



# Spirituality, Wellness Tourism and Quality of Life

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## Abstract

This article investigates the role of Spirituality, Tourism and Quality of Life in tourist decisions to visit specific places. It is apparent from current global trends that religious based spiritual tourism which enhances the quality of life of many travelers, has become prevalent and is now very popular especially as travelling is becoming far more accessible for many people. World Tourism Organization (2009) asserts that global tourism is one of the fastest growing industries and a core driver when it comes to global economic development. Tourism is regularly analyzed as an expression of human behaviour and thus where people go and why they travel there is worth investigating. Tourism marketing and promotion is reflected upon as an essential aspect for successful tourism development. Consequently, all tourism traffic, both local and international, for a wide range of purposes including religious and spiritual purposes, has increased significantly. Accordingly, the profiles of tourists and their perception about spirituality, wellness tourism and quality of life are important considerations when it comes to the effective marketing of tourism products and services.

**Keywords:** devoutness, wellness, value, travelers, quality

## Introduction

Tourists generally have the enthusiasm to explore novel places and want to experience authentic and unique things. There are of course numerous motives which persuade individuals or groups to travel to other places (Ambrož & Ovsenik, 2011). Such reasons include inter alia, leisure, enjoyment, spiritual regeneration and to enhance their quality of life and thus wellness. There are also then a multiplicity of benefits associated with leisure travel including a change of environment which may lead to enhanced familial relationships and a recovery from especially work-related stress, and also contentment with the vacation itself and resultant agreeable post-trip memories (Chen & Petrick, 2013; McCabe & Johnson, 2013). Travelers then usually seek benefits which are stated as “a change that is viewed to be advantageous – an improvement in condition, or a gain to an individual, a group, to society, or to another entity” (Driver, Brown & Peterson, 1991:3). Therefore, an improvement in a malady, be it physical or spiritual in nature, or even the preservation of a soughtafter condition must be the result of one’s tourism experience (Mannell & Kleiber, 1997:276). People are also increasingly seeking authentic experiences as a means of energizing disjointed personal identity or even existential authenticity (Steiner & Reisinger, 2006). The authenticity aspect is a highly intricate concept that is fundamental in tourism research (Rickly-Boyd, 2012). Irrespective of the trip undertaken, a tourist’s satisfaction or dissatisfaction with one or more of the characteristics of the trip leads to dissatisfaction or satisfaction with the



overall destination and thus affects the ultimate experience. Chon and Olsen (1991) assert that there is a significant relationship between a tourist's expectations on his or her destination experience and their ultimate level of satisfaction. If their expectations are exceeded the travellers' will be delighted, however if not, they will tend to be unfulfilled and discontented with their overall travel experience.

Spirituality in tourism as such, is a progressively more essential focus of interest to researchers globally. Tourism in this area is considered to be a key and growing industry and it is a relatively new dimension of a transmodern tourism practice which involves people searching for meaning in life and according to Puezko & Smith (2012: 274) one's emotional and spiritual wellbeing indicates the quality of one's life. The experience of the tourist who indulges in spiritual and/or religious travel is a critical aspect in enhancing wellness and quality of life within that person (Rojas & Camarero, 2006).

The market for religious travel as such has developed into a billion-dollar global industry (Hashim et al., 2007) and the majority of travelers in this niche are Christians, Muslims, and Hindus (Olsen and Timothy, 2006). Tourism is defined in this article, as the actions of an individual travelling and staying in a particular place which is beyond their normal residence for a certain purpose and period of time (Rowe et al., 2002). The various conclusions drawn from studies on spiritual experiences in tourism bring us nearer to a hypothetical understanding of multifaceted meanings and benefits travelers obtain in the course of their travels. Harrill & Potts (2003: 233) affirm that "tourism is an invisible industry, encompassing transportation, lodging, and entertainment". Tourism is thus a number of ideas, theories, or ideologies in which one is involved in travel as a tourist, and it is the manner in which the actions of tourists play out, when their ideas are applied (Przeclawski, 1986). In today's world, people are on a quest for new experiences that are not only authentic but also unique. They generally also seek benefits which include *inter alia*, their feelings of anticipation, how they enjoy activities they indulge in while on vacation, fresh experiences, acquiring of learning new skills, freedom of choice and an enhanced world view (Chen & Petrick, 2013). Richards (2011) conducted studies on religious tourism, and states that the concept is uncertain. There is thus generally a lack of consensus concerning the definition and notion of spirituality as it is reflected in the cross-cultural and cross-religious plurality of modern society (McCarroll, O'Connor & Meakes, 2005). In the literature, various concepts are clustered under the term 'religious tourism' including spiritual tourism, pilgrimage, pilgrim-tourism, cultural tourism, holistic tourism, creative tourism and wellness tourism. The phenomenon of religious tourism is highly complex and is generally a blending of 'religion' and 'travel' (Richards, 2011).

For the purpose of this article it is suitable to define spirituality as the tourists' search for the transcendent being which we term God, or Divine beings (Pargament & Zinnbauer, 2005). There is a global annual increase in religious tourism as tourists are enticed to visit key religious destinations (Jansen & Kühl, 2008). The World Religious Travel Association (WRTA) stated a decade ago, that there are over 300 million people who travel to sacred places annually, and the size of the religious tourism industry alone was estimated to be \$18 billion (Wright, 2007).

Norman (2012) asserts that spiritual tourism, for example, can be grouped into five distinct categories which can potentially offer authenticity and a measure of uniqueness. These include seeking healing, a spirit of experimentation, a spirit of discovery, the pursuit of knowledge and tourism as a withdrawal from the day-to-day stressed lifestyle people have. Personal and family wellbeing is a major priority in daily life and thus any activities linked to wellness are wanted by tourists so that they can attempt to correct or improve elements their everyday life which is very



often superficial and viewed as non-authentic, or unique and is thus challenging. Research on spirituality, tourism and quality of life in tourist decisions will help marketers, managers and employees in the tourism sector, to better understand what it is that motivates tourists. It also helps in seeking to satisfy their many wants and needs and this spirituality and quality of life desires play a significant role in the product development of destinations. Timothy and Olsen (2006) state that religion and spirituality are very common motivators for travel.

Religious devotion or religiosity is firmly connected with a tourist's thoughts, attitudes, as well as emotional and physiological wellness (Chamberlain & Zika, 1992). For many then, Religious travel may be considered to be as an important time since it offers potential for a mental as well as physical healing experience. When people attend church (Thoresen et al., 2001) or other religious site they feel a sense of ease. However, literature also suggests that religious tourists' such as pilgrims travel for mainly ceremonial and spiritual regeneration and not necessarily for their pleasure or even relaxation and have done so for centuries (Gilbert & Abdullah, 2002). This is why it is important for them to prepare well and read up on the quality of the destination and have some knowledge of what it offers them. This will enhance their experience on their trip and also at their destination, and will invariably impact their sense of wellbeing beyond their trip. The Strategic Initiatives and Government Advisory (SIGA) team (2012) describes religious tourism as travel with the primary purpose of experiencing religious forms, or their products such as art, culture, traditions and architecture. What has bolstered spiritually motivated travelling in recent times is the fact that for many, travelling has become far easier, more accessible and more affordable (Olsen & Timothy, 2006). Such tourism has the added positive effect of improving not only the tourists on quality of life, but also that of the residents at a destination.

When a particular community becomes a sought-after destination, the lives of residents in the community are invariably also affected by the tourism, and the residents then also require support from the relevant state authorities as they develop and plan what they hope will become a successful sustainable tourism destination (Kim, 2002). The quality of life of the residents and their visitors must also be a foremost concern of community leaders. In fact, religious or any other category of tourism should support the development of the quality of life of residents as well (Puezko & Smith, 2001). A universal attitude to life is based on a balance between wellbeing of one's body, mind and spirit (Smith & Puczkó, 2009). Researchers such as Frochot & Morrison (2000) and More & Averill (2003) have acknowledged the very close relationship between a tourists travel motives and their leisure needs and the notion of personal benefits for them from travel is thus well understood.

### **Spirituality and Religious Tourism**

It is evident from the marketing drives of travel agencies and tour operators as evidenced in the media that there is a large growth in what is termed the spirituality and religious market segment. A useful description of a spiritual tourist is that it refers to one who visits a specific place out of their usual environment, with the intention of increasing their level of spiritual meaning and thus spiritual growth.

Religious practices clearly encourage spiritual progress, and such spiritual practices are frequently a conspicuous feature of religious involvement (Armstrong & Crowther, 2002). This is not due to any overtly religious compulsion, which could be religious, non-religious, sacred or experiential in nature, but within a transcendental context, irrespective of the chief reason for travelling to a destination (Haq and Jackson, 2009:145). Wilson et al. (2013) elucidate how people



pursue meaning and life purpose beyond the self, their searches for meaning, and their experiences of transcendence and connectedness through their unique travel experiences. Pargament (1997) suggests that some form of religious and/or spiritual involvement may indeed provide additional ways for people to dealing with problems and thus help them to cope.

However, there is scant research available when it comes to understanding tourist behavior in spirituality and religious tourism and how it impacts wellbeing and thus quality of life of tourists. This is exacerbated by the multifarious relationship between tourism and religion *per se* (Vukonić, 1998) and the fact that spirituality is indeed a more extensive concept than religion. Canda defines spirituality as a: “person’s search for a sense of meaning and morally fulfilling relationships between oneself, other people, the encompassing universe, and the ontological ground for existence” (Canda, 1990: 13). People acquire through their upbringing and education a place-attachment which is essentially an emotional connection to a particular location so that Christians may feel a sense of linkage with Israel, Muslims with Mecca, Hindus with the Ganges and so forth (Hidalgo & Hernandez, 2001). Smith & Kelly (2006), state that travelers now seek holistic tourism experiences. Matheson et al. (2014) conducted research which scrutinized the role of spirituality in the context of tourist motivations rather than as an outcome of experiences and found ascertained that when tourists visited a festival in the United Kingdom, spirituality and escape factors were primary motivators. Smith (2006) suggests that spiritual tourism includes the visiting of religious sites or edifices, spiritual settings, pilgrimage sites, ashrams, retreats and even visits to gurus. Spirituality has linkages with philosophical human introspection, religion, transcendentalism, metaphysics and existentialism, and people seek the meaning of life in almost all things which they undertake. This differs from religion which: “Religion involves the pertaining of spirituality beliefs and practices into social institutions, with community support and traditions maintained over time” (Canda, 1997: 173). In a study by Matteucci (2013), tourists were found to be spiritually affected by their participation in flamenco workshops. Raj, Griffin and Blackwell (2015:105) describe religious tourism as comprising of the visiting of a variety of spiritual sites and their related services, which are visited for nonspiritual and religious reasons.

Kelly (1995) defines spirituality as “a deep sense of belonging, of wholeness, of connectedness, and of openness to the infinite” (1995: 4-5). Spirituality is considered to be central to wellness (Smith & Puezko, 2009:47). Modern tourists desire to live their travel experiences, and for many it is far more than merely interaction with other people and cultures, in particular settings, but rather a quest to self-transformation and an opportunity to grow spiritually (Holladay & Ponder, 2012: 311). In order for travelers to gather knowledge on a destination prior to travelling there, it is critical for them to have a stimulus to motivate them (Hjalager et al., 2012) and in this aspect, the role of word-of-mouth cannot be underestimated.

Spirituality and religion have been shown to enhance an individuals’ quality of life by positively contributing to superior life fulfilment, greater happiness, a more positive affect, increased morale, and a sense of hope (Koenig et al., 2001; Plante & Sharma, 2001). Smith (2003) compares escapism by tourists to religious locations for example, as attempts to escape of themselves and not so much as to augment themselves. There are nonetheless many more who visit spiritual places so as to be able to focus on the self and their innermost spirituality (Digance, 2006:38). Thus while religious travel is an early type of tourism which is driven by religious or spiritual obligations (Sharpley, 2009), the notion of religious tourism is multi-faceted and can be construed in an assortment of ways and there is thus no distinct established definition of religious tourism (Mu et al., 2007). Timothy & Olsen (2006:4) outline religion and spirituality as separate suggesting



that people 'have what they take to be spiritual experiences without having to hold religious beliefs'. Furthermore, they suggest that spirituality is an individual experience. We should also note that people tend to make an emotional and spiritual investment in a particular place (Hummon, 1992). Mu et al. (2007), also contend that the idea of what constitutes religious tourism differ considerably in the West and in the East. Many tourists travel to holy places because the places are well known and promoted as heritage or cultural attractions and not necessarily for religious or spiritual purposes in the traditional sense (Timothy & Boyd, 2003) and many travel for an enjoyment of a sense of history of a place or to enjoy architecture, natural scenery, a holy ambience and local cultures and traditions (Shackley, 2001). Whatever the motivation may be careful segmentation is required so that tourist needs and wants can be satisfied (Haq, Wong & Jackson, 2008).

Religious tourism stresses the preservation, restoration and expansion of religious and historical monuments for the purpose of attracting sustainable tourism. The pilgrimage tourist enjoys sightseeing, traveling, visiting diverse places and, may travel by land, air or sea to a desired destination. Once there, they may stay for one or many nights and buy local memorabilia, eat at local restaurants and experience the unique culture and virtually act like every other tourist, except that they are primarily spiritually motivated. This therefore includes tourism that is inspired by spirituality and religiousness and it is generally associated with religious heritage sites. The religious desire to travel is one of the oldest motivations. The contemporary tourist is a secular pilgrim however religion is the fundamental motivation of the segment which we presently define as 'tourism'. This was in past centuries referred to as 'pilgrimage' and is also an important a subject for various academic disciplines, including sociology, geography, anthropology and history (Hudman and Jackson, 1992). Religious tourism is often referred to a subclass of cultural tourism in which the traveller expresses the desire to travel from their homes to a destination which they consider as sacred and generally hope to participate in some religious proceedings.

Travel for religious reasons is growing in leaps and bounds and comprises a sizeable portion of the international tourism numbers (Timothy & Olsen, 2006). Travel companies across the globe offer extensive faith related packages to a range of religious destinations and pilgrimage sites and this tourism is growing rapidly (Reader, 2007). Given that spirituality is one of the fundamental benefits sought by religious and also wellness tourists, products and experiences need to be carefully packaged under the theme of spirituality (Kelly, 2010). This is crucial given that Lanquar (2011) asserts that about 600 million national as well as international religious and spiritual trips are conducted globally and of that number roughly 240 million tend to visit Europe. Consequently, religious tourism has become an important commercially driven enterprise in which tourists opt for single day or one to two week stays at selected pilgrimage sites.

The implication is that religious sites such as shrines or other religious buildings be maintained, protected and where age is taking its toll, restored. Such destinations require careful promotion and management (Rotherham, 2007). If we take as an example the Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca, this requires exceptional management as numbers of pilgrims are in the millions per day (Henderson, 2011). Religious tourism thus comprises followers of individual faiths visiting sacred locations that are considered to be holy sites for whatever reason. In numerous cases, religious tourists will visit a holy site on the anniversaries of an event that is of significance to the followers of a specific religion. The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) has established objectives and guidelines specially aimed at stimulating the rise of sustainable religious tourism (UNWTO, 2008).

The religious background of the tourist is associated with their perception of a site, so that those who are devout believers are more emotionally bonded with a destination than those who have



lesser belief (Poria, Butler & Airey, 2003). Religious tourism satisfies specific spiritual and/or religious needs (Collins-Kreiner, 2010). Constanta (2009) states that tourism has the potential to increase a traveler's quality of life, which is via a number of avenues such as *inter alia*: rest, relaxation, recreation, contemplation, introspection, physical care, knowledge growth and a sense of the aesthetic.

### **Religious tourist motivations**

An important type of cultural tourism exists in what we term as either 'faith travel', 'religious tourism' or 'pilgrimage'. Its market segment is referred to in diverse variations including faith tourism, pilgrimage tourism, spiritual tourism, religious tourism, and tourism pilgrimage and whatever its appellation, this type of travel is likely the earliest form of tourism in the world (Al-Amin, 2002). Santos (2002), states that religious tourism is basically the expression that has been used by tour operators and religious leaders to describe all kinds of situations that bring together religion and tourism, including pilgrimages. Many tourists specifically opt to go on a religious trip as their inspiration for travelling to a particular destination (Pourtaheri et al., 2012).

Religious travel is in itself not a new occurrence and has generally been considered to be an ancient type of non-economic travel for many centuries (Jackowski & Smith, 1992). Its distinctive from other tourism segments lies in it being driven by a sense of responsibility and obligation rather than simply a quest for pleasure and leisure (Swarbrooke & Horner, 2007). The current worldwide renaissance of religious pilgrimage has arisen for various reasons, together with the rise of fundamentalism which desires a return to prior religious rituals (Stump, 2000). In any event, religious trips have played a great role in bolstering national profits (Karar, 2010) and should be promoted where relevant sites are in existence.

Religious tourism is very different to other kinds of leisure and tourism events, and is largely regarded as a spiritual and religion experience event. This is of course outside the service quality customarily obtained from any service provider and so the perceived quality of experience is highly subjective and differs from person to person. (Chen & Chen, 2010). Thus quality of service is merely a supplementary benefit for most religious tourists. It is evident from a wide range of literature (Singh, 2006; Jewell, 2007; Raj & Morpeth, 2007; Wright, 2008; Rundquist, 2010; Stausberg, 2011) that religious tourists or pilgrims seek to escape the stresses of daily work and life in general. Many thus desire some spiritually invigorating formative and cultural experience in which they growth and become enlightened. Many enjoy dabbling in diverse world views and lifestyles and experiencing other cultures. Jackson and Henrie (1995) ascertained that half of the respondents in a study which they conducted reported having experienced a religious state of mind during their visits to holy sites. In addition, Voase (2007) states that religious tourists acquire a feeling of serenity during their visit to church or cathedral or other holy site.

Many tourists become hooked on a site (Yuksel, et al., 2010) due to their sense of serenity when visiting there. Furthermore, for many, this feeling remains with them long after they left the site in question and the visit thus had a residual wellness effect. Marketers and tour operators need to recognize the interconnections among shared sacred and secular spaces as they develop products (Raj & Griffin, 2015). Wray, Laing & Voigt (2010) emphasize that the spiritual values which reinforce local communities play a very important part in the overall development of specific health and wellness destinations.



## Wellness Tourism and Quality of Life

### Towards Wellness

The contemporary global environment invariably promotes high stress-levels in people and many are driven to seek the meaning in life. In this quest, it becomes important for people to attempt to live far healthier lives and increase their sense of wellbeing. This has resulted in the growth of a rising 'wellness industry' which includes what is referred to as 'wellness tourism'. The wellness tourism market is increasing in size and to an extent this reveals the deep seated emotional needs of people to grow on personal levels. People also seek to develop a sense of belonging in a world which is characterized by nerve-wracking routines and in which they feel increasingly alienated (Heintzman, 2010).

The most widely accepted view is that a definition of wellness tourism is lacking (Bertsch & Ostermann, 2011). Konu, Tuohino & Komppula (2010) state that wellbeing and wellness are fairly extensively used in the 'health, wellbeing and tourism' area. The annual wellness tourism market is far higher than that of medical tourism and is valued at approximately \$494 billion per annum (Andrews, 2014). The Global Wellness Institute (2013), estimates that medical tourism is valued at about \$50-\$60 billion per annum. Thomas (2009:11), contends that wellbeing is an "intangible, difficult to define and even harder to measure" concept. Smith and Puezko (2009:12) state that wellness is a multifaceted concept, encompassing contentment, quality of life, holistic practices and spiritual beliefs and the fundamentals of lifestyle, physical, mental, and spiritual wellbeing, as well as an introspective personal relationship, a relationship with others and also the natural environment. The wellness tourism industry includes a wide diversity of products and services and is also impacted upon by various influential and local stimuli (Kelly, 2012; Miller & Foster, 2010). The wellness market is booming as many people, especially the affluent in developed countries, show more concern for their personal self-development and are desirous of enjoying extended life-spans (Schalber and Peters, 2012). Wellness tourists are in a sense a standardized group with the similar needs, expectations and activities in mind concerning being in good health both physically and spiritually.

Olsen & Timothy (2006) and Shackley, (2004) agree that religious tourists tend to visit churches, cathedrals, shrines, retreat houses, holy places and festivals and this overlaps with wellness tourism resources (Smith and Puezko, 2009) which include retreats, ashrams, festivals, leisure centres, spas, hotels, resorts, hospitals and clinics (SIGA, 2012). Wellness tourism is thus closely aligned with health, medical and wellbeing tourism sub-sectors. Health tourism involves the "the provision of health facilities utilizing the natural resources of the country, in particular mineral water and climate" (Hall, 2011:5) but also includes a range of services and products which integrate medical and wellness tourism subsectors (Mueller & Kaufmann, 2001). Bushell & Sheldon (2009) maintain that Indigenous knowledge is considered to be very important in some wellness definitions as it involves the production and offering of natural remedies which is slowly recapturing its popularity in the global health market due to inaccessibility of traditional medicine for many people.

When considering physical wellbeing, the increasing wide-spread interest in alternative wellness has been ascribed to mounting healthcare costs as well as rising incredulity that orthodox medical treatment is as good as it is believed to be (Voigt et al., 2011). Wellness tourism is thus one of the most promising niche markets in global tourism. While wellness is generally an all-inclusive concept, wellbeing denotes a subjective psychological state (Ryff & Keyes, 1995). It is thus not an easy task to distinguish between medical and wellness tourism as such. We could of course



suggest that they be viewed as different sub-sectors of what is termed health tourism (Nahrstedt, 2004). Letho et al., (2006) include spa tourism and yoga tourists as wellness tourists, while Devereux & Carnegie (2006) speak of spiritual pilgrims.

Wray, Laing & Voigt (2010) understand health related travel it as travel which is for the enhancement of the physical, social, cerebral, emotional, psychological and spiritual dimensions. Konu & Laukkanen (2010) view wellness tourism as a holistic mode of travel that incorporates a search for physical health, beauty, or longevity, and an intensifying of consciousness and a connection with a particular community, with the environment, or even a connection on a transcendental level. Wellness tourism can thus be viewed as the entirety of all the relationships and occurrences resulting from a journey by people whose chief motivation is to preserve or support their health. They tend to book into highly specialized hotels which they believe will provide suitable professional know-how and offer them special individual care such as physical fitness and beauty care, healthy nutrition and diet control, relaxation and meditation and stimulating mental activities and above all (Heung & Kucukusta, 2013). Opportunities for self-reflection are also considered to be critical considerations (Voigt, Brown & Howat, 2011).

### **Enhancing Quality of Life**

Quality of life is essentially tacitly understood to be the degree of wellbeing felt by an individual or collection of people (Delibasic et al., 2008). It is important to note that very few researchers have addressed the consequence of tourism on enhancing the quality of life (Gursoy, Jurowski, & Uysal, 2002; Jurowski, Uysal, & Williams, 1997). The wellbeing of tourists can be connected to the quality of life which can be defined in a variety of ways, including the association between quality of life and life gratification, the quality of life, self- realization and fulfilment (Dolnicar et al., 2012). The notion of wellbeing cannot be measured by a solitary idea as it is clearly a multi-level and multi-dimensional quality of life structure including subjective wellbeing, psychological wellbeing and also social wellbeing (Ryff & Keyes, 1995). Subjective wellbeing as such relates to how one evaluates the quality of their life (Loewenstein & Ubel, 2008). Kelly (2012) asserts that most wellness tourists emanate from the ranks of women who are relatively well educated and generally more affluent than the average. They usually desire to unwind and destress and improve the quality of their health. Joppe, (2010) suggests that cynicism regarding traditional health care is driving especially baby – boomers into the wellness market where they believe they can enhance their quality of life.

Argyle & Lu (1990) state that quality of life is measured by one's state of wellbeing, life satisfaction levels, happiness, and the absence of ill-being and this was also part of the effort to measure quality of life as derived from the early social indicators movement (Bideman, 1974). Kim (2002) classifies quality of life in five spheres including material wellbeing, community wellbeing, emotional wellbeing, and health and safety wellbeing while Veenhoven (2005:61) says that "quality-of-life can be measured by how long and happy people live". There is however no definitive meaning regarding the concept of 'quality of life' (Skevington, Lotfy, & O'Connell, 2004) but the World Health Organization (WHO) defines 'quality of life' as one's discernment of their position in life in the setting of the culture and value systems in which they live. It also relates to their goals, prospects, values and apprehensions (Skevington, Lotfy, & O'Connell, 2004).

When we speak of medical tourism we generally refer to people going abroad to obtain medical, dental, or some or other surgical care (Hudson & Li, 2012:229). There is also a definition of medical tourism which refers to it as a prearranged travel beyond the confines one's local environment for the maintenance, enhancement or restoration of a person's wellbeing in mind



and body (Pocock & Phua, 2011). Wellness tourism is nonetheless usually linked to more holistic attitudes to human wellbeing. By comparison, when we speak of wellbeing tourism, this relates to people travelling to 'mend' the body, mind and soul (Konu & Laukkanen, 2009) or it is "the capacity to combine physical, nutritional, mental, spiritual, social and emotional aspects of life in such a way as to ensure positive health and maintain an optimum quality of life" (Stevens & Associates, 2008:5).

### **Goal and Objectives of the Study**

The study sought to test the main assumptions of tourists on spirituality, wellness tourism and quality of life as aligned to a transmodern paradigm. The study is underpinned by constructive authenticity which is founded in the constructivist belief that authenticity is fluid, subjective, and variable (Reisinger & Steiner, 2006:66). This means that even if tourists are involved in a non-authentic situation their ensuing tourism experience could be perceived to be authentic (Rickly-Boyd, 2012). Many renowned existentialist philosophers reflect on the theme of authentic existence and consider it to be very important. Authentic existence includes the idea that one has to 'create oneself' and then live in harmony with this self.

Ontology is the philosophical study of the nature of being, becoming, existence or reality. Existentialism relates to the existence of every individual person as a free and accountable agent shaping their own development through acts of their own will. Existential authenticity then is grounded on the relativist ontology in which objective reality plays no part in informing the reality of a tourist's experience (Kim & Jamal, 2007).

### **Methodology**

This study was a quantitative study based on primary and secondary data. Primary data was collected by means of self-administered questionnaires and secondary data was sourced from books, academic journals, electronic sources and other accessible sources.

The designated research instrument for the collection of primary data comprised a self-reporting questionnaire which was developed based on a very wide literature review. This is generally considered to be the most effective means of gathering data in short completion times, with a high response rate and useful data" (Mason & Kuo, 2007: 173).

The sample size for the study was established at 35 respondents. The respondents comprised congregants of a church in Gauteng Province, South Africa, who are known to be regular tourists both locally and abroad.

The data for the survey was collected during the period between 19 and 25 October 2016. The researchers informed the participants of the purpose of the survey to assure willing participation and they were informed they would remain anonymous. In order to reduce any bias associated with convenient sampling and to ensure the reliability and internal validity of the data the respondents were approached at the exit of a church hall after a parish function. In the event of family groups emerging simultaneously from the hall, only one respondent was selected, based on who travelled the most. The researchers personally collected the completed questionnaires.

The researchers opted for a probability sampling strategy wherein the samples are gathered in a process that affords all the individuals in the population equal probability of being selected to



participate. The sampling method was a convenience sample, by which the sampling was done on the basis of availability and ease of data collection (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998:76).

The characteristics of the sample are reported in Table 1.

**Table 1: Characteristics of the sample (N = 35 valid responses)**

Category		<i>n</i>	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
<b>Age</b>	18 - 24	1	3.0	3.0
	25-34	5	15.2	18.2
	35-44	9	27.3	45.5
	45-54	10	30.3	75.8
	55-64	4	12.1	87.9
	65+	4	12.1	100.0
<b>Occupation</b>	Clerk / admin	6	17.1	20.0
	Crafts worker	2	5.7	25.7
	Director	4	11.4	37.1
	Construction	1	2.9	40.0
	Professional	10	28.6	68.6
	Service	3	8.6	77.1
	Technical	6	17.1	94.3
	Unemployed	2	5.7	100.0
<b>Gender</b>	Female	14	42.9	42.9
	Male	20	57.1	100.0
<b>Married</b>	No	17	51.4	51.4
	Yes	17	48.6	100.0
<b>Education</b>	High school	6	19.4	19.4
	Diploma	14	45.2	64.5
	Degree	11	35.5	100.0
<b>Children under 18</b>	No	17	51.4	51.4
	Yes	17	48.6	100.0
<b>Income</b>	R25 000 – R49 999	3	8.8	8.8
	R100 000 - R199 999	2	5.9	14.7
	R200 000 - R299 999	8	23.5	38.2
	R300 000 +	21	61.8	100.0



The total sample consisted of 35 participants with complete and valid responses. In terms of the age distribution, the majority of the participants were between 45-54 years old (10, 28.6%) and 35-44 years (9, 25.7%). The age group with the lowest representivity is the category 18-24 years with only one participant. The occupational group that is the best represented in the sample, is Professional with 10 respondents which is 28.6% of the sample. This is followed by the Technical as well as the Clerical / administrative occupations with 6 respondents each (17.1% of the sample respectively).

The representation of the gender groups was slightly higher for males at 57% compared to 43% for females. There were slightly more respondents who have indicated that they are married (51.4%) and 51.4% have also indicated that they still have children that are under 18 years old. In terms of the income of the respondents – 20% have indicated that they are earning more than R300 000 per annum, followed by the category R200 000 – R299 999 with close to 23%. 83% of the respondents earn thus more than R200 000 per annum.

### **Statistical analysis**

The statistical analysis was performed with the help of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS version 23). Descriptive statistics were calculated to provide information on the distribution, with the mean score as either the average, or as the precise centre of the amalgamated values, with the standard deviation as the measure of variability (Leedy & Ormrod 2010). Skewness and kurtosis were also calculated to investigate the distribution of the data. The skewness value provides an indication of the symmetry of the distribution, while the kurtosis provides information about the peakedness of the distribution (Pallant 2010). The critical values for these two statistics are 2 and 7 respectively (West, Finch & Curran 1995).

One-way analysis of variance between groups (more than 2) and t-test (between 2 groups) were conducted to explore the impact of the specific demographic variables on the level of the three broad constructs measured, namely spirituality, wellness tourism and quality of life. Cross-tabulation tables were used to determine and analyse the observed value (number of participants) per response to questions related to (i) number of times travelled abroad in the last ten years; (ii) type of holiday and how many times in last ten years; (iii) type of accommodation usually chosen; (iv) motivations of last visit, and (v) the sources of information that the respondents consult before going on holiday. Chi-square values, usually associated with the use of cross tabulation (as well as effect size by means of Eta-square values) could not be calculated due to the relatively low observed values of certain of the categories (less than 5 respondents in many cases).

### **Findings**

#### **The findings of Section A**

Section A consists of aspects like the number of times the respondents have travelled abroad, the type of holiday the respondents had and how many times over a ten-year period, the type of accommodation usually chosen by the respondents, the average number of nights being on holiday, motivations for the last holiday or visit, and lastly the sources of information they have consulted before going on holiday. These aspects described in accordance with demographic variables such as gender, marital status, age, occupation, educational level and annual income. It is important to mention that, due to the relatively small sample, and subsequent low representation of certain of the demographic categories, the reader must consider the relative



size of the demographic group. Occurrences were reported and not the Chi-square values which are usually associated with cross tabulation. These findings would however provide a broad picture, and might serve as a basis for any further, more representative studies.

The number of times that the respondents have travelled abroad in the last ten years, are reported in Table 2.

**Table 2: Number of times travelled abroad in the last ten years (N = 35 valid responses)**

Category	Number of times	n	Valid Percent
Number of times travelled abroad	1	8	22.9
	2	9	25.7
	3	6	17.1
	4	5	14.3
	5	2	5.7
	6	2	5.7
	8	1	2.9
	10	1	2.9

By inspecting the results reported in Table 2, it is clear that the majority of respondents (80%) have travelled 1 - 4 times abroad in the last ten years, with 9 (25.7%) who have travelled twice abroad, followed by 8 (22.9%) who have travelled once abroad. 6 (17.1%) and 5 (14.3%) respondents have indicated that they have been abroad 3 and 4 times respectively. The number of times abroad decrease steadily from 5 – 10 times. The main findings regarding the number of times abroad in terms of the demographic variables are discussed below.

Gender: 20 males have indicated they have been abroad, with 5 (25%) been abroad once, 3 (15%) twice and 4 (20%) being abroad 4 times. There were 6 (30%) respondent who have indicated that they have been abroad between 4 and 6 times, with one being abroad 8 and 10 times respectively. The females reported a different picture, with 64% of the females that have been travelling abroad (out of 14), being abroad once (21.4%) and twice (42.9%). 2 respondents (14.3%) have been abroad 3 times and 3 (21.4%) being abroad 4 times.

Marital status: Unmarried respondents reported that they had travelled abroad at least once (66.7%) or twice (22.2%). However, the married respondents reported a different picture, with the majority (of the 25) reporting that they were abroad twice (28%), 3 times (20%), 4 times (20%) and 24% 5 or more times.

Age: The age groups 18 – 24 and 25 – 34 years have been abroad once (100% and 60% respectively) and twice (0% and 40% respectively). The age group who reported the highest number of times abroad is 45-54 with 3 or 30%) indicated that they have been abroad 3 times, followed by 2 (20%) 6 times. 2 respondents in the age group 65+ have indicated they have been abroad 8 or 10 times the last ten years.

Occupation: The professional (10), clerk/admin as well as technical (6 each), and director (4) have been abroad more than the other occupations. It is noticeable that the respondents from the professional category are more inclined to travel abroad more than 1 or 2 times, with 5 of the ten being abroad 4 times or more.



Educational level: No real difference in the number of times abroad when respondents with the different educational levels was identified.

Income: The majority of the lower income groups (R25 000 - R49 999 and R100 000 - R199 999) reported travels abroad once or twice in the last ten years. The R300 000 + income group reported a spread in terms of travels abroad the last 10 years, with close to 24% being abroad 3 times, followed by 19% being abroad twice and 4 times respectively. There are 6 respondents who have indicated that they were abroad more than 4 times which is close to 18% of this category.

The type of holiday and the number times in the last ten years that it was done, are reported in Table 3.

**Table 3: Type of holiday and how many times in the last ten years (N = 35 valid responses)**

Category	Number of times	n	Valid Percent
Leisure Holiday	1	10	28.6
	2	8	22.9
	3	2	5.7
	4	4	11.4
	5	2	5.7
	6	1	2.9
	8	1	2.9
Business holiday	1	5	14.3
	2	1	2.9
Faith based tour	1	13	37.1
Cultural tour	1	7	20.0
Sports travel	1	3	8.6
Ecotourism/nature	1	7	20.0
	2	1	2.9
Rural holiday	1	4	11.4
Beach holiday	1	11	31.4
	2	1	2.9
Tour group	1	10	28.6
	2	1	2.9
Private travel	1	24	68.6

The results reported in Table 3 indicate that there are 72 leisure holidays taken over the last ten years (*number of times x n*) compared to the maximum of 350. This is followed (using the same formula) by: 24 private holidays; 13 faith based tours; 13 beach holidays; 12 tour group holidays; 9 ecotourism / nature; 7 business holidays; 4 rural holidays and lastly, 3 sport travels.



**Gender:** Males are more inclined to have leisure holidays and more than 4 times the last 10 years – if compared with females. Males have also reported higher on the attendance to family matters (8 compared to the 1 of females). Males have also reported a slightly higher number of business holidays (using the formula - number of times  $\times n$ ) with 5 compared to the 2 of the females. Males also reported a slightly higher number of faith based tours than females (9 compared to the 4 of the females). The female group reported 15 culture tours compared to the 26 of the male respondents. The number of sport related travels compared between the 2 gender groups are very similar with the females reported 2 compared to the 1 of the males. A similar result was reported with ecotourism/nature, and rural holidays. The females reported a higher frequency in terms of the number of beach holidays (7) compared to 4 of the male group. The males reported a higher frequency for tour group holidays with 8 counts, compared to 4 females. Private travel is also even in terms of the genders if the relative representivity of the males and females is taken into account. **Marital status:** The married respondents reported a higher number of leisure holidays with 66 occurrences compared to the 6 of the respondents that are not married. The attendance to family matters are exactly the same if the 2 groups are compared to each other (with 9 occurrences), the same with business holidays (7 each), sports travel and tour groups (5 each). The married respondents recorded much higher values on the number of faith based tours (11 and 2 respectively), cultural tours (10 and 1 respectively), ecotourism / nature (7 and 2 respectively), rural holiday (3 and 1 respectively), beach holiday (11 and 2 respectively) as well as private travel (20 and 4 respectively).

**Age:** The leisure holidays are mainly taken by the middle age groups (35-44 and 45-54 years) with 13 and 28 holidays (using the formula - number of times  $\times n$ ) respectively. The 65+ age group also reported a number of 19 leisure holidays over a ten-year period. The age group 45-54 years reported the highest frequency of family matters and business holidays (with 4 occurrences respectively). This group, together with the 65+ reported the highest value on faith based tours as well. The frequency of cross cultural tours across the age categories are dominated by the 35-44 and 45-54 year groups with 11 each, compared to the 5 of the categories 55-64 and 65+ respectively. Sports travel is mostly popular (if compared across the age categories) with the 25-34 category. Ecotourism / nature is popular with the combined age category of 25 – 54 years with 2 occurrences recorded for each of the 3 age categories (25-34; 35-44 and 45-54). No real difference in the occurrence of rural and tour group holidays between the age categories has been recorded. Private travel seems to be more popular for the respondents within the middle age ranges (25-34; 35-44 and 45-54) compared to the categories 18-24 and 65+.

**Occupation:** All the occupational categories make use of leisure holidays with the professional category reporting 25 occurrences, followed by clerical / administration (15); directors (12); technical (10) and service with 8. The respondents involved with technical work reported 4 of the 9 family matter holidays, with the other 5 occurrences being shared between the other categories (with 1 each). The professional category reported the highest occurrence of business holidays with 5 out of the 7 occurrences in total (with 1 each for the director and technical category). The faith based tours are well shared between the occupational categories (considering their respective representation in the total sample). The professional category reported the highest number of faith based tours with 14, followed by the clerical / administrative, director, service and technical occupational groups with 6 each, and the craft occupation with 3 occurrences. In terms of cultural tours (and out of the total of 56 faith based tours), the professional category reported 12 occurrences, followed by technical (8), clerical / administrative (6), director and service (4 each), craft (3) and unemployed with 2 occurrences. Sports travel was not very popular, with 1 occurrence for clerical / administrative, craft and technical categories respectively. Only 9 ecotourism / nature tours were reported, equally shared between the clerical / administrative,



director, professional, service, technical and unemployed categories. Rural holidays, although not that popular, were evenly shared with 3 occurrences each between the craft, director, professional and service categories. This is also the case with the holiday category of beach holiday as well as the tour group holiday, but with the addition of the clerical / administrative category. Private travel as a mean of holiday seems to be very popular with all the occupational categories ranging from 7 occurrences by the professional category, followed by, directors and technical (with 4 each).

**Educational level:** The total number of business holidays is shared between the diploma and the degree categories. Faith based tours were also reported for all categories, but with the diploma category reporting more than 50% of the total occurrences (6 out of 11). The diploma category reported a much higher occurrence regarding family matters (6 out of the 9 occurrences). All 3 categories reported occurrences of cultural tours, but with the diploma and degree categories accounting for more than double the number of the high school category. The only sports travel was reported by the diploma (2 occurrences) and high school (1 occurrence) categories. Ecotourism / nature on the other hand, was only recorded for the diploma (3 occurrences) and degree (5 occurrences) categories. A similar pattern was recorded for the rural holidays as well as tour groups. The beach holidays as well as private travel are well spread amongst the 3 educational categories.

**Income:** Leisure holidays are more popular for the higher income categories (R200 000 - R299 999 [8], and R300 000 + [61]) with 64 of the total occurrences of 67. These 2 income groups are the only groups reporting that they attend to family matters (3 and 6 respectively) as well as faith based tours with 4 and 8 respectively (also 1 in the category, R100 000 - R199 999). A similar finding was made concerning the ecotourism / nature holidays, with the R300 000 + category reporting 6 occurrences and the R200 000 - R299 999 category 2 followed by the R25 000 - R49 999 category with 1. The R300 000 + category is the only group who reported that they went business holidays (7 occurrences). All the income categories reported occurrences of cultural tours, although the R200 000 - R299 999 [8], and R300 000 + [61] category reported the highest occurrence, with 10 and 26 respectively. The categories R25 000 - R49 999 and R100 000 - R199 999 reported 3 and 2 occurrences respectively. Sports travel (the 3 occurrences in total) were well spread between the income categories. The rural holidays were also well spread between the highest 3 income categories, while beach holidays are the highest with the R300 000 + category (8 occurrences), followed by 3 occurrences by the category R200 000 - R299 999 and 2 by the R25 000 - R49 999 category. All 4 categories reported occurrences of tour groups, with the higher income groups with more occurrences than the lower income groups. This is also the case with private travel.

The different types of accommodation used by the respondents during holidays are reported in Table 4.

**Table 4: Type of accommodation usually chosen (N = 35 valid responses)**

Category	<i>n</i>	Percent
Youth hostel	2	5.7
Family and friends	7	20.0
Bed & Breakfast	6	17.1
Private house	7	20.0



<b>Self-catering</b>	4	11.4	
<b>Hotel</b>	22	62.9	
<b>Second residence</b>	1 residence	3	8.6
	2 residences	1	2.9

From Table 4 it is clear that the most preferred type of accommodation for holiday purposes is hotels (3% of the respondents) followed by accommodation with family or friends and the use of private houses (20% of the respondents respectively).

**Gender:** A low occurrence of the use youth hostels were reported (1 each for males and females), while family and friends (7 in total) were also shared by the gender groups (4 for males, 3 for females). This is also the case with the use of self-catering (with 2 occurrences each). Males reported a slightly higher occurrence for bed and breakfast accommodation (4 compared to the 2 of the females), which is similar to that of the use of a private house (5 and 2), hotel accommodation (14 and 8) and the use of a second residence (4 and 1).

**Marital status:** The use of youth hostels as accommodation during holidays is similar in terms of the number used, if the married and unmarried respondents are compared with each other (2 occurrences each). Staying at family and friends is also relatively the same (3 and 4 occurrences respectively). The married category reported a much higher number of stays in bed and breakfast (5) compared to the 1 occurrence of the unmarried group; this is also the case with self-catering (with 3 and 1 respectively), as well as hotel stays (19 and 3 respectively). Only married respondents have indicated that they have stayed in a private house during their holidays in the last ten years (7 occurrences).

**Age:** Youth hostels are only used by the age category 25-34 with 2 occurrences. Staying with family and friends as well as the use of self-catering accommodation are well spread over the age categories while bed and breakfast accommodation are mainly used by the age categories of 35-44, 45-54 and 55-64 with 2, 3 and 1 occurrences respectively. Private houses as accommodation during holidays are used by the categories 45 and higher, with 45-54 reporting 4 occurrences, followed by the 55-64 and 65+ categories with 2 and 1 occurrences respectively. Hotel accommodation is mainly used by the categories 35-44 and 45-54 with 7 and 9 occurrences (out of the total of 11). The use of a second residence as holiday accommodation is only reported by the categories 45-54, 55-64 and 65+.

**Occupation:** Youth hostels as holiday accommodation are used only in 2 incidences, with the respondents involved in clerical / administration work and the unemployed reporting 1 occurrence each. Holiday accommodation with family and friends is reported by clerical / administration (3), technical (2), construction and the unemployed respondents with 1 occurrences. The use of bed and breakfast as well as private houses as accommodation are well spread between the occupational categories. Hotel accommodation are predominantly used by the professional category (9 occurrences), followed by technical, clerical / administrative and directors with 5, 4 and 3 occurrences respectively.

**Educational level:** The respondents with a diploma as the highest educational qualification reported 4 counts of staying at bed and breakfast accommodation, compared with the 2 of the group with degrees. This is very similar with the self-catering accommodation (3 and 1 respectively). The number of stays in private houses are relatively equal between the diploma and degree groups. The educational groups of diploma and degrees reported a high occurrence



of hotel stays (9 and 8 respectively) compared to the 4 of the high school group. The number of stays in second residences are shared between all three categories.

Income: Only the income category R25 000 - R49 999 reported they have stayed in youth hostels as holiday accommodation in the last ten years (2 occurrences). The number of stays at family and friends as well as bed and breakfast are relatively even if the income categories are compared to each other. Staying in private houses more popular with the R300 000 + group with 5 occurrences, compared to the 1 occurrence in the groups R100 000 - R199 999 and R200 000 - R299 999. This is similar to the results in terms of the use of self-catering accommodation, where the R300 000 + group accounted for 3 out of the 4 occurrences. Hotel stays were also more popular for the higher income groups (R200 000 - R299 999 and R300 000 +) with 16 and 6 occurrences respectively. The use of a second residence as accommodation during holidays was only reported for the R300 000 + income category (with 5 occurrences).

The usual number of nights of accommodation during holidays, as reported by the respondents, are reported in Table 5.

**Table 5: Average number of nights to be accommodated (N = 35 valid responses)**

Category	<i>n</i>	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1 night	2	5.9	5.9
2 nights	9	26.5	32.4
3+ nights	23	67.6	100.0

The majority of the respondents (68%) prefer to stay for 3 or more nights in a specific location when on holiday, this is followed by 2 nights (26.5%) and the least preferred number of nights is 1 night with only 6%. This overall pattern is also evident when analysing the preference of the respective demographic groups. The majority of males (70%) reported that they were accommodated for more than 3 days during their holiday, with 25% reporting 2 days. This was similar with the female group with 64% and 29% respectively. A similar finding was reported when marital status, age, occupation, educational level as well as income were used and differentiating variable.

The motivation for the last holiday (visit) is reported in Table 6.

**Table 6: Motivations of last visit (N = 35 valid responses)**

Category	<i>n</i>	Percent
Primarily for leisure	21	60.0
Sightseeing	12	34.3
To experience new things	16	45.7
To find out more about a culture/religion	14	40.0
To relax	25	71.4
To recuperate	6	17.1
To meditate	9	25.7
To attain spiritual growth	13	37.1



It is clear from Table 6 that the main reasons for taking holidays, as indicated by the respondents, were to relax (71%) and for leisure (60%). In order to differentiate between the respondents in terms of their belonging to a demographic group, a detailed discussion based on the cross-tabulation results will follow.

**Gender:** Both males and females reported that their motivation for their last visit (holiday) were primary for leisure (10 and 11 occurrences respectively). This is also the case with sightseeing (7 and 5 respectively), for recuperation (4 and 2 respectively) and to meditate (5 and 4 respectively). The motivation to experience new things was more popular with the male respondents with 11 occurrences compared to the 5 of the female respondents; this was also found with the category “to find out more about a culture/religion”, with a count of 11 for males and 3 for the female group as well as “to relax” (15 and 10 respectively) and lastly “to attain spiritual growth” (9 and 4 respectively).

**Marital status:** Leisure, to relax to find out more about a culture/religion, to relax, to relax as well as sightseeing as motivation for the last holiday (visit) is more evident for the married respondents.

**Age:** All ages indicated leisure as a motivation as well as to attain spiritual growth without real differentiation between the groups. The age group 35-44 reported a slightly higher motivation for sightseeing as well as to experience new things compared to the other age groups. The age groups 35-44 and 45-54 also reported a slightly higher count for the motivation to find out more about a culture/religion as well as the motivation to mediate. All the respondents (and categories) aged 35+ reported relaxation as motivating factor for their holidays. Recuperation as motivation was reported for the age groups 45+.

**Occupation:** Leisure, sightseeing, to find out more about a culture/religion, to relax, to recuperate, to meditate as well as to attain spiritual growth as motivation for the respondents last holiday cut across all occupational categories, without any real differentiation. Respondents from the professional as well as technical occupations however reported a slightly higher motivation to experience new things compared to the other occupational groups.

**Educational level:** No real differences between the respondents with different educational levels could be identified.

**Income:** No real differences between the respondents with different income levels could be identified for leisure, to relax, and to recuperate. Sightseeing, to experience new things, to find out more about a culture/religion, to attain spiritual growth as motivation were reported for the higher income categories (R200 000 - R299 999 and R300 000 +). Meditation as motivation was only reported for the R300 000+ income category.

The information sources used before respondents went on their holidays are reported in Table 7.

**Table 7: What sources did you consult before going (N = 35 valid responses)**

Category	<i>n</i>	Percent
Family and friends	24	68.6
Television and / or radio	6	17.1
Previous visits	7	20.0
Newspapers / magazines	5	14.3



Internet	8	22.9
Tour operator	4	11.4
Brochure	5	14.3
Tourist board	1	2.9
Guide books	6	17.1
Travel agency	19	54.3
Other	4	11.4

From table 7 it is clear that the most popular source of information is family and friends (close to 69%), followed by the use of travel agencies (54%).

### The findings of Section B

Section B consists of the findings related to the self- reporting questionnaires which contained items measuring the views of the respondents on spirituality, wellness tourism and quality of life.

Scales of measurement were at the ordinal level of measurement and a five point Likert scale was used in which " 1=strongly disagree and 5=strongly agree. The descriptive statistics on item level are reported in Table 8.

**Table 8: Descriptive Statistics of the responses on the Spirituality, Wellness Tourism and Quality of Life questionnaire (N = 35 valid responses)**

		N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
<b>SPIRITUALITY – Spirituality and religious tourism are important to me because</b>						
1	<i>I pray regularly to the Creator</i>	35	2	5	4.31	.87
2	<i>I attend religious proceedings on a regular basis</i>	35	3	5	4.31	.68
3	<i>Participating in religious events is essential in my life</i>	35	3	5	4.60	.55
4	<i>Spiritual orientation is essential for a tranquil life</i>	35	3	5	4.83	.45
5	<i>Spirituality is relevant for quality of life to be good</i>	35	3	5	4.86	.43
6	<i>Spirituality has true value in life</i>	35	3	5	4.80	.47
7	<i>I believe there are many rewards to a spiritual way of life</i>	35	3	5	4.71	.62
8	<i>Material prosperity is not more important than spiritual growth</i>	35	3	5	4.40	.78
9	<i>I am concerned about any afterlife aspects</i>	35	3	5	4.69	.53
10	<i>I believe that God is present in all human activity</i>	35	2	5	2.66	1.06
11	<i>Spirituality is an essential part of human life</i>	35	4	5	4.83	.38
12	<i>My parents and teachers taught me this</i>	35	3	5	4.51	.78
13	<i>Religious beliefs mean everything to me</i>	35	3	5	4.69	.53
14	<i>I believe there is a higher, divine power influencing my life</i>	35	4	5	4.74	.44
15	<i>I enjoy travelling to visit churches and religious sites</i>	35	1	5	4.20	1.05
16	<i>I enjoy interfaith travel for the historical value</i>	35	1	5	3.97	1.27
17	<i>I enjoy interacting with those of other faiths</i>	35	1	5	3.03	1.67



18	<i>I believe all faiths have the same creator</i>	35	1	5	2.46	1.48
19	<i>Spirituality has a positive influence on my vitality and on my physical health</i>	35	1	5	3.91	1.17
20	<i>Spirituality helps to improve my professional performance</i>	35	1	5	4.49	1.01
<b>WELLNESS TOURISM - I have or would visit a spa or related site in order to...</b>						
21	<i>Renew and invigorate my body and mind and get healthier</i>	35	1	5	3.89	1.08
22	<i>Heal and recuperate after medical treatment</i>	35	2	5	4.51	.78
23	<i>Meditate, relax and self-reflect</i>	35	1	5	3.49	1.46
24	<i>Escape the 'rat race' way of life</i>	35	1	5	3.09	1.70
25	<i>Experience new things and meet new people</i>	35	1	5	2.40	1.31
26	<i>Exercise and improve my fitness</i>	35	1	5	2.69	1.26
27	<i>Treating myself and for the peace and tranquillity of the site</i>	35	2	5	3.54	1.01
28	<i>Increase wellbeing and stress relief value</i>	35	1	5	3.97	.95
<b>QUALITY OF LIFE...</b>						
29	<i>I feel content with my life</i>	35	3	5	4.09	.61
30	<i>Is promoted by my religious beliefs help me keep well and heal me when ill</i>	35	3	5	4.60	.55
31	<i>Refers to how long people live and how healthy they are</i>	35	1	5	2.69	1.32
32	<i>Enhances my sense of wellbeing</i>	35	3	5	4.37	.73
33	<i>Refers to my social wellbeing</i>	35	1	5	3.89	1.39
34	<i>Refers to my economic status</i>	35	3	5	4.34	.59
35	<i>Refers to my sense of gratification in life</i>	35	3	5	4.11	.63
36	<i>Refers to my social mobility</i>	35	2	5	4.49	.74
37	<i>Refers to my mental and spiritual state</i>	35	3	5	4.69	.53
38	<i>Refers to my emotional side</i>	35	1	5	3.57	1.42
39	<i>Refers to my level of self-actualisation</i>	35	3	5	3.83	.66
40	<i>Is currently decreasing globally</i>	35	1	5	4.46	.95

The mean scores reported in Table 8 for the majority of items are relatively high (above 4), with the highest means score for the items that read as “*Spiritual orientation is essential for a tranquil life*”, “*Spirituality is relevant for quality of life to be good*”, “*Spirituality is an essential part of human life*” with low mean scores on “*I believe that God is present in all human activity*”, “*I believe all faiths have the same creator*”, “*I have or would visit a spa or related site in order to experience new things and meet new people*”, “*I have or would visit a spa or related site in order to exercise and improve my fitness*”, and “*Quality of life refers to how long people live and how healthy they are*”.

The descriptive statistics, specifically the minimum, maximum and mean scores of each of the dimensions, together with the standard deviation, skewness and kurtosis are reported in Table 9.



**Table 9: Descriptive Statistics of the dimensions of the Spirituality, Wellness Tourism and Quality of Life questionnaire (N = 35 valid responses)**

	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Spirituality	35	3.65	4.60	4.25	.22	-.84	.37
Wellness	35	2.25	4.50	3.45	.52	-.29	.11
Quality of life	35	3.50	4.67	4.10	.29	.01	-.56

The results reported in Table 9 regarding the means scores obtained on each of the 3 dimensions are relatively high, especially for *Spirituality* (4.25) and *Quality of life* (4.10). *Wellness* as dimensioned scored a bit lower with 3.24. This is also evident in the item statistics as reported in Table 8. The skewness and the kurtosis values do not exceed the critical values of 2 and 7 respectively (West, Finch & Curran 1995), which is an indication of normality, allowing the researchers to apply parametric statistics. The following section will look at differences between group by means of t-tests and ANOVA which is regarded to be parametric statistical techniques. The differences between the gender groups on each of the dimensions are reported in Table 10.

**Table 10: Results of a t-test with the gender groups as grouping variable and the 3 dimensions as dependent variables (N = 35 valid responses)**

	t-test for Equality of Means						
	t	df	p	Mean Diff	Std. Error Diff	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
						Lower	Upper
Spirituality	-1.73	32	.09	-.13	.07	-.28	.02
Wellness	-.69	32	.49	-.13	.18	-.49	.24
Quality of life	-1.84	32	.07	-.17	.09	-.37	.02

The results in Table 10 show that the male respondents scored slightly higher on all three dimensions, but the differences in mean scores are not statistically significant on  $p < .05$  level.

The differences in mean scores as reported for each of the age groups, as determined by a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) are reported in Table 11.

**Table 11: Results of an ANOVA with the age categories as grouping variable and the 3 dimensions as dependent variables (N = 35 valid responses)**

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Spirituality	Between Groups	.32	5	.06	1.41	.25
Wellness	Between Groups	1.40	5	.28	1.09	.39
Quality of life	Between Groups	.42	5	.08	1.03	.42

By inspecting the results reported in Table 11, no statistical differences in mean scores (on  $p < .05$  level) obtained by the respective age categories could be detected. The differences in mean scores as reported for respondents with different educational levels as determined by a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) are reported in Table 12.



**Table 12: Results of an ANOVA with the educational level as grouping variable and the 3 dimensions as dependent variables (N = 35 valid responses)**

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Spirituality	Between Groups	.06	2	.03	.58	.56
Wellness	Between Groups	2.09	2	1.05	5.15	.01
Quality of life	Between Groups	.25	2	.12	1.50	.24

The results in Table 12 indicate that there are no statistical significant differences between the respondents with different educational levels of *Spirituality* and *Quality of life*. The Omnibus test, followed by the Scheffe post hoc test has revealed that there is a statistical significant difference (on  $p < .05$  level) between respondents with degrees and that with diploma (difference is .58). The respondents with degrees reported thus a higher mean score than the respondents with diplomas.

The differences in mean scores between respondents from different income as determined by a one way analysis of variance (ANOVA) are reported in Table 13.

**Table 13: Results of an ANOVA with the income level as grouping variable and the 3 dimensions as dependent variables (N = 35 valid responses)**

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Spirituality	Between Groups	.20	3	.07	1.42	.25
Wellness	Between Groups	.15	3	.05	.18	.91
Quality of life	Between Groups	.06	3	.02	.22	.88

The results reported in Table 13 indicate that there are no statistical significant differences in mean scores (on  $p < .05$  level) when it is compared across the income level categories.

## Conclusions

A better understanding of spiritual tourism, wellness and quality of life considerations, is essential for the development of proper relationship marketing strategies. The increasing interest on spirituality travel, is not due primarily to its spiritual perspective, but rather for the potential it carries to develop as the largest segment within the global tourism industry. It has been found that spirituality, in general, has recently become an important focus of research in both the social and business areas. This has added a supplementary and new dimension to the tourism industry, termed spiritual tourism. It is abundantly evident from the findings of this research that spirituality is indeed a very important consideration for most people. It is considered essential for a tranquil existence and it is viewed as promoting quality of life and thus offers rewards given that most people believe that a higher divine power influences their lives. One's mental and physical state is promoted by faith and religious beliefs.

Before embarking on a trip, most travelers will likely ask the opinions of their family members as to which destination to visit, and where they could be accommodated. In this study of limited scope, most of the respondents travelled abroad in the last ten years and the majority travelled multiple times. Married males and professionals were the most frequent travelers. When it comes to types of holidays, it was evident that faith based tours, beach holidays and leisure holidays



enjoy the greatest levels of popularity. Faith based tours were also found to be relatively popular amongst all travelers who also prefer to stay in hotels for at least three days or longer. It seems that spiritual growth is an important consideration for all ages and something that travel planners should take cognizance of.

It is also evident that most travelers will travel in their private capacity rather than embark on organized group or other tours. Married couples enjoy the majority of leisure holidays and these tend to emanate from higher income categories and are most likely to be in the middle-aged group. The primary drivers for travel are stated as time to relax, and time for leisure. Interestingly, older travelers tend to travel for family matters or business related motivations. The majority of travelers will consult with family and friends or seek advice from travel agents.

There were several limitations of this research. Firstly, the lack of suitable literature available on spiritual tourism and its marketing, has led to not having a methodological hypothesis or context for marketing spirituality. As a result, this study relied heavily on borrowing the literature from the parent discipline of tourism. Secondly, the sample size was small and findings cannot be generalized. Thirdly, the literature views spiritual tourism as a type of tourism where tourists travel to destinations associated with spiritual places for their spiritual development irrespective of their religion. This study was thus limited in that it was confined to one faith only. The most important limitation however, was the lack of differentiation. While differences were reported in terms of occurrence, on all aspects, this was the result of the relatively poor representation indicating the homogeneity of the sample. Segmentation is thus proposed by means of a far more representative sample using the same methodology which should give us statistical and practical significant differences between grouping variables (where real differences exist).

## **Recommendations**

Tourism marketing and promotion is reflected upon as an essential aspect for successful tourism development. Consequently, all tourism traffic, both local and international, for a wide range of purposes including religious and spiritual purposes, has increased significantly. Accordingly, the profiles of tourists and their perception about spirituality, wellness tourism and quality of life are important considerations when it comes to the effective marketing of tourism products and services. Marketing strategies to encourage spiritual tourism and its related wellness and quality of life aspects needs to be further investigated.

For national tourist organizations to attain their objectives and meet conditions in a fast-changing environment, a well-coordinated tourism marketing planning process is required in order to grow and make the tourism industry sustainable. Effective tourism destination marketing is considered to be vital in the changing global competitive marketing environment. This research, while limited in scope, adds to the segmentation study of inbound and outbound tourists. It is suggested, based on the findings of this study, that segmentation, should be at the tourism stakeholder level and not necessarily only on the destination level. It is also recommended that further deeper segmentation and marketing aspects of spiritual destinations, wellness tourism aspects and quality of life issues are some of the facets that require further and deeper systematic exploration and analysis. Spirituality is a multi-dimensional construct based on dimensions such as religion, quality of life and wellness, which are all closely related. Consequently, spirituality needs to be carefully marketed and a tourism perspective highlighting segmentation is considered to be a suitable method to adopt based on the findings of this study, which should be viewed as a beginning to the research on the topic.



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## **ANNEXURES FOLLOW**



**Annexure 1.**

**Sociodemographic and Trip-Related Characteristics and questionnaire used.**

Indicate your choice by placing a tick next to the appropriate answer or writing a response opposite

**Demographic Characteristic**

<b><u>Gender</u></b> Male Female	
<b><u>Age</u></b> 18 to 24 25 to 34 35 to 44 45 to 54 55 to 64 65 or over	
<b><u>Occupation</u></b> Director or manager Professional Technical professions Clerical/administration Service and sales personnel Manual or crafts worker Industry, construction or agriculture Retired Unemployed	
<b><u>Highest level of education</u></b> Completed high school/general equivalency Diploma Degree	
<b><u>Marital status</u></b> Married yes/no Children under age 18 living at home Number of people in household Number of times travelled abroad	
<b><u>Type of Holiday and how many times in last ten years</u></b> Leisure Holiday Family matters Business holiday Faith-based tour Cultural tour Sports travel Ecotourism/nature Rural holiday Beach holiday Tour group Private travel Other	
<b><u>Annual household income</u></b> R25,000 to R49, 999 R50,000 to R99,999 R100,000 to R199,999	



R200,000 or R299,999 Over R300,000	
<b><u>Type of accommodation usually chosen</u></b> Youth hostel Family and friends Bed & Breakfast Private house Self-catering Hotel Second residence	
<b><u>Average number of nights</u></b> 1-2 3-4 More than 4	
<b><u>Motivations of last visit</u></b> Primarily for leisure For sightseeing To experience new things To find out more about a culture/religion To relax To recuperate To meditate To attain spiritual growth	
<b><u>What sources of information did you consult before going</u></b> Family/friends TV/Radio Previous visit/s Newspapers/Magazines Internet Tour operator brochure Tourist board Guide books Travel agency Other	

### Survey Questionnaire

Consider each of the following statements on the 5 point Likert scale below. Please note that there are no right or wrong answers. Indicate your choice by placing an X in the appropriate block

No	Statements		Rating (5 point Likert scale)				
Spirituality, Wellness Tourism and Quality of Life							
SECTION A							
Spirituality – Spirituality and religious tourism are important to me because...							
			Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
1	I pray regularly to the Creator	NA	1	2	3	4	5
2	I attend religious proceedings on a regular basis	NA	1	2	3	4	5



3	Participating in religious events is essential in my life	NA	1	2	3	4	5
4	Spiritual orientation is essential for a tranquil life	NA	1	2	3	4	5
5	Spirituality is relevant for quality of life to be good	NA	1	2	3	4	5
6	Spirituality has true value in life	NA	1	2	3	4	5
7	I believe there are many rewards to a spiritual way of life	NA	1	2	3	4	5
8	Material prosperity is not more important than spiritual growth	NA	1	2	3	4	5
9	I am concerned about any afterlife aspects	NA	1	2	3	4	5
10	I believe that God is present in all human activity	NA	1	2	3	4	5
11	Spirituality is an essential part of human life	NA	1	2	3	4	5
12	My parents and teachers taught me this	NA	1	2	3	4	5
13	Religious beliefs mean everything to me	NA	1	2	3	4	5
14	I believe there is a higher, divine power influencing my life	NA	1	2	3	4	5
15	I enjoy travelling to visit churches and religious sites	NA	1	2	3	4	5
16	I enjoy interfaith travel for the historical value	NA	1	2	3	4	5
17	I enjoy interacting with those of other faiths	NA	1	2	3	4	5
18	I believe all faiths have the same creator	NA	1	2	3	4	5
19	Spirituality has a positive influence on my vitality and on my physical health	NA	1	2	3	4	5
20	Spirituality helps to improve my professional performance	NA	1	2	3	4	5
<b>SECTION B</b>							
<b>Wellness Tourism - I have or would visit a spa or related site in order to...</b>							
21	Renew and invigorate my body and mind and get healthier	NA	1	2	3	4	5
22	Heal and recuperate after medical treatment	NA	1	2	3	4	5



23	Meditate, relax and self-reflect	NA	1	2	3	4	5
24	Escape the 'rat race' way of life	NA	1	2	3	4	5
25	Experience new things and meet new people	NA	1	2	3	4	5
26	Exercise and improve my fitness	NA	1	2	3	4	5
27	Treating myself and for the peace and tranquility of the site	NA	1	2	3	4	5
28	Increase wellbeing and stress relief value	NA	1	2	3	4	5
<b>SECTION C</b>							
<b>Quality of Life...</b>							
29	I feel content with my life	NA	1	2	3	4	5
30	Is promoted by my religious beliefs help me keep well and heal me when ill	NA	1	2	3	4	5
31	Refers to how long people live and how healthy they are	NA	1	2	3	4	5
32	Enhances my sense of being	NA	1	2	3	4	5
33	Refers to my social wellbeing	NA	1	2	3	4	5
34	Refers to my economic status	NA	1	2	3	4	5
35	Refers to my sense of gratification in life	NA	1	2	3	4	5
36	Refers to my social mobility	NA	1	2	3	4	5
37	Refers to my mental and spiritual state	NA	1	2	3	4	5
38	Refers to my emotional side	NA	1	2	3	4	5
39	Refers to my level of self-actualisation	NA	1	2	3	4	5
40	Is currently decreasing globally	NA	1	2	3	4	5

**Have you answered every question?**

**Thank you for your willing participation!**



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