



# *book of extended abstracts*

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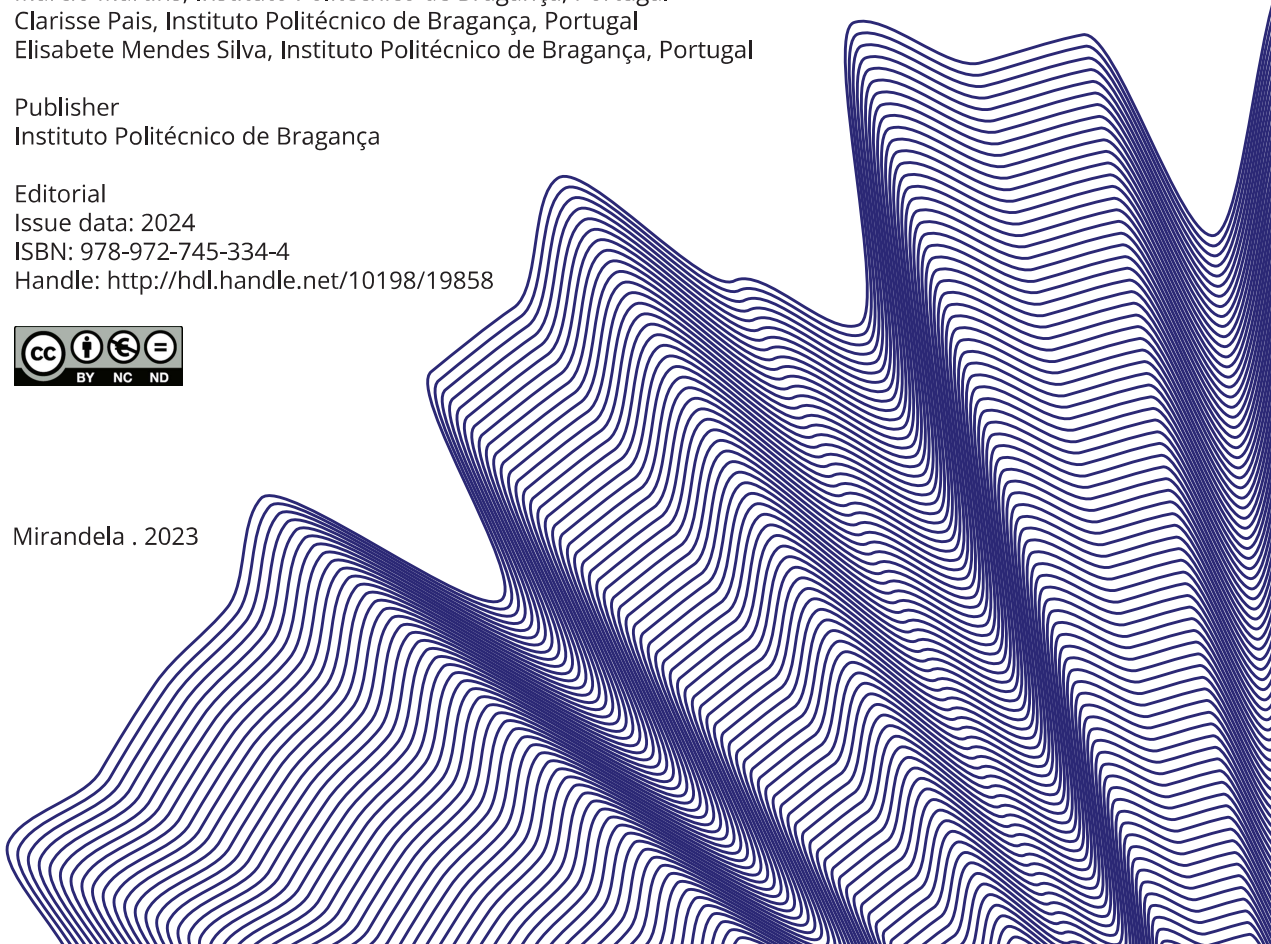
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# HEALTH AND WELL-BEING TOURISM: ANALYSIS OF MOTIVATIONAL FACTORS THROUGH SPA EXPERIENCES

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**Purpose** – The increase concern about health and disease prevention and the average life expectancy increase, in developed countries, are factors that have played an important role in changing the tourist demand for health and wellness destinations (Smith & Puczkó, 2015). In Portugal, health and wellness tourism is one of the country's segments of great importance, with a significant impact on the economy and employment in the regions (Ministry of Economy, 2021). Thus, the objective of this work is to study the motivations of tourists who seek thermal spaces, so that the managers of thermal organizations are able to respond to the new demands of the market. Based on the knowledge of the different motivations, spa organizations will be able to adjust their offer to the demand needs.

**Theoretical framework** – The high competition between different players in the health and wellness tourism market triggers the organizations' need to know what thermal clients are looking for and what their expectations are so that managers can adjust services to client preferences (Ramos et al. al., 2021). On the other hand, the services and products offer diversification, and together with the sustainable tourism promotion, can attract a wider audience and contribute to the sustainability of the thermal sector (Reis et al., 2019). The study of motivations is therefore relevant as it allows improving the potential of the product, service or experience to adequately satisfy the needs of consumers (Solomon, 2019).

**Design/methodology/approach** – The methodology used was based on a literature review of the motivations on health and wellness tourism. An analysis of secondary data

was carried out, as well as the use of an empirical research through a questionnaire, having obtained 113 responses. Data were analyzed using the SPSS program. The questionnaire was then made available online through social media platforms (Facebook, WhatsApp and Instagram) and the collected data was analyzed using SPSS.

**Findings** – The results allow the verification of the existence of different types of motivations, evaluated through a 24-item scale. An exploratory factor analysis was carried out, which identified 5 motivational factors. Factor 1, Motivation by the local heritage (eigenvalue 4.18), factor 2 related to Relaxation and tranquillity (3.70), factor 3 designated Social life in the spa (3.13), factor 4 Benefits of thermal waters (3.07) and factor 5, Family tradition (1.70).

**Research, practical & social implications** – Based on the study carried out, the managers of spa organizations will be able to adjust their products to the real needs of potential customers, offering specific and personalized products, depending on the different motivations for demand.

**Originality/value** – The study of motivations has been widely studied in the tourism sector, but it is still not so in Portuguese spas. This study may help to understand the existence of changes in the motivations of spa-goers between the pre-covid and post-covid period.

**Keywords** – Tourism, Motivations, Health and wellness tourism, Thermal spa.

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