related to satisfying basic needs, such as relaxation and recovery from different daily life efforts. Detachment relates to the act of giving up certain troubling or harmful elements of life. Recovery refers to the attempt to recover some aspects of life, which involves the release from high arousal or physically challenging forms of leisure. Through the first attempt at detachment and avoidance of something painful, individuals restore themselves to authentically fulfil their identity, allowing them to engage in a further process of recovery, increasing life satisfaction, enhancing positive emotions, and decreasing negative emotions, which is crucial for the recovery (Newman et al., 2014).

Autonomy is a vital prerequisite to understand how people develop and seek well-being in their lives (e.g. self-determination theory from Ryan and Deci [2001]). Through constant participation in the same leisure

activities, individuals restore their perception of control and freedom, leading to subjective well-being (Newman et al., 2014). The inclusion of autonomy in subjective well-being can be brought about through intrinsic leisure motivation and autonomous motivation in leisure. Intrinsic motivation is linked to the activities that match peoples' interests, leading to higher life enjoyment and psychological well-being, as well as a great sensation of flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1991). Autonomous motivation relates to activities that do not match individuals' motivations and willingness.

Mastery focuses on introducing the right skills into a leisure activity, achieving a new level of success, or overcoming challenges. Several associations confirm the relationship between mastery and subjective well-being and flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1991) since that absorption is a challenging activity that demands mastery and increases an individual's satisfaction with life, self-actualisation, self-enrichment, renewal, and a sense of accomplishment (Newman et al., 2014).

Meaning is related to positive emotions and life satisfaction and strongly correlates with the flow and serious leisure, given that strong commitment and meaningful engagement are two critical requisites of serious leisure (Csikszentmihalyi, 1991; Newman et al., 2014). This link between meaning and subjective well-being can be improved through engagement with life and close relationships (Fredrickson, 2001; Newman et al., 2014).

Affiliation proposes that social activities are related to the affiliative need for socialisation and the development of relationships with others since they represent a sense of belonging and connection with others and with activities (Newman et al., 2014).

Finally, the DRAMMA model is also applied to tourism settings. Different psychological mechanisms emerge from tourist trips, explaining peak mood levels and emotions through travel (Nawijn & Biran, 2019). Individuals are more likely to engage in self-congruent activities related to their needs, goals, and personalities in order to enhance subjective well-being (Newman et al., 2014).

PERMA and DRAMMA: Similarities and Differences

Compared to PERMA, DRAMMA proposes similar dimensions. However, DRAMMA attempts to address both hedonic and eudaemonic outcomes (Laing & Frost, 2017). Both models share the same construct of meaning associated with seeking a purpose in life, a talent for living as intensely as possible, and a sense of belonging to some social commitment (Newman et al., 2014). Through the dimensions of affiliation (DRAMMA) and relationships (PERMA) associated with the same outcomes, it can be observed that the latter is strongly related to eudaemonic well-being (Huta & Waterman, 2014) and finding love is strongly related to a more hedonic outcome (Laing & Frost, 2017).

An equal relation is found between mastery (DRAMMA) and achievement (PERMA), as both are related to an autonomous attitude of conquering something meaningful when the mastery challenge lies in dealing with different cultures or learning something new about them (Laing & Frost, 2017). Both components might involve the learning of new skills or a deeper understanding of different issues (Seligman, 2011), as well as an opportunity to develop and grow (Laing & Frost, 2017).

DRAMMA's autonomy is strictly linked with PERMA's engagement, as engaging in new activities presupposes an independent attitude and a sense of control over the future. PERMA's positive emotions are not present in the DRAMMA model (Newman et al., 2014). However, research has shown that this dimension is transversal to all the dimensions of DRAMMA (Newman et al., 2014).

Finally, the most expressive difference between these models is the context in which the DRAMMA model was developed, i.e. a leisure context, making this model particularly attractive in understanding tourists' well-being (Laing & Frost, 2017).

2.5 Mindfulness

Mindfulness has been defined as a state of mind where individuals experience strong attention to and awareness of what happens in the moment (Chan, 2019), which gives individuals the opportunity to be implicitly aware of the context and content of the information, notice new details, and feel sensitive to context. Considered the consciousness property with the highest relation to well-being (Brown & Ryan, 2003), mindfulness involves an openness to novelty, self-acknowledgement, and self-regulation (Langer,

2000), helping individuals be conscious of awareness through scanning the physical sensations of the body, thoughts, feelings, or emotions and by exploring what surrounds them (Brown & Ryan, 2003). As for its benefits, mindfulness increases individuals' competence, decreases accidents, improves memory, creativity, positive affect, and longevity and reduces stress (Langer, 2000).

Chen and colleagues (2017) examined the relationship between mindfulness and tourist experiences by exploring the role of mindful mental states in the genesis of experiential outcomes. Their framework is divided into antecedents (triggers of meditative mindfulness), episodes (constructs related to mindful experience), and consequences (positive outcomes of meditative mindfulness). The themes and constructs are as follows: (1) paying attention to the experience (sensory awareness and relaxed attention), (2) living in the present (being aware of the moment and interacting with the surroundings), (3) non-elaborative awareness (cognitive processes occurring on meditative mindfulness experiences).

Dutt and Ninov (2016) studied the role of mindfulness in helping tourists remember the interactions established within tourism businesses. The results confirmed that mindfulness influenced tourists' positive memories through unique experiences, features, variety of facilities, and services offered, showing the strong potential of this movement to impact tourists' memories about the destination. The framework divided the factors involved in this process into individual (interest, perception and mindset, people, and interpersonal relationships) and site factors (people and interpersonal relationships, experience, aesthetics, safety, and control) and the benefits into hard (word of mouth, satisfaction), and soft benefits (understanding, history, culture and heritage, environment, difference, and infrastructure).

Tourism has been a crucial context in which to apply mindfulness. Individuals develop a sense of self-awareness, resulting in an existentially authentic experience and a feeling of *communitas* (Tiberghien et al., 2020). The spiritual dimension of tourism involves people, places, relationships, and emotions and is influenced by cultural background, personal goals, motivations, expectations, preconceived knowledge of the destination, and local people (Tiberghien et al., 2020). The social interaction during the experience is crucial in evaluating the role of mindfulness in meaningful experiences and can be constructed between tourists who travel together but also with local communities, contributing to promoting destinations' attractiveness (Park et al., 2019).

In sum, key main characteristics related to mindfulness are: (1) *transcendence* (Chen et al., 2017), (2) *self-acceptance* (Chen et al., 2017), (3) *awareness* (Langer, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2001; Brown & Ryan, 2003; Dutt & Ninov, 2016; Chen et al., 2017; Chan, 2019; Tiberghien et al., 2020), (4) *meaning of life and beliefs* (Brown & Ryan, 2003; Tiberghien et al., 2020), and (5) *spirituality* (Chang et al., 2021).

3. Positive Psychology, Positive Tourism, Well-Being, and Mindfulness: Synergies

Meaningful experiences represent a change in the routine of important social, personal, and emotional components of individuals' lives. Positive psychology, positive tourism, well-being, and mindfulness mediate this process of increasing personal consciousness, thereby providing enhanced experiences. As such, tourism experiences have the strong potential to become extraordinary and meaningful (Kirillova et al., 2017). A considerable number of studies relating meaningful tourist experiences with positive psychology, well-being, mindfulness, and other psychological constructs (e.g. emotions, memory, place attachment, destination image, authenticity) present the motivations that lead tourists to engage in these meaningful experiences. Considering the complementary theoretical foundations reflected in this manuscript, what are the potential synergies between positive psychology, positive tourism, well-being, and mindfulness in relation to meaningful tourist experiences?

3.1 Positive Psychology and Positive Tourism

Positive tourism aligns the foundations of positive psychology related to tourism, enhancing the potential to promote meaningful tourism experiences, in view of positive host communities and positive tourism workers (Filep et al., 2017). Studies corroborate these assumptions, centring on the antecedents and consequents related to these topics. There are different motivations to engage in meaningful experiences,

given that individuals seek an *inner construction based on beliefs and perspectives* (Reisinger, 2013). Positive psychology and positive tourism corroborate this motivation because both focus on fulfilling a purpose and positive significance. Filep (2014) acknowledged that individuals develop a sense of *gratitude* throughout their meaningful tourist experiences that lead to the *development of a feeling for the visited place* (Reisinger, 2013). Positive psychology, as the driver of positive emotions (Seligman, 2002), and positive tourism compete for the same goal: to develop positive emotions through engagement with significant positive experiences.

In sum, meaningful experiences are a personal and simultaneously a social process, considering individuals' motivations and expectations and the relationship between tourists and the local community (Filep et al., 2017).

3.2 Positive Psychology and Well-Being

Through the lens of positive psychology and well-being, the main motivations to engage in meaningful experiences are the *search for self and identity*, *the quest for self-empowerment* (Steger et al., 2006), and *seeking positive emotions* (Chandralal & Valenzuela, 2013; Wilson et al., 2013). As for the outcomes, they relate to the development of *strong emotions and feelings* (*excitement, pleasure, enjoyment*) (Packer & Gill, 2017), *pleasant sensations* (Csikszentmihalyi, 1991; Larsen, 2007; Wilson et al., 2013), *sense of being* (Packer & Gill, 2017), and *happiness* (Seligman, 2002). As both movements are related to positive emotions, personal growth, search for meaning, and life purpose (Laing, 1967; Ryff, 1989; Seligman, 2002, 2011; Newman et al., 2014; Packer & Gill, 2017; Voigt, 2017), they have the potential to develop meaningful experiences.

3.3 Positive Tourism and Well-Being

Positive tourism is related to well-being, as both focus on the development of *positive relationships* between individuals and the visited place, competing to develop meaningful experiences (Filep et al., 2017; Glover & Filep, 2017; Saunders et al., 2017). Both positive tourism and well-being focus on the *social component* of meaningful experiences, a topic that can dictate the success or lack thereof of the experiences on account of the critical role that the host communities and tourism workers play in promoting their destinations as meaningful (Filep et al., 2017).

3.4 Mindfulness, Positive Psychology, Positive Tourism, and Well-Being

Mindfulness influences positive psychological experiences and well-being. Consciousness is related to several well-being dimensions, like positive affectivity, vitality, life satisfaction, self-esteem, optimism, self-actualisation, autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Also, mindfulness is responsible for developing self-awareness, influencing positive emotional states, and decreasing mood disturbances and stress (Brown & Ryan, 2003). Mindfulness, positive psychology, positive tourism, and well-being place a strong value on *relationships*. Individuals seek authentic and strong relationships characterised by intimacy and experiencing a social change in the relationships with themselves, other people, the world, or a higher power or force. The same applies to positive psychology and well-being, where the social component is crucial to understanding the meaning of individuals' experiences (Tiberghien et al., 2020).

Tiberghien et al. (2020) and Deb and Lomo-David (2021) highlighted the *contribution of the local community* and the importance of having a good plan for tourist activities, as both can generate positive feelings, personal enrichment, and authentic tourist experiences. Another common topic is the promotion of *self-acceptance* and the *search for meaning and purpose* (Chandralal & Valenzuela, 2013), leading to an emotional reaction during the experience. A eudaemonic perspective is also a common characteristic, as transcendental, optimal, and inner experiences produce *self-knowledge, realisation, self-actualisation, self-awareness, and development* (Maslow, 1968; Park et al., 2019; Tiberghien et al., 2020).

In addition, mindfulness relates to positive psychology and well-being through the *flow moments* and the feeling of self-immersion (Csikszentmihalyi, 1991) that integrates individuals' optimal emotional levels (Mannell & Iso-Ahola, 1987) and competes for the ultimate authentic tourist experiences (Tiberghien et al., 2020), intellectual enhancement, and self-actualisation (Maslow, 1968). Finally, the *presence of emotions*

related to mindful awareness is another common topic since that the better the emotional state, the better the evaluation of authenticity (Tiberghien et al., 2020).

3.4.1 How to assess relevant constructs?

Table 1 presents some examples of instruments used to assess relevant constructs related to the synergies between positive psychology, positive tourism, well-being, and mindfulness in relation to meaningful tourist experiences.

Ryff's (1989) Psychological Well-being Scale assesses eudaemonic well-being through *self-acceptance* (self-actualisation, optimal functioning, and self-acceptance), *positive relations with others* (empathy, affection, intimacy, and generativity), *autonomy* (self-determination, independence, and regulation of behaviour), *environmental mastery* (manipulate and control complex environments), *purpose in life* (comprehension of life purpose, goals, and intentions), and *personal growth* (development of one's potential, openness to experience, and self-realisation). Considering the dimensions assessed, besides eudaemonic well-being, positive psychology (positive relationships; purpose in life; personal growth) and mindfulness (self-acceptance; purpose in life) can also be assessed.

Then, the Flourishing Scale (FS) (Diener et al., 2010) assesses psychological flourishing and feelings, focusing on positive human functioning through positive relationships, competence, meaning, purpose in life, and engagement with daily activities. This resource is helpful in the assessment of eudaemonia (personal relationships, self-esteem, meaning and purpose in life), positive psychology (positive relationships, meaning and purpose in life), mindfulness (meaning and purpose in life), and positive tourism (personal relationships, positive relationships).

Positive psychology and eudaemonia can also be evaluated through the Basic Need Satisfaction Scale (Ryan & Deci, 2000), considering the dimensions competence, autonomy (eudaemonia) and supportive relationships (eudaemonia and positive psychology).

Kim and colleagues (2012) developed the Memorable Tourist Experience Scale (MTES), which includes seven domains: *hedonism* (excitement and enjoyment), *novelty* (uniqueness), *local culture* (immersion in local culture and local people), *refreshment* (sense of freedom), *meaningfulness* (self-knowledge), *involvement* (willingness for engagement), and *knowledge* (learn something new). These dimensions allow the assessment of hedonia (hedonism, refreshment), eudaemonia (meaningfulness, involvement), positive psychology (meaningfulness), and positive tourism (local culture). Later, Chandralal and Valenzuela (2013) reached different dimensions from the original ones: (a) *authentic local experiences*, (b) *Self-beneficial experiences*, (c) *professional local guides and tour operators*, (d) *local hospitality*, (e) *affective emotions*, (f) *perceived significance*, (g) *social interactions with people*, (h) *serendipitous and incredible experiences*, and (i) *fulfilment of personal travel interests*. These dimensions can also be involved in the assessment of hedonia (affective emotions, serendipitous, surprising experiences), eudaemonia (social interactions with people, fulfilment of personal travel interests), positive psychology (self-beneficial experiences, affective emotions, perceived significance, social interactions with people, fulfilment of personal travel interests), and positive tourism (professional local guides and tour operators, local hospitality, social interactions with people).

Hedonia and positive psychology share an important dimension: emotions and their role in the improvement of individuals' well-being. As such, several instruments can be useful in the evaluation of this dimension: Destination Emotion Scale (DES) (Hosany & Gilbert, 2010), which assesses three basic emotions—joy, love, and positive surprises; Life Satisfaction Index Scale (LSI) (Neugarten et al., 1961) under the dimensions zest vs apathy, tone of mood (hedonia), positive self-concept (positive psychology), resolution and fortitude, congruence between desired and achieved goals; Positive and Negative Experience Scale (SPANE) (Diener et al., 2010) and Positive and Negative Affect Scales (PANAS) (Watson et al., 1988), both focused on positive and negative emotions; Subjective Well-Being Scale (SHS) (Lyubomirsky & Lepper, 1999), focused on information about relationships as well as happy and unhappy situations.

The Questionnaire for Eudaemonic Well-being (QEWB) (Waterman et al., 2010) measures eudaemonia through (a) *self-discovery*, (b) *perceived development of one's best potentials*, (c) *sense of purpose and meaning-in-life*, (d) *investment of significant effort in the pursuit of excellence*, (e) *intense involvement in activities*, and (f) *enjoyment of activities as personally expressive*. Considering these dimensions, positive psychology can also be assessed according to the category "sense of purpose and meaning in life".

The Hedonic and Eudaemonic Motives for Activities (HEMA) (Huta & Ryan, 2010) deepens the study of hedonic—seeking pleasure and comfort—and eudaemonic well-being—use and develop the best in one-self—since it appraises the general motivational tendencies of an activity.

The Personally Expressive Activities Questionnaire (PEAQ) (Waterman, 1993) assesses functioning according to the types of self-defining activities in which individuals engage and self-realisation values. It is responsible for evaluating eudaemonic (personal expressiveness) and hedonic well-being (e.g. hedonic enjoyment).

Voigt et al. (2011) developed the Benefits of Wellness Tourism Scale (BWTS), which measures benefits sought from wellness tourist experiences according to six dimensions: (a) *transcendence*, (b) *physical health and appearance*, (c) *escape and relaxation*, (d) *important others and novelty*, (e) *re-establish self-esteem*, and (f) *indulgence*. These dimensions have the potential to assess positive psychology (important others and novelty, transcendence), hedonia (physical health and appearance, escape and relaxation), eudaemonia (important others and novelty, re-establish self-esteem), and mindfulness (transcendence).

The Tourism Well-being Scale (TWS) (Garcês et al., 2020) addresses global well-being through *optimism* (positive side of situations), *meaning* (giving meaning to life), *positive emotions* (having fun), *creativity* (uniqueness, originality), *engagement* (participate in community activities), *accomplishment* (the best result from an experience), *spirituality* (connection with something higher, awareness of surroundings), and *positive relationships* (development of new relationships). Since the rationales for this scale are the PERMA (Seligman, 2011) and HOPE models (Human Optimal Psychological Experiences) (Garcês et al., 2017), hedonia (positive emotions), eudaemonia (engagement, meaning, accomplishment), positive psychology (positive emotions, meaning, recovery, relationship, optimism, creativity), mindfulness (spirituality), and positive tourism (relationships) can be analysed.

Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS) (Brown & Ryan, 2003) explores the cognitive, emotional, physical, interpersonal, and general domains of the awareness of the present. The instrument has never been applied to tourism settings. A focus on mindful dimensions of the experience is also a priority for Pinto and Pais-Ribeiro (2007), who developed the Spirituality Scale. In particular, the scale is divided into two factors: *meaning of life/beliefs* and *optimistic life perspective/hope*. The first one is related to mindfulness.

Finally, Chang and colleagues (2021) developed the Experience Scale for Pilgrimage Tourists, which assess tourists' pilgrimage experience through five dimensions: (a) *spirituality*, (b) *learning*, (c) *physicality*, (d) *help*, and (e) *unpleasantness*. The dimensions *learning* and *unpleasantness* can help assess positive psychology, while *spirituality* is a mindfulness component.

3.5 Knowledge Gaps in the Literature and Preliminary Framework

Despite the apparent relationship between the theoretical approaches, the literature advises carefully analysing their interconnections further to support the rationale of future studies. The literature review also allowed examples of knowledge gaps that can shed light of future avenues for research on meaningful tourist experiences to be identified. Some of these research gaps are highlighted in this section.

Garcês and colleagues (2018) explored the role of positive psychology in tourism and highlighted the need to adopt a holistic view of stakeholders' well-being through the involvement of different populations in the analysis of this phenomenon. The relevance of addressing residents, host communities, and workers was also stressed in the systematic review conducted by Vada and colleagues (2020). In fact, the findings showed that there was minimal focus on these stakeholders in the literature reviewed. The authors approached the relationship between positive psychology, tourism, and tourists' well-being. On one hand, the review indicates that tourists' well-being is influenced by positive psychological variables, such as happiness, character strengths, gratitude, and humour. On the other hand, mindfulness was advanced as an antecedent of tourists' well-being. The study reveals the need to explore tourists' interactions with social and natural environments related to self-consciousness (e.g. wellness tourism, yoga tourism, volunteer tourism). Skavronskaya et al. (2018) focused on the description of the emotional consequences of experiences. However, there is a lack of understanding of the affective responses elicited by specific stimuli, raising some underestimated perspectives that lead to a new pathway: What other constructs can be considered as predictors of this relationship?

Table 1. Examples of Instruments used to Assess Relevant Concepts

Authors	Name	Components Analysed
Neugarten et al. (1961)	Life Satisfaction Index Scale (LSI)	-Zest vs. Apathy; -Mood tone; -Positive self-concept; -Resolution and fortitude; -Congruence between desired and achieved goals;
Watson et al. (1988)	Positive and Negative Affect Scales (PANAS)	-Positive emotions; -Negative emotions;
Ryff (1989)	Psychological Wellbeing Scale	-Self-acceptance; -Positive relations with others; -Autonomy; -Environmental mastery; -Purpose in life; -Personal growth;
Waterman (1993)	Personally Expressive Activities Questionnaire (PEAQ)	-Self-defining activities; -Self-realization values from the activities;
Lyubomirsky & Lepper (1999)	Subjective well-being scale (SHS)	-Information about the relationship established; -Happy/unhappy situations;
Ryan & Deci (2000)	Basic need satisfaction scale	-Competence; -Autonomy; -Supportive relationships;
Brown & Ryan (2003)	Mindful attention awareness scale (MAAS)	-Awareness to the present;
Pinto & Pais-Ribeiro (2007)	Spirituality scale	-Meaning of life/beliefs; -Positive life perspective/hope;
Diener et al. (2010)	Flourishing Scale (FS)	-Positive relationships; -Feelings of competence; -Meaning and purpose in life; -Engagement in daily activities;
	Scale of Positive and Negative Experience (SPANE)	-Positive emotions; -Negative emotions;
Hosany & Gilbert (2010)	Destination Emotion Scale (DES)	-Three basic emotions: joy, love, and positive surprises;
Huta & Ryan (2010)	Hedonic and Eudaimonic Motives for Activities (HEMA)	-General motivational tendencies;
Waterman et al. (2010)	Questionnaire for Eudaimonic Well-being (QEWB)	-Self-discovery; -Perceived development of one's best potentials; -Sense of purpose and meaning-in-life; -Investment of significant effort in the pursuit of excellence; -Intense involvement in activities; -Enjoyment of activities as personally expressive;
Voigt et al. (2011)	Benefits of Wellness Tourism Scale (BWTS)	-Transcendence; -Physical health and appearance; -Escape and relaxation; -Important others and novelty; -Re-establish self-esteem; -Indulgence;
Kim et al. (2012)	Memorable Tourist Experience Scale (MTES)	-Hedonism; -Novelty; -Local culture; -Refreshment; -Meaningfulness; -Involvement; -Knowledge;
Chandralal & Valenzuela (2013)	Memorable tourist experience scale (MTES)	-Authentic local experiences; -Self-beneficial experiences; -Professional local guides and tour operators; -Local hospitality; -Affective emotions; -Perceived significance; -Social interactions with people; -Serendipitous and surprising experiences; -Fulfilment of personal travel interests;
Garcês et al. (2020)	Tourism Wellbeing Scale (TWS)	-Optimism; -Meaning; -Positive emotions; -Creativity; -Engagement; -Accomplishment; -Spirituality; -Positive relationships;
Chang et al. (2021)	Experience Scale for Pilgrimage Tourists	-Spirituality; -Learning; -Physicality; -Help; -Unpleasantness;

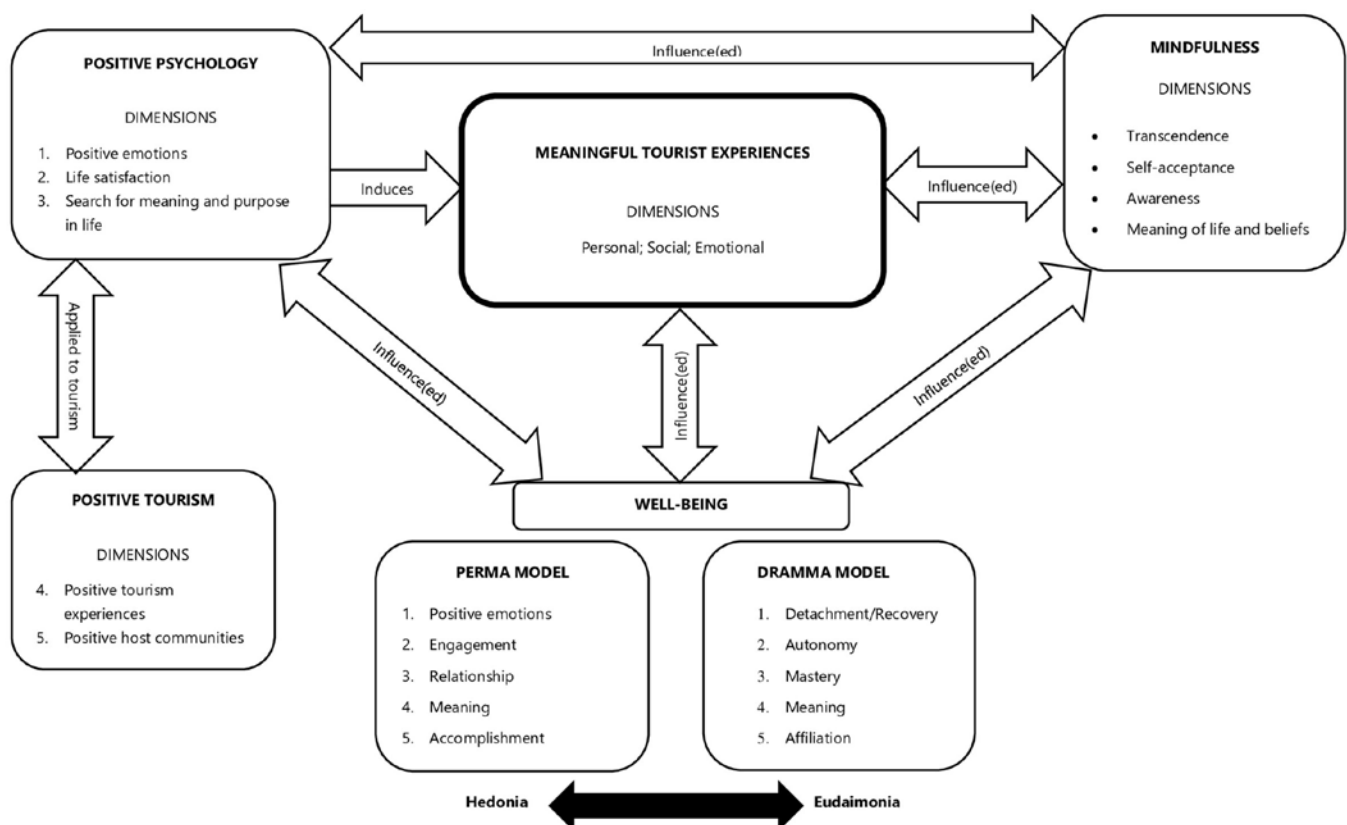
Source: Own Elaboration, 2021

Based on the identified knowledge gaps, the literature advances some research opportunities focused on meaningful experiences related to individuals' cultural differences (Filep et al., 2017), positive and negative emotional changes during the experience (Vada et al., 2020; Volo, 2021); centring the research in tourism and psychology on the processes (Filep & Laing, 2019); the relationship between tourists and residents (Volo, 2021); eudaemonia and positive tourism (Voigt, 2017); authenticity and emotional attachment (Deb & Lomo-David, 2021); hedonia, eudaemonia, and emotional attachment (Vada et al., 2020); intensity, durability, and the nature of eudaemonic experiences (Voigt, 2017; Filep & Laing, 2019); and positive psychology, well-being, happiness, positive emotions, character strengths, gratitude, humour, and authenticity (Vada et al., 2020).

If the studies show that positive psychology, well-being, mindfulness, and positive tourism are areas complementary to the study of meaning in tourism, what are the future directions for the theoretical deepening of these experiences? What leads individuals to engage in specific activities? What comes out of those experiences, associated with the foundations of the psychological constructs under study? Furthering knowledge on the antecedents of meaningful experiences will allow to enhance the perceived experiences and resulting outcomes. It is imperative to introduce a new lens on the promotion of meaningful tourist experiences that considers not only the individuals and their needs, expectations, and preferences but also the potential of the experiences and the places where they emerge (Garcês et al., 2018, 2020; Staphit & Coudounaris, 2018; Chen & Yoon, 2019).

The preliminary diagram (Figure 1) illustrates the interconnections between positive psychology, positive tourism, well-being, and mindfulness as a psychological framework around meaningful tourist experiences derived from the literature review conducted in this research. This diagram can assist future research and act as a first step among systematic and empirical studies in exploring antecedents and outcomes of meaningful experiences.

Figure 1. Preliminary Framework - Positive Psychology, Positive Tourism, Well-Being, and Mindfulness: How they Interrelate?



Source: Own Elaboration

4. Conclusions

This article has offered a theoretical reflection on the connections between positive psychology, positive tourism, well-being, and mindfulness towards the development of meaningful tourist experiences. In so doing, this research proposes a preliminary diagram illustrating the theoretical links observed in the literature, which acts as a first step towards the design of a systematic literature review of the antecedents and outcomes of meaningful tourist experiences. This reflection can thus also contribute to future empirical research focused on empirically testing potential relationships between constructs. The resulting preliminary diagram (Figure 1) suggests that the synergies between positive psychology, positive tourism, well-being, and mindfulness enable a greater understanding of meaningful tourist experiences, which can contribute to establishing a psychological framework for this topic.

4.1 Theoretical Implications

The study represents a first step towards the design of a systematic literature review on the antecedents and outcomes of meaningful tourist experiences, considering different theoretical foundations and the role of each one in the promotion of meaningful experiences. First, despite the importance of considering different levels of well-being, in tourism well-being is mostly assessed through the general outcome level. In so being, the PERMA and DRAMMA models represent a good start for the complex work of studying well-being in view of the different dimensions approached (Seligman, 2018). The present study highlights the need to continue the research on this topic on the premise that tourist experiences must favour individuals' meaningful and long-term motivations and outcomes (Laing & Frost, 2017).

This study underlines the importance of considering both the reflexive and the anticipatory phase of the trip (Filep & Laing, 2019) through its focus on the antecedents and outcomes of meaningful tourist experiences to understand what personal, emotional, social, or environmental reasons lead to involvement in a particular experience. So, through the study of antecedents and outcomes of meaningful tourist experiences, it is possible to develop a set of meaningful activities and thus improve stakeholders' well-being and marketing strategies (Chen & Yoon, 2019; Garcês et al., 2020).

Despite the different instruments already developed, there is a need to carefully analyse and adapt some of these tools to better understand meaningful tourist experiences (Packer & Gill, 2017). As such, an important theoretical implication consists of improving the already existing instruments that assess the psychological variables under study.

The conclusions gathered through the chapters are a result of the investigation that highlights the strong interrelation between positive psychology, positive tourism, well-being, and mindfulness with tourism and meaningful experiences (Laing, 1967; Maslow, 1968; Mannell & Iso-Ahola, 1987; Ryff, 1989; Csikszentmihalyi, 1991; Seligman, 2002; Brown & Ryan, 2003; Steger et al., 2006; Larsen, 2007; Chandralal & Valenzuela, 2013; Wilson et al., 2013; Reisinger, 2013; Filep, 2014; Huta & Waterman, 2014; Newman et al., 2014; Packer & Gill, 2017; Filep et al., 2017; Glover & Filep, 2017; Saunders et al., 2017; Voigt, 2017; Park et al., 2019; Tiberghien et al., 2020; Deb & Lomo-David, 2021). As such, the priority is to introduce a richer perspective on the promotion of these experiences with a holistic lens and to proceed to the development or improvement of new or existing tools to better address them and understand meaningful tourist experiences.

This theoretical approach is still at a preliminary stage and must be improved to allow a better tourism management decision, especially during these difficult times when resilience and persistence are being tested. As such, the article offers a theoretical reflection on the connections between the referenced theoretical foundations as proposed in a preliminary diagram illustrating the theoretical links observed; it acts as a first step towards the design of a systematic literature review of the antecedents and outcomes of meaningful tourist experiences. The advantages of this method include the fact that the focus is on the critical subjects in which to invest in future research through demonstrating the important research gaps that will help to better design and justify the research (Pickering & Byrne, 2014).

4.2 Managerial Implications

COVID-19 has been the wake-up call needed for tourism industries to reflect on the current problems and develop new strategies that enable a more compassionate and meaningful tourism practice. In so being, finding alternatives to innovate the offer and increase safety are two priorities.

Studies on tourism and well-being focus mainly on the hedonic perspective (Nawijn, 2015; Filep et al., 2019; Hao & Xiao, 2021; Allen et al., 2021). A comprehensive perspective of the meaningful tourist experience from tourism industries requires the consideration of hedonic and eudaemonic well-being (Nawijn, 2015; Smith & Diekmann, 2017; Voigt, 2017). As such, the theoretical investigation and destination managers must explore the eudaemonic perspective and its synergy with positive psychology in the development of positive meaningful tourist experiences, allowing for the emergence of other psychological components, such as meaning and purpose in life, life satisfaction, accomplishment, mastery, and affiliation (Csikszentmihalyi, 1991; Fredrickson, 2001; Filep & Deery, 2010; Newman et al., 2014; Filep, 2016; Seligman, 2018; Garcês et al., 2019; Nawijn & Biran, 2019).

Consequently, managers and tourism industries should invest in the emotional, psychological, and social reactions that contribute to the relational component of the experiences, taking the characteristics of the experiences and also the intrinsic characteristics of stakeholders and their contribution to the development of meaningful tourist experiences into account (Staphit & Coudounaris, 2018).

Even though the literature argues for the applicability of positive psychology interventions to enhance tourists' well-being, they have not been overly developed. So, the knowledge about the potential of positive psychology for the promotion of well-being can be a powerful tool in the design of travel experiences (Nawijn, 2015), which could prove to be another arresting idea for tourism industries: innovate to captivate.

Finally, research stresses the need to improve the participation of other people, which is simultaneously important for the promotion of well-being. This research aims to assure that all stakeholders' needs are considered equally. As such, tourism industries can be responsible for exploring whether the quality of life and satisfaction of the host community is threatened by tourism in order to achieve positive well-being outcomes and help host communities and tourism workers flourish, thus contributing to the optimisation of the experience and the improvement of well-being (Filep & Laing, 2019).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This paper is financed by National Funds provided by FCT - Foundation for Science and Technology through project UI/BD/150798/2020.

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