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The relationships between happiness, wellness tourist motivation, and tourism destination among Finnish wellness travellers: insights from the world's "happiest nation"

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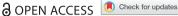
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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the relationships between happiness, wellness tourist motivation, and tourism destinations among Finnish wellness travellers during crises, "the happiest country in the world". Qualitative and quantitative data were collected from Finnish wellness travellers via a survey (n = 520) in fall 2021. The findings highlighted that Finnish happiness is largely based on eudaimonic-oriented meaning-seeking focusing on long-term happiness rather than hedonic-oriented and short-term pleasure-seeking: relationships, nature, rest and relaxation, and health and well-being. These motivations echo Finnish wellness travellers' destination preferences: spas, urban destinations, national parks, and outdoor recreation areas. This paper contributes to previous tourism literature by providing the industry with new insights into travel motivations and the sources of happiness, especially in Finland.

1. Introduction

The world is slowly recovering from the challenges caused by the Covid −19 pandemic which, tremendously changed our everyday lives, practices, consumption, and even tourism behaviour (Benjamin et al., 2020; Cheer, 2020; Choudhary & Qadir, 2021; Gössling et al., 2021; Sivanandamoorthy, 2021). During the pandemic, many of us came to understand the importance of holistic wellbeing, and as a result, wellbeing became a key consumer value, survival tool and lifestyle priority for many around the world (GWI, 2021; 2023).

Since the 1980s, health and well-being have been recognised as a motivator for travelling. With the emergence of the global wellness industry, travelling to feel and function well has increased (Kessler et al., 2020). GWI (2021) defines wellness tourism as travel associated with the pursuit of maintaining or enhancing one's personal well-being. Wellness tourist motivation relates to travelling that improves well-being through physical, psychological, emotional, social, spiritual, and intellectual activities simultaneously

touching one's body, mind, and spirit (Bočkus et al., 2023b; Bushell & Sheldon, 2009; Chen et al., 2008; Kelly, 2012; Smith & Kelly, 2006; Smith & Puczkó, 2009; Voigt et al., 2011). These motivations can be categorised into hedonic-oriented (happiness and pleasure-seeking) and eudaimonic-oriented (psychological functioning and meaning-seeking) motivations, stressing broader philosophical and psychological discussions about happiness and the "good life" (Ryan & Deci, 2001).

Aligning with the holistic concept of wellness, tourism scholars have been increasingly interested in the rise of positive psychology, which studies what makes life enjoyable and worth living (Seligman, 2012; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Especially, the differentiation between hedonic and eudaimonic well-being has recently gained recognition as a means for understanding wellness tourist motivation, experiences, and activities contributing to individuals' happiness, well-being, and quality of life (Dillette et al., 2018; Filep et al., 2022; Filep & Laing, 2019; Kim & Yang, 2021; Konu, 2016; Lengieza et al., 2019; Rahmani et al., 2018; Voigt, 2016; Voigt et al., 2010; 2011).

Wellness tourist motivation has been broadly studied across a wide range of wellness and spa settings, including motivations to travel for wellness (Chen et al., 2008; Kelly, 2012; Smith & Kelly, 2006) and, more specifically, the characteristics of wellness tourists (Voigt et al., 2011), wellness tourism motivation scales (Kessler et al., 2020; Voigt et al., 2010), market demand analysis (Mueller & Kaufmann, 2001; Smith & Kelly, 2006), and cross-cultural wellness tourist motivation (Bočkus et al., 2023b). Different types of wellness tourism have been studied, such as Alpine wellness (Pechlaner & Fischer, 2006), rural wellness (Pesonen & Komppula, 2010), lake wellness (Konu et al., 2010), Nordic well-being (Hjalager et al., 2011), forest-based well-being (Komppula et al., 2017), and, most recently, urban wellness (Lee et al., 2020; Saari, 2022).

Although wellness tourism has been widely studied in previous literature, a scholarly understanding of the nexus of happiness, motivation, and destination is still in its infancy (cf. Dillette et al., 2018; GWI, 2023). Research on wellness tourism should go beyond the conventional understanding of wellness tourist motivation or tourism destination. This assumption aligns with recent calls for tourism transformation towards more regenerative in a world of over-tourism and overconsumption by highlighting the importance of happiness and well-being, as well as sustainability and resilience building within the whole industry (Andreu et al., 2021; Ateljevic, 2020; Cheer et al., 2019; Dredge, 2022; Sheldon, 2020). The current study aims to fill this research gap.

Based on this background, this paper examines the relationships between happiness, wellness tourist motivation, and tourism destinations among Finnish wellness travellers during crises. According to the most recent World Happiness Report, Finland is the world's happiest country for the fifth consecutive year (Helliwell et al., 2022). Along with the other Nordic countries, Finland has built a society with an infrastructure of happiness – universal social, healthcare, and educational systems – increasing people's feelings of trust and safety and offering a foundation for maintaining happiness and well-being. Thus, we ask 1) What are the sources of happiness among Finnish wellness travellers? 2) What are the motivations of Finnish wellness travellers? 3) What is the relationship between happiness, wellness tourist motivation, and tourism destination among Finnish wellness travellers?

This paper contributes to previous wellness tourism literature and, thus far, our limited understanding of the relationships between happiness, wellness tourist motivation, and

tourism destinations by applying quantitative and qualitative data. We draw from wellness tourism studies and positive psychology and discuss happiness and wellness tourist motivation regarding hedonic and eudaimonic well-being. The urge for tourism transformation towards more regenerative, ensuring travel and tourism reinvestment in people, places, and nature while supporting the long-term renewal and flourishing of the social-ecological systems (Dredge, 2022) – will likely affect wellness tourism.

While substantial research on Finnish wellness tourists exists, new data is constantly needed due to this transformational shift of future wellness tourism and the increasing consciousness of prospective wellness tourists. This study provides the wellness tourism industry and practitioners with novel insights into enhancing happiness and well-being among secondary wellness travellers in particular and their motivation to travel during crises. Getting new insights into the sources of happiness and their relationships between the wellness tourist motivations and tourism destinations of the country boasting natural social distancing and melancholic nature is valuable in the wellness tourism context.

2. Literature review

2.1. Hedonic and eudaimonic well-being in tourism studies

Well-being has become one of the decade's most fundamental notions and is omnipresent in almost all discourse regarding people's daily life and activities (Smith & Diekmann, 2017). The search for understanding human well-being has extended to various disciplines, especially positive psychology, which studies what makes life enjoyable and worth living (Seligman, 2012; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Tourism scholars have been increasingly interested in the rise of positive psychology (Filep et al., 2022; Filep & Laing, 2019; Smith & Diekmann, 2017). Tourism knowledge related to this field has been growing over the last decades through a broad range of terms, including "wellness" (Bushell & Sheldon, 2009; Kelly, 2012; Smith & Kelly, 2006; Smith & Puczkó, 2009; Voigt et al., 2010; 2011), "happiness" (Nawijn, 2011; Nawijn et al., 2010), and "hedonic" and "eudaimonic" well-being (Dillette et al., 2018; Filep et al., 2022; Kim & Yang, 2021; Konu, 2016; Lengieza et al., 2019; Rahmani et al., 2018; Voigt, 2016; Voigt et al., 2010; 2011).

Notably, well-being has been a philosophical and psychological concern since the beginning of time; conceptions of happiness and the "good life" have been central concerns for philosophers and great thinkers (Ryan & Deci, 2001). The current psychological understanding of well-being is based on two philosophical traditions: hedonia and eudaimonia. The hedonic approach defines well-being as happiness (or subjective well-being), focusing on satisfaction with one's life, the quantity of positive affect, and the absence of negative affect (Diener et al., 1999; Kahneman et al., 1999). Accordingly, hedonic well-being is often defined as happiness, life satisfaction, pleasure, enjoyment, and comfort, emphasising short-term positive emotions (Diener, 2009; Huta & Ryan, 2010).

Unlike hedonic well-being, eudaimonic well-being captures aspects of optimal living and psychological functioning, focusing on long-term happiness and positing that pleasure should not be one's ultimate goal to be truly happy (Huta & Ryan, 2010; Ryff & Singer, 2008; Waterman, 2008). Eudaimonia is connected to meaningful and valuable actions or

activities, referring to a sense of meaning and purpose, authenticity, personal growth, self-development, psychological functioning, full engagement, autonomy, and vitality (Huta & Ryan, 2010; Ryff & Singer, 2008).

Developments in positive psychology are consistent with the growing interest in wellness tourism and studies addressing well-being within these paradigms (Filep & Laing, 2019; Smith & Diekmann, 2017; Voigt et al., 2010). Historically, hedonia has received considerable attention in wellness tourism studies, and attention to eudaimonia has recently grown among tourism scholars (Lengieza et al., 2019). Wellness tourist motivation, experiences, and activities include hedonic and eudaimonic elements: hedonism and pleasure, rest and relaxation, meaningful experiences, philanthropic activities, personal growth, and broader pro-social or pro-environmental outcomes (Lengieza et al., 2019; Smith & Diekmann, 2017; Voigt et al., 2010; 2011).

Hedonic pleasure-seeking often provides instant feelings of happiness and well-being through joyful and relaxing activities, whereas eudaimonic meaning-seeking necessitates engagement in unpleasant and challenging activities, often resulting in greater happiness and well-being in the long term (Smith & Diekmann, 2017; Voigt et al., 2010). While some activities are more often experienced as purely hedonic (e.g. visiting a beauty salon) or purely eudaimonic (e.g. visiting spiritual retreats), activities can be experienced as simultaneously pleasurable and personally meaningful (Lengieza et al., 2019).

In recent years, there has been growing recognition that hedonic and eudaimonic experiences are essential for human flourishing (Huta & Ryan, 2010; Huta & Waterman, 2014). In the wellness tourism context, hedonic and eudaimonic motivations, experiences, and activities are not mutually exclusive but tend to positively correlate and influence one another (Filep et al., 2022; Filep & Laing, 2019; Lengieza et al., 2019; Rahmani et al., 2018).

2.2. Wellness tourist motivation

The extensive research on travel motivations is clear: marketing tourist destinations without understanding tourists' behaviour and motivations would be impossible. Motivation has grown into a vast concept that flares up travel behaviour and can be used to further develop tourism activities and successful wellness services at the company level (Castaño Blanco et al., 2003). Maslow's (1954) hierarchy of needs is a widely used and accepted basis for explaining people's motivations (Moscardo, 2011; Prebensen et al., 2012). It is argued that certain tourism activities could satisfy all five needs: physiological, safety, belongingness, esteem, and self-actualisation (Kim et al., 2016). Moreover, other conceptions of motivation exist, like Dann's (1981) push–pull theory, Plog's (1974) allocentric–psychocentric theory, Iso-Ahola's (1980) approach–avoidance dichotomy, Ross and Iso-Ahola's (1991) escape-seeking theory, Pearce's (1993) career ladder of tourist motivation, and Li and Cai's (2012) four components of tourism motivation (Kim et al., 2016). Chen et al. (2008, p. 108) argue that "tourist health motivation could be seen as a position between individual values and lifestyles".

Wellness tourists often have more than one motivation for travelling (Bočkus et al., 2023b; Chen et al., 2008; Kessler et al., 2020; Moscardo, 2011), which can be connected to their background, previous wellness experiences (Bočkus et al., 2023a; Bočkus et al., 2023b), country of origin, and nationality (Aleksijevits, 2019; Smith and Puczkó, 2014). Bočkus et al. (2023b) claim the perception of wellness as a concept by international

tourists varies, influencing their aspirations. Globally agreed tourism motivation measures have not been agreed upon among researchers, and travel motivations can be destination-specific and change over time (Bočkus et al., 2023b). However, wellness-related motivations are only part of what tourists seek when travelling is important to them (Moscardo, 2011; Pearce, 2005).

Today's stressful and hectic lifestyle is one of the motivators identified (Chen et al., 2008; Konu & Laukkanen, 2010; Voigt et al., 2011). Appearance and physical well-being have been natural motivators for pursuing wellness (Aleksijevits, 2019; Bočkus et al., 2023a; Bočkus et al., 2023b; Chen et al., 2008; Kessler et al., 2020; Konu & Laukkanen, 2010; Voigt et al., 2011). Various emotional and luxury motivations have been identified (Aleksijevits, 2019; Bočkus et al., 2023b; Voigt et al., 2011). Connecting to and enjoying nature is another important motivation (Bočkus et al., 2023b; Chen et al., 2008; Kessler et al., 2020; Konu & Laukkanen, 2009). Holistic wellness means involving the body, mind, and spirit through learning, experiencing, and trying new things (Bočkus et al., 2023a; Chen et al., 2008; Kessler et al., 2020; Konu & Laukkanen, 2009; Voigt et al., 2011). Finally, social connections with others are an important motivating factor, whether they involve new connections, family, or friends (Bočkus et al., 2023b; Voigt et al., 2011).

Tourists can be divided into primary and secondary wellness tourists. The primary type travels to a destination motivated by wellness; the core of their holiday is the various wellness activities offered. The secondary type typically travels for other reasons and will only occasionally use wellness services and activities when they are available at, say, a hotel or resort (GWI, 2017; UNWTO & ETC, 2018).

Motivations determine the destination choice (Bočkus et al., 2023a; Bočkus et al., 2023b; Kim et al., 2016) and are the engine of all behaviour (Prebensen et al., 2012). Furthermore, wellness-motivated travellers are inclined to seek an environment considering the holistic approach of body, mind, and spirit (Chen et al., 2008), in which "physical and built environments, social conditions and human perceptions combine to produce an atmosphere which is conducive to healing" (English et al., 2008, p. 69). However, these destinations do not have to offer natural curative resources (Dryglas & Salamaga, 2018), and no set of criteria exists for what constitutes a therapeutic environment (Adongo et al., 2017). Nevertheless, wellness tourism as means of recovering from illness or regaining strength is usually oriented towards the natural environment (Prebensen et al., 2012). According to Majeed and Ramkissoon (2020), natural destinations are categorised as blue (e.g. beaches, rivers, lakes, and spas) and green (e.g. gardens, groves, forests, and parks). The natural environment or wellness services make travellers feel good and help them forget the stresses of everyday life (Majeed & Kim, 2023). However, achieving wellness in an urban environment is also possible (Saari, 2022). Locals are important in any destination as they often provide the services offered, personify the local culture, and create the atmosphere needed (Kim et al., 2020).

Post Covid-19 tourism will show whether a change in wellness travel motivation exists. Some of the trends the pandemic precipitated were known before Covid-19, such as the desire for fewer co-travellers and less overcrowding, more holistic and wellness experiences, and innovative future-oriented and sustainable products and services (Andreu et al., 2021). This study examined wellness tourist motivation through Kessler et al.'s (2020) seven motivational dimensions as listed below:

1. Movement & Fitness; To become more fit and toned, look and feel better, challenge oneself physically, improve one's fitness/movement practice
2. Healthy Food & Diet: To practice clean eating, achieve and/or maintain a healthy weight, enjoy a variety of foods fitting one's dietary needs, experience cooking demonstrations and/or go home with healthy recipes
3. Meditation & Mindfulness: To find one's inner self, learn how to meditate, contemplate what is important to oneself, be at peace with oneself
4. Rest & Relaxation: To escape the demands of everyday life, return to daily life feeling rejuvenated, find peace and quiet, as well as time for self-care and space for reflection
5. Learning about Wellness: To learn about nutrition to make better decisions, learn how to better manage stressful situations, learn general ways to improve overall health, learn how to overcome specific health problems
6. Self-Care: To focus on one's own needs, recover from a major negative life event, get a better night's sleep, reduce stress levels
7. Nature & Disconnect: To experience activities outdoors, connect with and feel grounded in nature, totally disconnect from technology

3. Methodology

3.1. Data and data collection

Survey data was collected among primary and secondary Finnish wellness travellers using a questionnaire administered by Webropol. The Finnish Spa Association, representing 12 independent well-being destinations in different parts of Finland, distributed an invitation to participate in the online questionnaire as a separate newsletter to its thousands of subscribers and on their Facebook page. The researchers used their own social media networks, mainly LinkedIn and Twitter, and relevant Facebook interest groups to disseminate the survey link. The cover letter included a privacy notice informing the respondents of the anonymous use of research data. The data was collected from October to November 2021, and 520 recipients answered the questionnaire.

The questionnaire included open- and closed-ended questions on the following themes: 1) hedonic and eudaimonic well-being, 2) wellness tourist motivation, and 3) tourism destination (Table 1).

Table 1. Research themes, questions, operationalisation, and analysis.

Themes	Questions	Operationalisation and analysis
Hedonic and eudaimonic well-being	In a few words or sentences, name three things that make you happy.	Open-ended question; thematic content analysis and quantifications, bivariate and multivariate linear regression analysis
Wellness tourist motivation	Please answer the following statements describing your motivation to travel. Why do you want to go on a wellness trip? "So that I can …"	Closed ended questions with a 5-point Likert scale: 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree (adapted from Kessler et al., 2020); descriptive statistics, factor analysis, bivariate and multivariate linear regression analysis
Wellness tourist destinations	What kind of tourist destination do you ideally holiday in? Put items in order from one to nine. In addition, name the three main reasons why you are preferably vacationing in that destination.	Closed-ended questions with a 9-point Likert scale: 1 = most popular to 9 = least popular. Frequency distribution, bivariate and multivariate linear regression analysis Open-ended question; thematic content analysis and quantifications.

3.2. Data analysis

The data was first analysed by examining descriptive statistics and the frequency distribution of background variables using SPSS28. Second, qualitative data on sources of happiness were analysed using thematic content analysis and quantification to provide a descriptive representation of the data. Third, the motivation of wellbeing tourists was investigated, and an exploratory factor analysis of the motivation questions was conducted to determine motivational dimensions and construct sum variables. Fourth, destination preferences were analysed using descriptive statistics. Descriptive statistics on motivational dimensions and items by background and happiness variables are also presented. Finally, the relationships between happiness, wellbeing travellers' motivation, destination preferences and background variables were examined using bivariate and multivariate linear regression analysis (using ordinary least squares [OLS]), which allowed us to use both continuous and categorical variables for the analysis. For the multivariate linear regression analysis the Enter method was chosen to give additional information for interpreting the destination. The Enter method allows all independent variables relevant to the wellness tourism theory to be simultaneously forced into the equation. Moreover, the researcher can obtain a reduced set of variables from a larger set of independent variables, thus eliminating unnecessary variables and simplifying data to enhance the model's accuracy (Nummenmaa, 2021). Table 2 describes the descriptive statistics of the background variables of Finnish wellness travellers by gender, age, education level, and income level.

Of the 520 respondents, 79.6% were female, and 19.8% were male. The remaining 0.6% answered "other" or "I do not want to tell". Most respondents were aged 55–64 (38.1%), followed by 65–75 (22.6%), and 45–54 (22.2%). Regarding education, 37% of the respondents had vocational qualifications, followed by a bachelor's degree at 32.5%, and then a

Table 2. Demographic statistics of Finnish wellness travellers.

Gender	N	%
Male	103	19.8%
Female	414	79.6%
I do not want to tell/other	3	0.6%
Age group		
18–24	3	0.6%
25–34	12	2.3%
35–44	44	8.5%
45–54	115	22.2%
55–64	197	38.1%
65–75	115	22.6%
Over 75	29	5.6%
Educational background (according to the Finnish education system)		
Basic education	31	6.1%
Matriculation examination	28	5.5%
Vocational qualifications	188	37%
Bachelor degree	165	32.5%
Master degree	90	17.7%
Doctoral/Licentiate degree	6	1.2%
Gross income/year		
20 000€ - 34 999€	136	26.3%
35 000€ - 49 999€	96	18%
50 000€ - 74 999€	96	18.6%
Over 75 000€	72	13.9%
I do not know/		
I do not want to tell	120	23.2%

master's at 17.7%. In terms of income level, the majority of respondents (26.3%) were in the gross annual income range of €20,000-34,999.

4. Results

4.1. Finnish wellness travellers' sources of happiness

Respondents were first asked to name the three main things that made them happy in a few words or sentences. Altogether, 1422 references were given. After thematic content analysis, 11 thematic categories were identified, listed in their order of importance: relationships; nature; health, and well-being; rest and relaxation; active living; food and wine; balanced mind; balanced living; escaping from everyday life; independence and safety; and Finnish sauna. These categories were further divided into hedonic and eudaimonic well-being based on previous literature (Diener, 2009; Diener et al., 1999; Huta & Ryan, 2010; Kahneman et al., 1999; Ryff & Singer, 2008; Waterman, 2008). Table 3 illustrates that we identified 305 references addressing hedonic well-being and 1117 eudaimonic well-being.

Our findings show that Finnish happiness seems largely based on eudaimonic-oriented meaning-seeking, consisting of meaningful and valuable actions or activities, rather than hedonic-oriented pleasure-seeking. The main sources of happiness include relationships (454 references), nature (174), rest and relaxation (166), and health and well-being (165). *Relationships* – family, friends, children, and pets – are Finns' most important sources of happiness. The importance of *nature* was highly stressed: Finns value being outdoors, engaging in nature-based activities, enjoying the changing seasons, being authentic and pure, and appreciating nature's beauty. *Rest and relaxation* were frequently addressed, especially regarding not being rushed, being stress-free, and enjoying calmness and quietness. *Health and well-being* are vital factors contributing to happiness, whether regarding one's health or that of loved ones.

Moreover, the importance of active living, balance of mind, and balanced living were addressed. Notably, these factors intertwine with the above-mentioned main sources of happiness: one can embrace *active living* while engaging in nature-based activities, cherish a *balance of mind* while enjoying calmness and quietude or nature's beauty, or experience *balanced living* when all important aspects of one's life are balanced: home and family, work or education, leisure and financial stability.

Two concrete sources of happiness were mentioned – *food and wine,* as well as *Finnish sauna* – the latter of which is often associated with the natural environment and bathing in natural waters in summer and winter. By contrast, *escaping from everyday life,* such as going for a holiday or travelling, and *independence and safety,* which concerns autonomy or a sense of security, were surprisingly low-valued as main sources of Finnish happiness.

Our results align with previous literature, indicating that hedonic and eudaimonic well-being are not mutually exclusive but tend to be positively correlated and influence one another (Filep & Laing, 2019; Filep et al., 2022; Huta & Ryan, 2010; Huta & Waterman, 2014; Lengieza et al., 2019; Rahmani et al., 2018).

4.2. Finnish wellness travellers' motivations

Finnish wellness travellers' motivations were examined by Kessler et al. (2020) seven motivational dimensions: Movement & Fitness, Healthy Food & Diet, Meditation & Mindfulness,

Table 3. Sources of happiness of Finnish wellness travellers in relation to hedonic and eudaimonic well-being.

Main category	Main category	Example citations
Hedonic well-being (305 references, 21%)		
Rest and relaxation (166 references)	Calmness, no rush, rest, no stress, quietness, sleep	"Good, unscented, relaxation treatments, yoga on the beach or in the forest, peaceful music and good food." "Peace, nature and balance", "A good night's sleep",
Food & Wine (89 references)		"Good food and drink after a walk and sauna", "Good and affordable food", "Good wine"
Escaping from everyday life (50 references)	Travelling, "getting away", room, services, different environment,	"Getting away from the normal environment", "New travel experiences", "Travelling with your own family", "Clean rooms", "A small break",
Eudaimonic well-being (1119 references, 79%) Relationships (454 references)	Pets, family, children, friends, intimacy, love	"Family, my dog, beautiful weather" "What makes me happy is my children's care for their families, and my grandchildren's contentment and happiness, my spouse's well-being and happiness, and my own happiness" "Friends to whom I can vent my troubles. My "talking cat", to whom I am the most important thing in the world.", "I have a wonderful wife, I have wonderful children"
Nature (174 references)	Nature, outdoors, season, good weather	"Nature trip with camping, spring weather, beautiful domestic landscapes" "Walking in the woods, especially in the crisp air. In the summer, the gentle, unhurried suds of the beach sauna and the repeated dips in the lake. In winter, the frosty blue twilight, gazing at the stars and moon, as the snow crunches under the shoes." "The peace of nature, where you can sit around a campfire or by the water and watch the sun set or rise. Good, unscented, relaxation treatments, yoga on the beach or in the forest, peaceful music and good food."
Health & Well-being (165 references)		"That my loved ones stay healthy or don't get sick again and that I get myself fit and healthy", "I feel happy when I feel loved, needed, comfortable in my own body"
Active life (129 references)	Activities, sports, creativity, culture, experiences	"Swimming in cold water, a book that takes you away, a successful apple pie", "Listening to music", "Yoga",
Balanced mind (70 references)	Authenticity, beauty, purity, balance, awareness, atmosphere, faith	"Spirituality, awareness of one's place", "I give my worktime to others but balance it with nature and photography, finding my own inner peace", "Landscapes that nurture the soul", "Forgiveness and love"
Everyday life and security created by home, work and the economy (65 references)	Work, education, home, summer cottage, good everyday life, financial security	"Balance between work and leisure", "An economic situation that allows you to live without stress"
Independence and safety (41 references) "security", "Freedom"	Independence, freedom of choice and security, lawfulness, Finland	"The freedom to be, to live and to move", "Sense of Security, Freedom"
Finnish Sauna (19 references)		Hot sauna; Swimming/ Ice-swimming & sauna

Rest & Relaxation, Learning about Wellness, Self-Care, and Nature & Disconnect, with 28 statements. Respondents answered statements using a 5-point Likert scale from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. Table 4 presents the motivational items and each item's mean and standard deviation.

According to the responses, the most important motivational items were "to return to everyday life feeling energised" (M = 4.03, SD = 1.00), "to experience activities in nature" (M = 3.90, SD = 1.03), "to give myself time and peace" (M = 3.87, SD = 1.10), and "to enjoy a variety of foods that suit my diet" (M = 3.85, SD = 1.01). The least motivating activities were "to practise cooking and/or get healthy recipes to take home" (M = 2.52, SD = 1.17) and "to learn to meditate" (M = 2.26, SD = 1.16). According to the standard deviation, respondents' motivational levels vary most on the motivational items "to find my inner self" (M = 2.86, SD = 1.23) and "to get over my negative life situation" (M = 2.84, SD = 1.26).

An exploratory factor analysis (EFA) of the 28 motivational scale items was conducted to identify motivational dimensions. Barlett's test of sphericity and Kaiser-Meyer Olkin measurement (KMO) were conducted. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value in the EFA dataset was 0.871 (> 0.5), meaning the data set was suitable for factor analysis. All factors with eigenvalues greater than 1 and factor loadings greater than 0.70 were retained in the solution, with Cronbach's alphas ranging from 0.807–0.892. Thus, a four-factor solution was created involving 15 items and explaining 74.14% of the total variance. The identified motivational dimensions were labelled "Learning about wellness", "Inner peace and relaxation", "Nature connection", and "Physical well-being" (Table 5).

Table 4. Means and standard deviations of the Finnish wellness travellers' motivations.

Statement	M	SD
To return to everyday life feeling energised	4.03	1.00
To experience activities in nature	3.90	1.03
To give myself time and peace	3.87	1.10
To enjoy a variety of foods that suit my diet	3.85	1.01
To look and feel better	3.83	0.92
To escape the demands of everyday life	3.79	1.16
To lower my stress levels	3.68	1.13
To focus on my own needs	3.65	1.06
To feel the connection with nature	3.64	1.09
To improve my mobility and increase my fitness	3.60	1.07
To sleep better	3.60	1.19
To become more physically fit	3.54	0.98
To be at peace with myself	3.45	1.20
To eat healthier	3.44	1.05
To feel part of nature	3.43	1.16
To find peace and quiet	3.39	1.14
To learn ways to improve my health	3.35	1.14
To think about what is most important to me	3.08	1.21
To learn to manage stressful situations	3.07	1.18
To achieve and/or maintain target weight	3.04	1.18
To challenge myself physically	3.03	1.13
To learn to overcome my health problems	2.98	1.19
To be completely disconnected from technology	2.93	1.18
To find my "inner self"	2.86	1.23
To get over my negative life situation	2.84	1.26
To learn about nutrition so I can make better choices	2.81	1.18
To practice cooking and/or get healthy recipes to take home	2.52	1.17
To learn to meditate	2.26	1.16

4.3. Finnish wellness travellers' destination preferences

Respondents were asked to rank their favourite tourist destinations from 1 to 9 (1 = most popular, 9 = least popular) and name the three main reasons they prefer going there. The results are presented by means, with the lowest mean being the most favourite destination and the highest being the least (Table 6).

Spas came in at number one on top wellness tourism destinations. Comments included "*sauna*", "*swimming, pampering, easiness*", "*activities, relaxation*", and "*the whole family can enjoy*". Notably, Finnish spas are usually amid pure nature by the Baltic Sea or one of the thousand lakes where physically and mentally recharging one's batteries is easy. In modern spa destinations, customers can enjoy a diverse range of sports, culture, entertainment, and other activities in addition to the spa.

Urban destinations came in at number two, for which several reasons were mentioned: "*lots to do and see*", "*culture, attractions, and good food*", "*historic towns*", "*shopping*", "*scenery*", "*accessibility*", and "*variety of facilities*". A few Finnish cities were mentioned, including the capital Helsinki, medieval Turku, and northern Oulu and Ivalo in the heart of Finnish Lapland. The first three offer food for the body and soul through rich cultural offerings, events, local food, and urban nature, among other things. The town of Ivalo is amid Finland's stunning Lapland and wild nature – a great hub for the wide range of nature-based activities and tourism services in its vicinity as well as the town.

National parks and outdoor recreation areas came in third for many reasons, such as "*well-maintained signposts, lodges*", "*clean air*", "*exploring plant species*", "*nature*", "*physical activity, marked woodland areas*", "*close to home*", and "*animals*". Finland has 41 national parks, stretching from the Archipelago Sea to Lapland. They are large nature reserves with the important task of safeguarding biodiversity and allowing people to enjoy and relax in nature. National parks have marked trails, nature trails, and fireplaces. National parks offer

Table 5. An exploratory factor analysis of the motivational scale items of Finnish wellness travellers.

Factors	Factor loadings	Eigen-value	% of	Cronbach's Alpha
Learning about wellness		6.383	42.551	0.890
To learn about nutrition so I can make better choices	0.855			
To practise cooking and/or get healthy recipes to take home	0.769			
To learn ways to improve my health	0.753			
To learn to manage stressful situations	0.745			
To learn to overcome my health problems	0.741			
Inner peace and relaxation		2.140	14.272	0.807
To escape the demands of everyday life	0.851			
To return to everyday life feeling energised	0.745			
To lower my stress levels	0.740			
To give myself time and peace	0.706			
Nature connection		1.523	10.156	0.892
To feel the connection with nature	0.893			
To feel part of nature	0.863			
To experience activities in nature	0.760			
Physical well-being		1.074	7.16	0.868
To become more physically fit	0.856			
To improve my mobility and increase my fitness	0.820			
To challenge myself physically	0.798			

Notes: Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis; Rotation Method: Varimax; Loadings higher than 0.7 are reported; Bartlett test of sphericity $p < 0.000$. Percent of variance explained 74.14; KMO = 0.871.

Table 6. Means and standard deviations of the favourite destinations.

Destination	M	SD
Spa	4.2	2.70
Urban destination	4.3	2.50
National part & outdoor recreational area	4.40	2.50
Waterfront	4.46	2.72
Archipelago	4.57	2.42
Nature destination with activities	4.82	2.31
Cruise	5.10	2.48
Ski resort	5.67	2.69
Amusement and theme parks	6.05	2.69

overnight accommodations, with camping areas or buildings. Several Finnish tourism destinations were mentioned, including year-round activity resorts – Ylläs, Saariselkä, Levi, Luosto, and the Urho Kekkonen National Park – all in Lapland. Among the destinations mentioned in Southern Finland included the national parks of Nuuksio, Teijo, and Torronsuo.

Waterfront destinations came in fourth. Finnish beaches are on the shores of the Baltic Sea, numerous rivers, and thousands of lakes. Most comments were naturally about water during summer and winter, namely "*swimming*". Other comments included "*a relaxed pastime with the family*", "*being active outdoors and enjoying nature*", and surprisingly, "*heat and sun*" because Finnish summers are not necessarily warm and sunny.

Cruises, ski resorts, and amusement and theme parks were the least favourite destinations. A Finnish speciality is the Baltic Sea cruises: "Turku – Åland Islands - Stockholm", "Helsinki – Åland Islands - Stockholm", and "Helsinki - Tallinn". These trips range from short journeys of a few hours to full-day packages, including one or two nights aboard and also offer wellness services. Several cruise lines offer voyages, and there are several daily departures from Helsinki and Turku. Of the above-mentioned destinations, Ylläs, Saariselkä, Levi, and Luosto are year-round resorts where Nordic and downhill skiing can be practised in winter. However, they all have well-developed tourist offerings, hospitality super structures, and various wellness services.

Finns are down-to-earth, which is certainly reflected in the fact that artificial experiences or forced tourist destinations are not very popular. A speciality was mentioned as a wellness destination: the Moomin World. This family theme park in Naantali is on the beautiful island of Kailo; its charm lies largely in the active movement in nature and the experiences the Moomin philosophy created; tranquillity, flora and fauna, and family time. This theme park combines all the elements of holistic wellness that meet the criteria for eudaimonic well-being.

4.4. The relationships between happiness, wellness tourist motivation, and tourism destinations

Finally, the relationships between happiness, motivation, background variables and destination were analysed using linear regression analysis. To include the categorical background variables as independent variables, they were transformed accordingly: age group was categorised into adults (18–54) and elderly (55 years and older); education level into upper secondary and higher education; and gross income into middle/lower

(below 50.000€) and higher (50.000€ and above). Dummy variables were created to represent categorical background variables – the four most important sources of happiness (relationships; nature; rest and relaxation; health and well-being) and background variables. Based on the motivational factors new sum variables were formed (Learning about wellness; Inner peace and relaxation; Nature connection; Physical well-being). Finally, destination preferences were inverted (1 = least popular, 9 = most popular); the analysis included only the four most preferred destinations (spa; urban destination; national park and recreation area; waterfront destination). Table 7 shows descriptive statistics of the means and standard deviation for the background and happiness variables for both motivation and destination.

For gender, only men and women were included, and for income categories only those who reported their income.

Table 8 summarises the results of the linear regression analyses. Each coefficient represents the result of a separate regression analysis between independent background variables (0–1 point scale), happiness (0–1), motivation (1–5), and destination (1–9). Standardised coefficients are used due to the different units of measurement.

Regarding motivational factors, "Learning about wellness" is positively associated with "waterfront destination" ($\beta = 0.112$, $p = 0.011$), while "Nature connection" is negatively associated with "spas" ($\beta = -0.086$, $p = 0.05$). However, these relationships can be considered weak. Concerning happiness, none of the happiness factors significantly explain motivational factors. However, regarding destination, two statistically significant positive correlations were found: "Relationships" weakly correlate with "urban destination" ($\beta = 0.097$, $p = 0.028$) and "nature" moderately with "national park and outdoor recreational areas" ($\beta = 0.133$, $p = 0.003$).

For background variables, three moderate and statistically highly significant and moderate relationships were found. Higher education is negatively associated with "Learning about wellness" ($\beta = -0.187$ $p < 0.001$). Positive associations relate to females with "Inner peace and relaxation" ($\beta = 0.208$, $p < 0.001$), and age group adults with "Inner peace and relaxation" ($\beta = 0.286$, $p < 0.001$).

The final step of the analysis was modelling the linear relationship between the independent background, happiness, and the motivational variables and dependent destination variable to discover whether specific combinations of independent variables can explain variance in the dependent variable. Multivariate linear regression analysis using the Enter method was run to give additional information for interpreting the destination. The size of the coefficient, the statistical significance, and the meaningfulness of the variables in the model are considered.

First, all independent background, happiness, and motivational variables were fitted into the model to explain each of the four dependent destination variables. Before examining models, the main assumptions underlying multivariate regression models were examined for each model and the identified outliers were deleted to improve the validity of the results. However, the overall F statistics were not statistically significant in any of the regression models. Next, the independent variables that did not fit the models were excluded to improve the model's fit, and the analysis was run again several times. Explanatory power of the models could not be greatly increased, although overall statistical significance was improved. However, the analysis provides some interesting findings concerning statistically significant regressions that continue to identify relationships in

Table 7. Means and standard deviations of the motivational dimensions and destinations by background and happiness variables.

	N	Learning about wellness		Inner peace and relaxation		Connection with nature		Physical well-being		Spa		Urban		National park and recreational area		Waterfront	
		Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.
Gender																	
Male	103	2.78	0.93	3.48	0.91	3.47	0.93	3.30	0.96	6,20	2,57	5,74	2,46	5,59	2,49	5,58	2,72
Female	414	2.99	0.99	3.71	0.84	3.71	1.01	3.41	0.94	5,76	2,74	5,66	2,49	5,62	2,44	5,50	2,69
Age group																	
Adult	174	2.86	0.99	4.20	0.71	3.70	1.07	3.31	0.99	5.32	2.74	5.76	2.43	5.39	2.33	5.37	2.66
Elderly	343	2.99	0.97	3.67	0.90	3.64	0.95	3.43	0.92	6.12	2.66	5.63	2.51	5.73	2.50	5.60	2.71
Educational background																	
Upper secondary education	247	3.13	0.96	3.86	0.87	3.67	0.97	3.49	0.90	5.92	2.40	5.68	2.40	5.79	2.54	5.68	2.6
Higher education	261	2.76	0.97	3.84	0.88	3.65	1.02	3.28	0.98	5.83	2.68	5.67	2.55	5.45	2.35	5.35	2.72
Gross income/year																	
Low/middle gross income	229	3.03	0.94	3.85	0.89	3.77	0.95	3.43	0.92	5.85	2.81	5.77	2.47	5.70	2.56	5.52	2.71
High gross income	168	2.77	1.01	3.90	0.83	3.56	0.97	3.30	0.99	5.71	2.67	5.46	2.56	5.65	2.38	5.46	2.70
Happiness																	
Nature,	157	2.90	1.06	3.91	0.86	3.70	1.02	3.37	0.94	5.86	2.65	5.55	2.39	6.11	2.61	5.65	2.63
Nature, not contributing	360	2.96	0.94	3.81	0.88	3.64	0.99	3.40	0.95	5.85	2.74	5.73	2.53	5.40	2.34	5.46	2.73
Health and wellbeing,	159	2.95	0.98	3.82	0.87	3.60	0.94	3.37	0.92	6.13	2.71	5.69	2.52	5.51	2.32	5.70	2.58
Health and wellbeing, not contributing	358	2.94	0.98	3.85	0.89	3.69	1.02	3.40	0.96	5.73	2.70	5.66	2.47	5.66	2.50	5.43	2.75
Rest and relaxation,	137	3.012	0.99	3.81	0.89	3.59	1.03	3.39	0.89	6.17	2.66	5.61	2.47	5.41	2.50	5.71	2.70
Rest and relaxation, not contributing	380	2.92	0.97	3.86	0.87	3.69	0.98	3.38	0.96	5.74	2.72	5.70	2.50	5.69	2.43	5.45	2.70
Relationships,	175	2.94	0.97	3.82	0.88	3.66	0.99	3.44	0.95	5.81	2.72	5.34	2.60	5.53	2.44	5.59	2.59
Relationships, not contributing	342	2.96	0.99	3.89	0.88	3.66	1.01	3.48	0.92	5.87	2.70	5.85	2.41	5.66	2.45	5.48	2.75

Notes: The scale for motivation 1–5, and for destination 1–9.

Table 8. Summary of linear regression analysis and regression coefficients.

Wellness tourist motivation		Learning about wellness	Inner peace and relaxation	Connection with nature	Physical well-being	Spa	Urban destination	National park & outdoor recreational area	Waterfront destination
Learning about wellness	Beta					0.007	−0.021	0.032	**0.112****
	Std. error					2.710	.497	2.448	2.683
	Adj. R2					−0.022	−0.001	−0.001	0.011
Inner peace and relaxation	Beta					−0.072	−0.050	−0.034	0.031
	Std. error					2.703	0.496	2.448	2.699
	Adj. R2					0.003	0.001	−0.001	−0.001
Nature connection	Beta					**−0.086***	−0.056	−0.043	0.045
	Std. error					2.670	0.496	2.447	2.698
	Adj. R2					0.006	0.001	0.000	0.000
Physical well-being	Beta					−0.037	−0.019	−0.051	0.050
	Std. error					2.798	0.497	2.446	2.697
	Adj. R2					−0.001	−0.002	0.001	0.001
Relationships, happiness	Beta	−0.011	−0.038	0.002	−0.070	0.012	**0.097***	0.025	−0.019
	Std. error	0.979	0.877	0.995	0.943	2.710	2.474	2.449	2.670
	Adj. R2	−0.002	−0.001	−0.002	0.003	−0.002	0.007	−0.001	−0.002
Nature, happiness	Beta	−0.028	0.049	.0029	−0.017	0.002	−0.033	**0.133****	−0.033
	Std. error	0.978	0.876	0.995	0.945	2.710	2.710	2.428	2.700
	Adj. R2	−0.001	0.000	−0.001	−0.002	−0.002	−0.002	0.016	−0.001
Rest and Relaxation, happiness	Beta	0.049	−0.022	−0.044	0.003	0.070	−0.016	−0.051	0.043
	Std. error	0.977	0.877	0.994	0.946	2.703	2.485	2.446	2.700
	Adj. R2	0.000	−0.001	0.000	−0.002	0.003	−0.002	0.001	0.000

(*Continued*)

Table 8. Continued.

Wellness tourist motivation		Learning about wellness	Inner peace and relaxation	Connection with nature	Physical well-being	Spa	Urban destination	National park & outdoor recreational area	Waterfront destination
Health and wellbeing, happiness	Beta	0.005	−0.016	−0.039	−0.013	0.069	0.007	−0.029	0.046
	Std. error	0.979	0.877	0.994	0.946	2.703	2.703	2.449	2.700
	Adj. R2	−0.002	−0.002	0.000	−0.002	.003	0.003	−0.001	0.000
Gender, female a	Beta	**0.086***	**0.208****	**0.096***	0.002	−0.065	−0.013	0.005	−0.012
	Std. error	0.975	0.858	0.990	0.945	2.704	2.485	2.450	2.700
	Adj. R2	0.005	0.042	0.007	0.048	0.002	−0.002	−0.002	−0.002
Age group, adult b	Beta	−0.064	**0.286****	0.028	−0.067	**−0.139****	0.024	−0.066	−0.019
	Std. error	0.977	0.841	0.995	0.943	2.680	2.485	2.484	2.698
	Adj. R2	0.002	0.080	−0.001	0.003	0.018	0.002	−0.001	−0.039
Education, higher Education c	Beta	**−0.187****	−0.010	−0.008	**−0.108***	−0.018	−0.010	−0.069	−0.060
	Std. error	0.963	0.879	0.998	0.941	2.711	2.488	2.445	2.699
	Adj. R2	0.033	−0.002	−0.002	0.010	−0.002	−0.002	0.003	0.002
Gross income, high Income d	Beta	**−0.129***	0.025	**−0.109***	−0.018	−0.024	−0.061	0.005	−0.011
	Std. error	0.970	0.862	0.959	2.711	2.748	2.510	2.450	2.710
	Adj. R2	0.014	−0.002	0.009	−0.002	−0.002	0.001	−0.002	−0.002

Notes: * $p < .050$ ** $p < .010$ *** $p < .001$.
a (1 = female, 0 = male), b (1 = adult, 0 = elderly), c (1 = higher education, 0 = upper secondary education), d (1 = high income, 0 = low/middle gross income).

models for the destinations Spa and National park and outdoor recreational areas. While for urban and waterfront destinations any explaining models could not be generated to the limitations arising from low R2 and lack of significance in multivariate regressions.

First, the analysis shows that "spa" (R2 = 0.059, F [3, 451] = 8.761, $p > 0.001$) has a positive and moderate association with age group elderly (β = 0.211, $p > 0.001$) and weak with "rest and relaxation" (β = 0.122, $p = 0.009$). Although "relationships" (β = 0.080, $p = 0.086$) is not significantly related to spa it was left into the model due the meaningfulness and the ability to enhance explaining accuracy. According to the results reported in Table 9, the whole model is statistically significant ($p < 0.001$) and the strength of the regression is moderately strong (R = 0.235). As shown in the above table, adjusted R2 = 0.053 which means about 5.3% is explained by independent variables in the model. The results indicate that the 18–54 age group finds spas less preferable than the 55 and over age group. Moreover, respondents who find relationships and rest and relaxation as happiness factors prefer spa destinations more than the reference group.

"National park and outdoor recreational area" (R2 = 0.049, F [3, 478] = 8.195, $p < 0.001$) has a moderate and weak positive association with "nature" (β = 0.155, $p < 0.001$) and elderly (β = 0.125, $p < 0.005$) and weak negative association with higher education (β = −0.101, $p = 0.024$). According to the results reported in the table, it is concluded that the regression model fits the data and the whole model is statistically significant ($p < .001$) and the overall strength of the regression is moderately strong (R = 0.221). These three independent variables combined explain 4.3% (adj. R2 = 0.043) of the variance in the dependent variable. "Nature" as a happiness factor has a larger and more significant effect on the "National park and outdoor recreational area" than other variables. The model shows that people who find nature as a happiness factor and who are adults are more likely to choose National park and outdoor recreational areas as destinations than those of the reference groups, while respondents with higher income favour the destination less than respondents with lower income.

Table 9. Summary of multivariate linear regression analysis and regression coefficients explaining Spa and National park & outdoor recreational area.

	Beta	p	r^2	Adj. r^2	F	Std.Error	Constant	Obs.
Spa a		<0.001	0.059	0.053	8.761	2.446	5.263	455
Age group elderly	0.211	<0.001						
Relationships, happiness	0.080	0.086						
Rest and Relaxation, happiness	0.122	0.009						
National park & outdoor recreational area b		<0.001	0.049	0.043	8.195	2.266	5.417	481
Nature, happiness	0.155	<0.001						
Age Group elderly	0.125	0.005						
Higher education	−0.101	0.024						

[a]Notes: Std. Residual Min = −2.178, Std. Residual Max = 1.528. Age group elderly, Tolerance = .994, VIF = 1.006; Relationships, Tolerance = .955, VIF = 1.007: Rest and Relaxation, Tolerance = .960, VIF = 1.047. The charts of standardised residuals indicated that the data contained approximately normally distributed errors.
[b]Notes: Std. Residual Min = −2.358, Std. Residual Max = 1.788. Nature, Tolerance = .998, VIF = 1.04; Age group elderly, Tolerance = .996, VIF = 1.004: Higher education, Tolerance = .995, VIF = 1.005. The charts of standardised residuals indicated that the data contained approximately normally distributed errors.

5. Discussion

The ecological crisis and the Covid-19 pandemic have further accelerated the importance of wellness, resulting in wellness becoming one of the most important consumer values, means of resilience, and lifestyle priorities for many around the globe (GWI, 2021; 2023). Consumers are increasingly aware of and interested in investing in their happiness, well-being, and quality of life in various domains, including wellness tourism, simultaneously enhancing the well-being of others and the whole planet for a more sustainable future (Andreu et al., 2021; Ateljevic, 2020; Cheer, 2020; Grénman, 2019).

Although wellness tourism has been widely studied in previous literature (Andreu et al., 2021; Chen et al., 2008; Dillette et al., 2018; Kelly, 2012; Smith & Puczkó, 2009; Voigt et al., 2011), a scholarly understanding of the nexus of happiness, motivation, and destination is still in its infancy (cf. Dillette et al., 2018; GWI, 2023). Research on well-ness tourism should go beyond the conventional understanding of wellness tourist motivation or tourism destination. Accordingly, this paper examined the relationships between happiness, wellness tourist motivation, and tourism destinations among Finnish wellness travellers during crises. We drew from wellness tourism studies and posi-tive psychology and discussed happiness and wellness tourist motivations regarding hedonic and eudaimonic well-being.

Based on our findings, Finnish happiness is largely based on eudaimonic-oriented meaning-seeking focusing on long-term happiness (Ryff & Singer, 2008; Waterman, 2008) rather than hedonic-oriented and short-term pleasure-seeking (Diener, 2009; Diener et al., 1999; Kahneman et al., 1999): relationships, nature, rest and relaxation, and health and well-being. These findings are in accordance with the World Happiness Report: Finns' enduring happiness is associated with a solid connection to nature and the outdoors, self-healing saunas, icy waters, and balanced living, the importance of which have even increased during the crisis (Helliwell et al., 2022).

Finnish wellness travellers' motivations included hedonic- and eudaimonic-oriented elements: feeling energetic, being active in nature, taking care of one's time and peace of mind, escaping daily life, lowering stress levels, and feeling connected to nature. This finding aligns with previous studies suggesting wellness tourist motivation combines hedonism and pleasure, rest and relaxation, meaningful experiences, philanthropic activi-ties, personal growth, and broader pro-social or pro-environmental outcomes (Lengieza et al., 2019; Smith & Diekmann, 2017; Voigt et al., 2010; 2011).

These motivations echo Finnish wellness travellers' destination preferences: spas, urban destinations, national parks and outdoor recreation areas. The connecting factor among these destinations is nature. Nature is vital in Finns' enduring happiness. Being active in nature gives people meaning and purpose. Many Finnish spas are also located in the midst of nature. Again, in cities the connection with nature can be created by making use of "urban green or blue," as many Finnish urbanites do (cf. Majeed & Ramkis-soon, 2020). Notably, in this sparsely populated country, even the cities are rich in nature and are often by the sea, a river, or a large lake.

The findings regarding the relationships between happiness, wellness tourist motiv-ation, and tourism destinations among Finnish wellness travellers were not very signifi-cant. Nevertheless, some observations can be highlighted:

According to the survey, spas are favoured by the elderly age group in particular. Both rest and relaxation as well as relationships influence their happiness. This is relatively easy to understand: people rarely go on spa holidays alone, but with their spouse or family/friends to use to the various services and conveniences that spas offer. Spa holidays can easily combine both eudaimonic and hedonistic happiness factors (Bočkus et al., 2023a).

Nature is a higher happiness factor than other factors, especially among well-off adults. They most often choose "natural park and other recreational area" as their destination, confirming nature is the motivating factor (Bočkus et al., 2023b; Chen et al., 2008; Kessler et al., 2020; Konu & Laukkanen, 2009). On the other hand, respondents in higher income category are less likely to choose these destinations than those earning less. This could be explained by the fact that in Finland, for example, national parks offer many completely free services, which are both attractive and make it easier for people with lower incomes to use them. It was found that the motivational factors used in this study do not have much to do with the preferred destination, although previous studies (Bočkus et al., 2023a; Bočkus et al., 2023b; Kim et al., 2016) emphasise motivation in this regard. On the other hand, happiness and demographic factors clearly play a role. Here too, the time of the survey may play a role; during the pandemic, motivation was still present but the constraints of the time of travel limited the choices.

Unfortunately, no explanatory models could be created for urban destinations and waterfronts. Water bodies (lakes, rivers, the Baltic Sea) are such a natural part of Finnish life that their importance may not have been highlighted in the responses, also the timing of the survey might have influenced this. On the other hand, with the exception of the capital region, there are hardly any big cities in Finland. Therefore, their importance as a source of happiness was not mentioned, although urban destinations were the number two destination in themselves and as such an interesting area to research more.

6. Implications, limitations and future research

This study contributes to the existing wellness tourism literature in more than one way. First, it reinforces the understanding that wellness tourism and nature are a strong combination and motivational factor in Finland. Second, it highlights that Finnish happiness is largely based on a eudaimonic-oriented search for meaning focused on long-term happiness, which is in line with Ryff and Singer (2008) and Waterman (2008). Third, it highlights that wellness can be experienced in a wide range of tourist destinations. Even in cities where, e.g. urban nature, various cultural, and leisure activities can create a perfect wellness vacation or staycation nurturing body, mind, and spirit (Saari, 2022). Fourth, we can conclude that wellness, happiness and motivation are linked, at least in some respect.

Before the Covid −19 pandemic, wellness tourism was growing faster than the global economy (GWI, 2021). This study provides the tourism industry and entrepreneurs with enhanced knowledge for developing their wellness services to meet the needs of future wellness tourists (Bočkus et al., 2023a). Wellness travellers can be found from many types of destinations: nature parks, urban locations, spas, and waterfronts for example. Wellness tourism businesses in these locations need to think carefully about the motivational factors that influence their customers' choice of destination, for example, when working on the marketing claims corresponding to tourists' motivations.

In addition, tourism destinations can use different motivational items to develop their wellness brand by considering, for example, the preferences and aspirations of age groups, level of education and income. Understanding the elements contributing to happiness is another critical factor in wellness tourism. According to this study, the happiness of Finnish tourists is largely eudaimonic, almost mundane happiness. The main message to businesses could be that while happiness comes from everyday things, it can also be increased through small but attentive services and a good service attitude.

This study was conducted in Finland, so the conclusions may not be generalisable to other wellbeing tourism destinations. In addition, this study was conducted in the middle of a pandemic (autumn 2021), when most Finns would only travel domestically, if at all, so the motivations of future wellness travellers may be different in the post-Covid-19 period. In addition the timing of the study, late fall, could have affected e.g. the choice of preferred destinations, which could explain why waterfronts and amusement parks were not among the popular destinations. Almost 80% of the respondents were women, which is also good to keep in mind when looking at the results. However, this is in line with previous studies confirming females still are the biggest users of wellness services (Bočkus et al., 2023a). The various analyses provide some insights into the relationships between happiness, motivation, destination, and background variables. However, we cannot rely solely on these statistical analyses to explain destination preferences. Nevertheless, the research theme has a novelty value; thus, more empirical research is needed.

As wellness tourism is a growing tourism niche of transformative and regenerative tourism, we encourage future studies to build on our findings; examine the nexus of happiness, motivation, and destination; and explore other wellness destinations in more depth globally.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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