

THE INFLUENCE OF MINDFULNESS ON MEMORABLE TOURISM EXPERIENCES AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

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ABSTRACT

This paper analyzes the mutual effects of mindfulness and memorable tourism experiences (MTE) and their consequences. We adopt an innovative approach in which mindfulness is considered an antecedent of MTE. This approach allows us to develop and test a theoretical model using the structural equation modeling technique. That model tests an MTE scale and its consequents, such as personal transformations, subjective well-being, behavioral intentions, place attachment and memory. An electronic questionnaire about MTE in the previous two

years was completed by 1,187 respondents. The results indicate that mindfulness negatively impacts MTE, although the literature has shown that mindfulness and travel experiences are positively related. It also confirms that MTEs arouse personal transformations for tourists in terms of learning, abilities, and behaviors. Managers willing to design memorable experiences must provide innovative experiences that can evoke emotions and generate personal transformations.

KEYWORDS: Memorable tourism experience, memorable trip, mindfulness, travel and personal transformations, structural equation modeling.

A INFLUÊNCIA DE ATENÇÃO PLENA EM EXPERIÊNCIAS TURÍSTICAS MEMORÁVEIS E SEUS CONSEQUENTES

RESUMO

Este artigo analisa os efeitos mútuos de atenção plena e experiências turísticas memoráveis (MTE) e suas consequências. Adotamos uma abordagem inovadora em que a atenção plena é considerada um antecedente de MTE. Esta abordagem nos permite desenvolver e testar um modelo teórico usando a técnica de modelagem de equações estruturais. Esse modelo testa uma escala de MTE e seus consequentes, como transformações pessoais, bem-estar subjetivo, intenções comportamentais, apego ao lugar e memória. Um questionário sobre MTE nos últimos dois anos teve 1.187

respondentes. Os resultados indicam que a atenção plena impacta negativamente o MTE, embora a literatura tenha mostrado que a atenção plena e as experiências de viagem estão positivamente relacionadas. Também confirma que as MTEs provocam transformações pessoais para os turistas em termos de aprendizagem, habilidades e comportamentos. Gestores dispostos a promover experiências memoráveis devem proporcionar experiências inovadoras que possam evocar emoções e gerar transformações pessoais.

Palavras chave: Experiência turística memorável, viagem memorável, atenção plena, viagens e transformações pessoais, modelagem de equações estruturais.

1 INTRODUCTION

Memorable trips are remarkable to the point of being remembered and are also known in the literature as memorable tourism experiences (MTE). Memorable experiences are subjective evaluations of events related to tourism activities before, during, and after a trip (Seyfi et al., 2020; Tung & Ritchie, 2011). Travel can have both short-term and long-term effects, including tourist satisfaction; the promotion of life quality; and impacts on happiness, optimism, family, and personal relationships (Kamenidou & Stavrianea, 2021; McCabe & Johnson, 2013).

Several studies have proposed and attested to the multidimensionality of MTE (Kim et al., 2012; Kim, 2012; Kim & Ritchie, 2014a; Sthapit et al., 2019; Sthapit & Coudounaris, 2018; Koga, Bastos, Coelho & Santos, 2025). However, there is no consensus in the MTE attributes (Hosany, Sthapit & Björk, 2022) and several dimensions remain unexplored, including the interdependence of the environmental, cultural, social, and personal dimensions of tourism experiences. These are recurrent factors in the literature of tourism experiences but have not been adequately addressed in MTE studies (Coelho et al., 2018; Sie et al., 2021; Melón et al., 2021). And still lacks in literature an MTE scale aligned with different contexts (Hosseini, Cortes Macias, & Almeida Garcia, 2023).

In addition to the MTE dimensions, some authors have investigated the antecedents and consequences of the tourism experiences. For Kim (2014), these antecedents are destination attributes that facilitate tourists' MTE and include ten dimensions: 1) local culture, 2) the variety of activities, 3) hospitality, 4) infrastructure, 5) environment management, 6) accessibility, 7) the quality of service, 8) physiography, 9) place attachment, and 10) superstructure. For the studies of Lee (2015), culinary attraction, cultural inheritance and nostalgia are significant to MTEs. More recently, Shapit & Coudounaris (2018) considered the seven dimensions of Kim, Ritchie & McKormick (2012) to be antecedents of MTE.

One antecedent that has not yet been investigated in MTE studies is mindfulness. Paying attention to the environment and capturing sensations through the senses and external stimuli can contribute to tourists' engagement in their experiences (Wong et al., 2020; Agapito et al., 2014; Hanley et al., 2015). The concept of mindfulness is relevant for coding memory (Tung et al., 2016). Hence, the literature suggests that if tourists are mindful of their behavior, they tend to have memorable experiences, although no MTE studies have assessed this relation.

Meanwhile, the consequences of MTEs confirm their relevance as a determinant of future travel behavior (Kim, 2018; Kim & Chen, 2021). The consequences of tourism experiences include visitors' satisfaction and loyalty (Wu & Liang, 2011; Dalgıç & Birdir, 2020), such as revisit intention, recommendation intention, and destination image (Sharma & Nayak, 2019). Thus, tourist experiences precede tourism satisfaction (Wu & Liang, 2011) and emotions (Rojas & Camarero, 2008).

In addition, behavioral intentions (Kim & Ritchie, 2014b; Sharma & Nayak, 2019; Sthapit & Coudounaris, 2018), image and destination image (Kim, 2018; Sharma & Nayak, 2019) and well-

being (Sthapit & Coudounaris, 2018) have been determined by quantitative techniques to be consequences of MTEs. Although some studies point out the relationship between short- and long-term experiences and personal transformations, such as learning (Ballantyne et al., 2011), the consequences of MTE deserve further academic investigation. In particular, personal transformations have not yet been tested.

Thus, the MTE literature still presents gaps that this study tries to address: 1) it uses a broader scale of MTEs that includes environment, dream, emotion, and interpersonal relationships (Coelho & Gosling, 2018); 2) it innovatively considers mindfulness as an antecedent of MTEs; and 3) it seeks to understand the consequences of MTEs, such as personal transformations, memory, subjective well-being (SWB), and place attachment.

This research addresses the following questions: How is mindfulness related to MTEs? What are the main dimensions of MTEs? What are the consequences of MTEs? The aim is to analyze the mutual effects of mindfulness and MTEs and their consequences. Thus, managers can design proper MTEs by understating their dimensions and influence the state of mindfulness among tourists.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Memorable Tourism Experience (MTE)

An MTE is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon composed of distinct and significant dimensions of the tourist experience (Cifci, 2021; Skavronskaya et al., 2020). Tung and Ritchie (2011), pioneers on this topic, affirm that affections, expectations, consequentiality, and recollection are four dimensions of an MTE. A scale, initially developed by Kim (2010) and then further tested and adapted by Kim et al. (2012), marked the beginning of the assessment of memorable experiences. The authors proposed a 24-item and seven-dimension scale for MTEs: 1) hedonism, 2) refreshment, 3) local culture, 4) meaningfulness, 5) knowledge, 6) involvement and 7) novelty. Meanwhile, Koga et al. (2025) tested the scale of Kim (2014) and found out that the original scale does not apply to the Brazilian context.

Holistic perceptions of the processes that encompass the various actors that relate to the traveler, the environment, and the sociocultural and individual influences on the tourist's behavior broaden the understanding of MTEs (Sterchele, 2020). Coelho & Gosling (2018) state that MTEs are composed of ten dimensions: 1) environment - interaction with natural and built attractions or businesses at the destination; 2) culture - impressions of and experimentation with local culture; 3) relationship with companions - personal contact between the tourist and the others who participated in the experience and travel decisions, whether partners, family, friends, or coworkers; 4) relationship with tourists - contact between tourists and people who also visited the destination during the tourist experience process; 5) relationship with agents - personal contact with local agents in their various roles and with residents, service providers, or other stakeholders;

6) dream – the desire or motivation for a tourist experience, activity, or specific product; 7) emotion – the emotional state generated by specific stimuli; 8) novelty; 9) refreshment; and 10) meaningfulness. Finally, considering the need to understand MTEs better, this study adopts the scale proposed by Coelho & Gosling (2018).

2.2 Mindfulness

Mindfulness is the mental state of focusing on the present moment of experience without judgment (Chang et al., 2014). Mindfulness is related to daily life experiences and therefore routines (Barros et al., 2015). This concept has gained the attention of tourism studies (Prentice et al., 1998). Practitioners of contemplative activities report higher mindfulness levels (Hanley et al., 2015), especially for activities such as climbing, surfing, and trekking (Agapito et al., 2014). Kang & Gretzel (2012) confirmed that mindfulness is a critical dimension as an antecedent of the tourism experience. In their study of mindfulness, where tourists visiting a national park were offered podcasts to guide their visit, the authors identified that the higher the level of attention tourists give, the greater their learning, entertainment, and escapism. In another study (Tung et al., 2016), mindfulness positively affected the codification of memory. Paying attention to the environment, sensorial experiences, and external stimuli (e.g., signage, digital and nondigital objects, and music) all contributed to engaging visitors in their experience, as attention to external stimuli can involve tourists during their experiences.

H1: Tourists' mindfulness positively impacts MTE.

2.3 Personal transformation

The tourism experience literature points out that travel experiences generate changes in travelers (Bosangit et al., 2015; Bosangit & Demangeot, 2016; Coelho et al., 2018). Tourists' transformations may be physical, psychological, or spiritual (Voigt et al., 2011). Additionally, personal transformations affect life quality (Chen et al., 2016; Kim et al., 2015) and the of quality experiences in leisure activities can generate value and well-being to visitors (Gosling, 2021). However, there is no systematic review of the types of transformation that result from tourism experiences. Scarinci and Pearce (2012) quantitatively measured tourists' transformations. While authors such as Pan (2012, 2014), Sørensen & Jensen (2015), and Ourahmoune (2016) opted for qualitative methods to investigate changes resulting from travel, there is little consensus on which personal transformations result from travel experiences.

Coelho (2017) proposed the classification of personal transformations derived from tourism experiences into four main categories: 1) the development of abilities and personal skills, which reflects the changes in the ability and knowledge to develop personal and professional activities (Pan, 2012, 2014; Scarinci & Pearce, 2012); 2) reflections of empathy, which requires changes in

the ability to put oneself in another's shoes and reflect on the reality of the destination compared to the visitor's reality (Ballantyne et al., 2011; Pan, 2012; Sørensen & Jensen, 2015); 3) learning from the travel experience, which includes the ability to acquire and retain tacit and explicit knowledge through living in the tourist destination (Verleye, 2013); and 4) behavior changes as a result of the travel experience, involving changes in the way one consumes and acts (Coelho, 2017). Additionally, Knobloch et al. (2016) affirmed that personal transformations are one dimension of MTEs.

H2: MTEs positively impact personal transformations.

2.4 Subjective well-being, eudaimonia, and hedonism

Subjective well-being (SWB) research often seeks to understand what makes people happy and satisfied with life. The concept measures the results and benefits of an activity, a project, or an intervention (McCabe & Johnson, 2013). It is common to measure SWB as a bidimensional construct, admitting hedonism and eudaimonia as first-order concepts (Hanley et al., 2015). Hedonism is usually associated with emotions and happiness (Anderson et al., 2013). Studies have operationalized hedonism using one or more components of SWB, such as positive or negative affect and satisfaction with life (Huta & Waterman, 2014). Eudaimonic experiences are related to long-term personal results (Matteucci & Filep, 2015), reflecting an individuals' perceptions of their capacity for personal growth. This feeling reflects individuals' sentiment of possessing the resources and skills to meet their goals or maximize their potential (McCabe & Johnson, 2013). Studies of SWB (Buzinde et al., 2014), or hedonism and eudaimonia individually (Matteucci & Filep, 2015), have grown in the context of tourism. Tourists evaluate the health benefits of visiting a destination, and their subjective beliefs generate well-being and satisfaction (Chang & Beise-Zee, 2013). The hedonic dimension impacts the satisfaction of tourists (Rojas & Camarero, 2008). Hence, tourism activities that offer meaningfulness and joy add to the memorability and SWB of MTEs (Sthapit & Coudounaris, 2018).

H3: MTEs positively impact SWB.

2.5 Behavioral intentions

Behavioral intentions determine the probability as which an individual will take a specific action, such as buy a product, make a recommendation, or revisit a destination (Dolnicar et al., 2015). Intentions to repurchase, intentions to claim, price sensitivity, and loyalty (Kim et al., 2015) are also types of behavioral intentions. Consumer experience may determine a tourist's intention to (re)try a product/service or recommend it to friends and family (Tsai, 2016). Kim, Woo, and Uysal (2015) demonstrated that overall satisfaction with a tourist experience, personal satisfaction with

leisure activities, and quality of life were significant antecedents of the intention to revisit a destination.

Previous studies have linked the tourist experience and visitor satisfaction with consequent variables, such as loyalty, intention to revisit, and purchase intention (Kim et al., 2015). MTE studies have also established the relationship between memorable experiences and behavioral intentions (Kim & Ritchie, 2014b; Sharma & Nayak, 2019; Sthapit & Coudounaris, 2018). These results suggest that tourists make decisions based on multiple dimensions of MTEs.

H4: MTEs positively impact behavioral intentions.

2.6 Place attachment

One of the leading branding problems for destinations is building an emotional bond with tourists (Veasna et al., 2013). Davis (2016) defines place attachment as the affective and emotional relationships individuals form with specific locations. Thus, place attachment indicates an emotional connection between individuals and specific environments, such as their homes, communities, societies, and tourism destinations, revealing the complex relationships between humans and nature or built environments (Tsai, 2016).

Attachment to a destination is discussed as one of the variables of loyalty in the tourist experience. More specifically, Pine and Gilmore (1998) define place attachment as resulting from experiences. Studies show that antecedent variables of place attachment comprise tourist involvement in leisure activities and the image and credibility of the destination (Veasna et al., 2013). Tsai (2016) confirmed that tourists' consumption of local cuisine positively affects the memorability of MTEs, intensifying the attachment to local attractions and behavioral intention.

H5: MTEs positively impact place attachment.

2.6 Memory

Memory is the active information acquisition, storage, and retrieval process for decision-making (Kim & Jang, 2016). Memory reflects the knowledge of an event or fact, supported by the processes of remembering or forgetting (Brown & Reavey, 2015). Memory is described in the literature as a mediating variable between tourist experiences and their results, behavioral intention, and satisfaction (Kim et al., 2012; Manthiou et al., 2016). The emotion resulting from the experience contributes to creating memories (Lee, 2015) and impacts affective memory, which processes the judgments and evaluations of satisfaction of experiences (Hosany & Witham, 2010). Thus, events related to emotions are easier to remember (Tsai, 2016).

Memorable positive experiences can generate satisfaction, revisit intention, and intention to recommend a destination (Ali et al., 2016; Sharma & Nayak, 2019; Sthapit & Coudounaris, 2018). Barnes et al. (2016) confirmed the relationship between experience and resultant memories and

the statistically positive relationship between memory and behavioral intention to revisit a destination. Tsai (2016) also confirmed that MTEs impact the two dimensions of place attachment: place identity and place dependence.

H6: MTEs positively impact memory.

H7: Memory positively impacts behavioral intentions.

H8: Memory positively impacts place attachment.

2.7 Proposed model

The proposed research model (Figure 1) consists of ten hypotheses and seven variables (i.e., mindfulness, MTE, well-being, transformations, memory, place attachment, and behavioral intention).

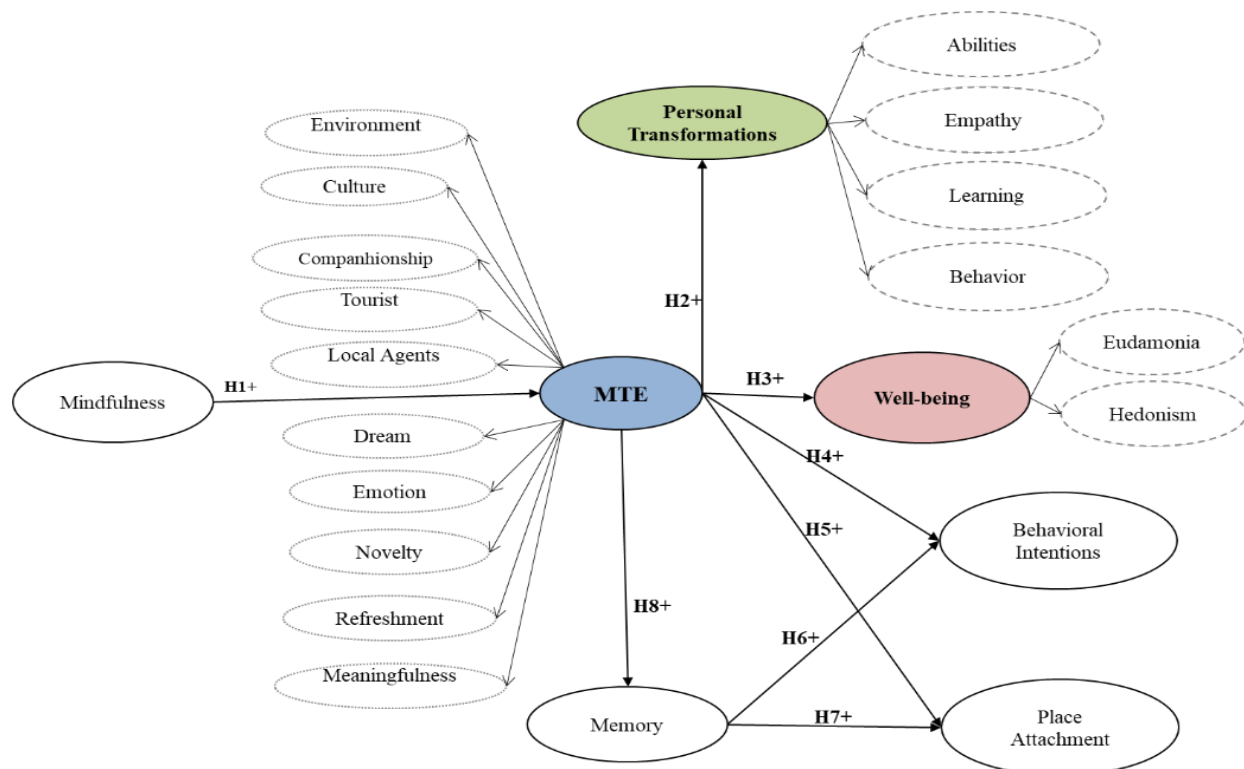


Figure 1. Proposed model of memorable tourism experience outcomes

Source: The authors

Notes: MTE, well-being, and transformations were modeled as multidimensional constructs. H= hypothesis, + = the relationships between the variables are modeled as positive.

3. MATERIAL AND METHODS

3.1 Instrument design and pilot test

This study is conclusive and descriptive, adopting a quantitative approach. The study is based on the recommendations of Babbie (1990), Malhotra (2007), and Hair (2010) to ensure that the survey reaches quantitative conclusions about the data. Four steps were followed to develop the final version of the questionnaire: 1) literature review; 2) adaptation of the scales; 3) pretest; and 4) formation of the final questionnaire.

The respondents were asked to consider a memorable travel experience to complete the questionnaire. Sociodemographic variables such as age, gender, and education contributed to a complete sample description.

The study modeled all multidimensional constructs (MTE, personal transformations, and well-being) as reflective (Lacrus, Assis & Guedes, 2023). Hence, they were based on previous studies that followed such modeling also named second-order constructs (Table 1). Additionally, four unidimensional constructs (mindfulness, behavioral intention, place attachment, and memory) were included in the model, also modeled as reflective.

Table 1. Constructs and its definitions, sources of the scales used in the proposed model

CONSTRUCT (MODEL LABEL)	DEFINITION	SOURCE
Mindfulness (MIND)	A mental state of focusing on the present moment of experience without judgment (Chang, Huang, & Lin, 2014), related to daily and routine life experiences (Barros et al., 2015).	Barros et al. (2015)
Memorable Tourism Experiences (MTE)		
Environment Dimension		
Environment (AMB)	Contact with natural, built, and business-related attractions at the destination.	Coelho & Gosling (2018)
Culture Dimension		
Culture (CULT)	Impressions and experience of local culture.	Kim, Ritchie, & McCormick (2012); Aroeira, Dantas, & Gosling (2016)
Interpersonal Relationship Dimension		
Companion (COMPC)	Personal contact between the tourist and those who participated in the experience and travel decisions (e.g., partner, family, friends, colleagues).	Coelho & Gosling (2018)
Other Tourists (COMPT)	Contact between the tourist and other individuals visiting the destination during the tourism experience.	Coelho & Gosling (2018)
Local Agents (COMPL)	Personal contact with local agents in various roles: residents, service providers, or other tourism stakeholders.	Coelho & Gosling (2018)
Individual/Psychological Dimension		

CONSTRUCT (MODEL LABEL)	DEFINITION	SOURCE
Dream (DREAM)	A desire or personal motivation for a specific tourism experience, activity, or product.	Coelho & Gosling (2018)
Emotion (EMOT)	Emotional state triggered by specific stimuli (Schmitt, 2000).	Coelho & Gosling (2018)
Novelty (NOV)	A psychological state of freshness resulting from a new experience.	Kim, Ritchie, & McCormick (2012); Coelho & Gosling (2018)
Involvement (INV)	Physical participation in activities of interest.	Kim, Ritchie, & McCormick (2012)
Refreshment (REFRE)	A state of feeling rested as a result of the tourism experience.	Kim, Ritchie, & McCormick (2012)
Meaningfulness (MEAN)	A sense of great value or significance.	Kim, Ritchie, & McCormick (2012)
Hedonism (HED)	Feelings of pleasure and excitement.	Kim, Ritchie, & McCormick (2012)
Knowledge (removed)	Information, facts, or experiences known by an individual.	—
Personal Transformation		
Skills (TABILITY)	Changes in capacity and knowledge to perform personal or professional activities.	Translated from Scarinci & Pearce (2012); translated and adapted from Pan (2012)
Empathy (TEMPATHY)	Changes in the ability to take another's perspective and reflect on the reality of the destination compared to that of the visitor.	Translated and adapted from Pan (2012); Sørensen & Jensen (2015); Ballantyne, Packer, & Falk (2011, p. 1251)
Learning (TLEARN)	The ability to acquire and retain tacit and explicit knowledge through experiences at the tourism destination.	Adapted and translated from Verleye (2015, p. 327) and Ali, Ryu, & Hussain (2016)
Behavior (TBEHAV)	Changes in consumption and behavioral patterns resulting from the travel experience.	Coelho (2017)
Well-being		
Hedonism (HFEEL)	A temporary sensation of pleasure and happiness.	Translated from Waterman, Schwartz, & Conti (2008, p. 51)
Eudaimonia (EUDA)	An individual's perception of personal growth—feeling capable of achieving goals or realizing one's potential (McCabe & Johnson, 2013).	Translated from Waterman, Schwartz, & Conti (2008, p. 51)
Memory		
Memory (MEM)	An active process of acquiring, storing, and retrieving information for decision-making (Kim & Jang, 2016).	Based on Ali, Ryu, & Hussain (2016, p. 8); Oh, Fiore, & Jeong (2007)
Behavioral Intention		
Behavioral Intention (BI)	An individual's subjective likelihood of taking a specific action, such as purchasing a product, recommending, or revisiting a destination (Dolnicar, Coltman, & Sharma, 2015).	Translated from Woo & Uysal (2015, p. 471)
Place Attachment		
Place Attachment (PLACEA)	Emotional connection between individuals and specific environments, such as homes, communities, societies, or tourist destinations (Tsai, 2016).	Translated from Veasna, Wu, & Huang (2013)

Source: The authors (2025)

A seven-point Likert-type scale was deployed. This procedure aimed to generate uniformity for data analysis and facilitate the understanding of respondents. The complete questionnaire is available in the Appendix.

3.2 Target audience and data gathering

The study's target population was Brazilians over the age of 18 due to their independence and decision-making power. Additionally, the respondents were required to have a habit of traveling. Therefore, a filter question identified whether the respondents had traveled at least once in the prior two years before completing the questionnaire.

Data collection was non-probabilistic but attempted to ensure a more significant variability of respondents. The survey reached respondents residing in every state of Brazil across the country's five macro-regions (Aroeira et al., 2016) (Table 1). Data collection took place between July and September 2017. The survey was promoted across 15 Facebook communities, and 3,200 e-mails were sent to higher education institutions to widely publicize the research. The sampling presented 1,193 responses and 129 scalar variables: a proportion of 9.2 cases per variable, a higher number than the minimum of five and close to the ideal number of ten proposed by Hair et al. (2010; 2019). Response validation involved a rigorous review, including the cases where there was evidence of duplication and inconsistent responses. As data collection was electronic/online, Google Docs was used for the scale variables' mandatory answers. These results culminated with no missing data, and the final sample was 1,187 respondents.

Data analysis was performed with the support of Microsoft Excel, SPSS, and Amos software. This required the preparation of the database, followed by 1) tests of the assumptions of multivariate analysis (Hair, 2010; 2019); 2) tests of the measurement model to verify the reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity of the constructs; and 3) tests of the structural model to analyze the path coefficients and the significance of the tested hypotheses following the recommendations of Malhotra (2007) and Hair et al. (2010; 2019), as the study of Araújo, Echternacht, Crisóstomo and Nobre (2020).

4. RESULTS

4.1 Assumptions of multivariate analysis

The first assumption to be tested in the final sample was the detection of outliers. In the outlier analysis, following the recommendations of Hair et al. (2010; 2019), all cases were kept, as none

were very different from the rest of the sample. The kurtosis and asymmetry criteria were used to assess normality, where asymmetry values must be less than three and kurtosis must be less than ten (Kline, 2011). The test results showed that the values fell within the range recommended by the literature, revealing the appropriateness of the maximum likelihood method. Thus, it was decided to proceed with the analyses.

4.2 Respondent profile

The respondents' profiles showed a diversity of age and place of residence, providing various travelers that otherwise could not be achieved if the data collection was undertaken in person at a particular destination. Table 2 summarizes the respondents' profiles.

Table 2. Profile of the respondents – (n=1,187)

	Categories	Frequency (%)
Gender	Female	65.3
	Male	34.7
Age	18-20	7.0
	21-30	43.1
	31-40	32.4
	41-50	12.2
	51-60	4.9
	>61	0.4
Education	Elementary (incomplete)	0.2
	Elementary (complete)	0.3
	High school	22.9
	Bachelor's degree	54.7
	Postgraduate	22.8
	Masters	22.5
	PhD	9.4
Place of residence (Macro-region)	Centre-east	6.1
	North-east	21.8
	North	19.7
	South	28.3
	South-east	22.6
	Overseas	1.5

Source: The authors (2025)

4.3 The measurement model

The standardized factorial loads and R^2 of the variables observed in the model were evaluated (Figure 2). Variables with a standardized factorial load below 0.65 and R^2 close to 0.30 were removed (Marôco, 2014; Hair, 2019) as demonstrated in Appendix.

Errors were correlated based on the modification indexes with values above 20 when using the same variable to improve the measurement model index. In the patronized matrix of covariance

of residues, variables that shared values higher than 2.58 in a more significant number of variables were identified using Excel. Care was taken not to remove items from factors with only three observed variables to avoid problems in evaluating the measurement model (Marôco, 2014; Hair et al., 2019).

Table 3 shows the reliability (CR > 0.7) and convergent validity (AVE > 0.5) for all latent variables in the final model. Emotions and transformations in personal skills were the variables that presented the lowest CVA values but met the minimum recommended by the literature.

Table 3. Evaluation of the reliability and convergence validity of the model

	CR	AVE
TBEHAV	0.79	0.56
MIND	0.93	0.64
NOV	0.91	0.60
CULT	0.90	0.69
COMPL	0.83	0.55
REFRESH	0.89	0.73
DREAM	0.94	0.83
AMB	0.83	0.62
EMOT	0.75	0.50
COMPT	0.88	0.70
COMPC	0.88	0.70
MEAN	0.89	0.80
MEM	0.91	0.72
PLACE	0.92	0.73
BI	0.83	0.61
SWB	0.94	0.65
TLEARN	0.94	0.68
TABILITY	0.97	0.50

Source: Output from Stat Tools, CR = Composite Reliability, AVE= Average Variance Extracted

Furthermore, the discriminant validity evaluation indicated problems with the validity of the latent variables “transformations ability” and “transformations empathy”. Thus, it was decided to remove the items with lower factor loads from each latent variable until discriminant validity was obtained. Table 4 presents the values of the discriminant validity of the final model.

Table 4. Discriminant validity tests

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
TBEHAV	0.75																	
MIND	0.01	0.8																
NOV	0.31	-	0.77															

CULT	0.2 9	- 0.11	0.4 1	0.83														
COMPL	0.1 7	- 0.05	0.2 7	0.37	0.7 4													
REFR	0.2 5	- 0.04	0.5 5	0.22	0.2 8	0.8 5												
DREAM	0.2 8	- 0.04	0.4 3	0.34	0.1 6	0.2 8	0.9 1											
AMB	0.2 3	- 0.07	0.5 5	0.41	0.4 2	0.4 2	0.3 6	0.7 9										
EMOT	0.1 9	- 0.14	0.6 5	0.29	0.3 7	0.5 7	0.3 2	0.5 9	0.71									
COMPT	0.3 7	- 0.04	0.2 6	0.27	0.3 2	0.1 7	0.1 8	0.1 6	0.19	0.8 4								
COMPC	0.0 9	- 0.04	0.0 9	- 0.02	0.1 4	0.1 4	0.0 5	0.0 9	0.26	0.0 8	0.8 4							
MEAN	0.3 2	- 0.11	0.4 8	0.3	0.2 6	0.4 3	0.3 6	0.3 6	0.43	0.2 4	0.0 8	0.8 9						
MEM	0.2 7	-0.1 4	0.7 4	0.32	0.3 2	0.5 1	0.3 4	0.6 8	0.81	0.1 8	0.1 7	0.4 6	0.8 5					
PLACE	0.3 5	- 0.03	0.4 8	0.28	0.3 2	0.4 2	0.5 4	0.5 4	0.45	0.2 1	0.1 1	0.4 9	0.4 5	0.8 5				
BI	0.2 2	- 0.05	0.3 2	0.22	0.3 3	0.3 5	0.3 1	0.5 8	0.44	0.1 1	0.0 7	0.3 2	0.4 3	0.6 3	0.7 8			
SWB	0.4 6	0.01 4	0.5 4	0.27	0.2 6	0.5 2	0.4 2	0.4 2	0.43	0.2 8	0.1 1	0.4 3	0.5 1	0.6 7	0.4 1	0.8 1		
TLEARN	0.5 4	- 0.02	0.5 1	0.49	0.2 4	0.3 5	0.3 2	0.3 4	0.34	0.3 7	0.0 2	0.4 5	0.4 4	0.4 1	0.3 8	0.5 3	0.8 3	
TABILITY	0.5 3	- 0.07	0.2 5	0.19	0.1 4	0.2 4	0.1 4	0.1 7	0.16	0.2 7	0.0 6	0.2 5	0.2 3	0.2 3	0.1 3	0.3 6	0.4 3	0.7 1

Source: Output from Stat Tools

The Fornell and Larcker matrix indicated the absence of discriminating validity between emotion and memory. However, it is worth noting that emotion is one of the most critical dimensions of MTEs and that memory is intrinsically related to MTEs. The study then opted for a new assessment of the discriminating validity between emotion and memory following the criteria of Bagozzi and Phillips (1982). The value of the difference between the chi-square was 441,849 ($\chi^2_1 = 733,579$ and $\chi^2_2 = 291,724$), and the degree of freedom was equal to 1. Thus, a value of 4.28 was obtained, which, being higher than 3.81, confirmed the discriminant validity among the evaluated constructs at the 5% significance level. Following the literature's recommendations, 27 observed variables were removed after the required procedures, with the final measurement model meeting all the criteria of reliability and convergent and discriminant validity.

4.4 Structural model

The evaluation of the structural model involved hypothesis testing. Table 5 summarizes the results of the tests, which, in general, were considered statistically significant, at least for the sample in question.

Table 5. Results of the test of hypothesis

Hypothesis	Relationship	Coefficient	Significance	Results
H1	MIND -> MTE	-0.103	0,001***	Rejected
H2	MTE -> TRANSF	0.685	***	Supported
H3	MTE -> SWB	0.679	***	Supported

H4	MTE -> BI	0.630	***	Supported
H5	MTE -> PLACEATT	0.588	***	Supported
H6	MTE -> MEM	0.891	***	Supported
H7	MEM-> BI	0.520	***	Supported
H8	MEM -> PLACEATT	0.593	***	Supported

Source: Output AMOS notes: n= 1,187 *TEMPATHY and TABIBILITY were merged under one construct***= significance at the 1% level.

According to the tests performed, seven hypotheses were supported, one was rejected, and the initial model proposal was adjusted. MTE is a multidimensional construct composed of ten dimensions. In this study, novelty presented itself as the most salient dimension, followed by emotion, environment; refreshment; meaningfulness; dream; culture; and relationship with local agents, tourists, and companions. (Figure 2). This result estimated that the psychological dimension has the ideal weight for the memorability of the experience, followed by environmental and cultural influences, and the impact of interpersonal relationships was of the most minor importance for MTEs. Empathy was one of the dimensions of personal transformations initially proposed in this study, adding to personal skills transformations. Well-being was first modeled as a bidimensional construct (eudaimonia and hedonism), but tests confirmed it as a single-dimensional variable.

Hypothesis 1, which affirmed the impact of mindfulness on MTEs, was rejected because it showed a significant but negative relation. This suggests that the more mindful tourists are during their experiences, the less likely their experiences will be memorable. Figure 2 shows a graphical synthesis of the hypothesis test results.

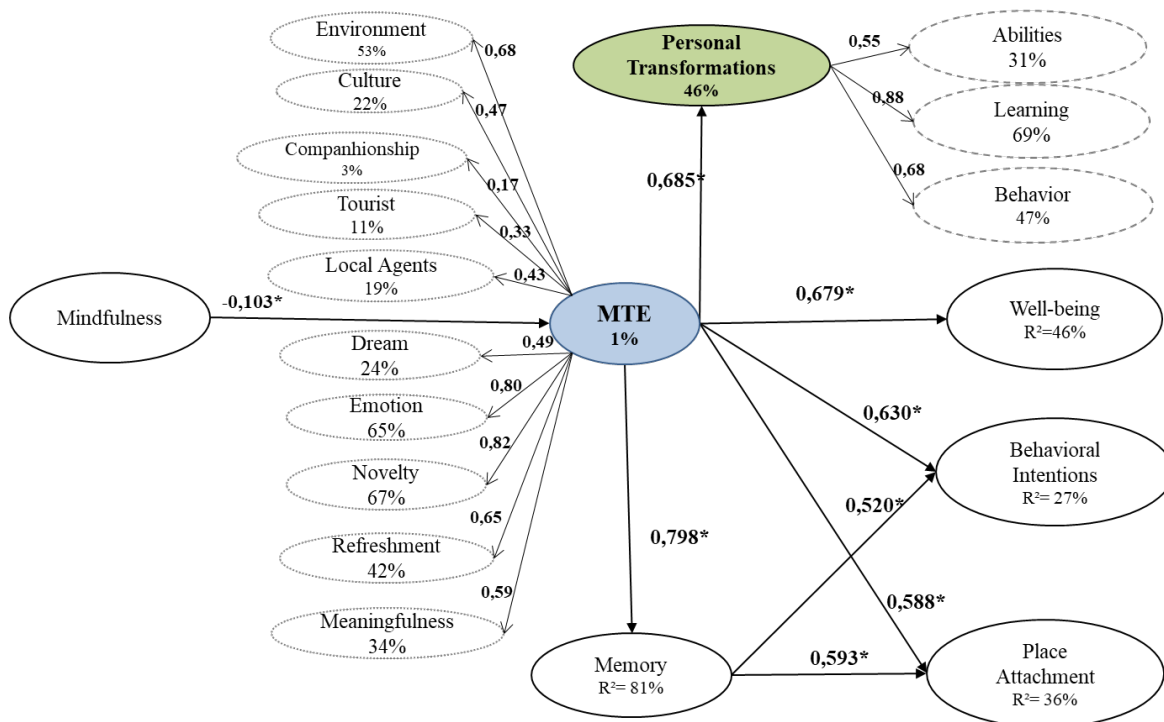


Figure 2. Final research model estimation

Source: The authors

Notes: MTE and personal transformations are multidimensional constructs. All others are single-dimension.

* shows the hypotheses confirmed at a 1% level of significance.

The values of multiple squared correlations (R^2) are also essential to demonstrate the degree of explanation of a variable, with the variables that are best explained being memory (81%), well-being (46%), and personal transformations (46%). Furthermore, the low R^2 of MTEs is justified given that the study sought to find the dimensions of MTEs and not the antecedent variables of the same. In this case, only mindfulness was an antecedent MTE variable, contributing to the R^2 of the latter. Table 6 presents the adjustment indexes of the final structural model of the final sample. Although the GFI, AGFI, and NFI indexes were slightly below what the literature considers desirable, they are acceptable for exploratory models (Hair, 2010) since later studies can refine the scale and the proposed model.

Table 6. Adjustment index of the structural model

Index	Criteria	Final Model E2
χ^2	NA	11246.26
χ^2/Df	<3	2.324
P-value	>0.05	0.000
SRMR	<0.08	0.061
RMSEA	<0.07	0.033
GFI	>0.9	0.827
AGFI	>0.9	0.815
NFI	>0.9	0.881

CFI	>0.9	0.928
TLI	>0.9	0.925

Source: Output from Amos

Thus, the final model's adjustment indexes proved to be adequate and met the main criteria proposed by the literature. Finally, the proposed theory was confirmed through the relationships established in the final research model.

5. DISCUSSION

The proposed research opens space for the discussion of the dimensions of MTEs. The results reinforce that, in addition to being a multidimensional construct, it is possible to separate the dimensions of an MTE into three significant areas of influence: 1) environmental and cultural; 2) interpersonal; and 3) individual and psychological (Coelho et al., 2018; Coelho & Gosling, 2018). The research demonstrated that all these dimensions were statistically significant for the respondents' MTEs. Hence, this study demonstrates that dimensions other than those tested by Kim et al. (2012), Kim & Ritchie (2014a), and Kim (2010) are significant for MTEs.

Individual and psychological influences have been emphasized within the MTE literature and are an essential part of this instrument. In this study, it was clear that novelty, emotions, meaningfulness, dream, and refreshment are individual influences that support the multidimensionality of MTEs. Despite this, some dimensions proposed by Kim, Ritchie, and McCormick (2012) were not proven relevant in the context of this study (e.g., hedonism, knowledge, and involvement). Hence, these results are similar to Koga et al. (2025) and indicate that MTE scales should be tested and analyzed considering its context (Hosseini et al., 2023).

The literature points out that tourists' attention is essential for their experiences (Chen et al., 2017; Kang & Gretzel, 2012). However, this study attests that this notion may not be accurate for memorable experiences. The relationship between mindfulness and MTEs was significantly negative. This means that the less attentive tourists are during their tourism experiences, the less memorable their experiences tend to be. This is particularly important because surprise and novelty are reported to be very relevant for MTEs. Hence, this study shows that tourists like to be relaxed and aim for experiences distinct from ordinary experiences, as pointed out by Walls et al. (2011).

The most relevant personal transformation, which was proven to affect memorable tourism experiences, is learning. In the present study, it became evident that learning is a consequence of MTEs, while some studies present it as a dimension of MTEs (Kim et al., 2012; Kim & Ritchie, 2014a). Hence, this study proposes that learning is a consequence of a memorable experience. These learning experiences are related to tourists' new ideas and innovations, testing their capabilities, gaining new knowledge and expertise, and stimulating their curiosity to learn new things.

The proven behavioral changes included acquiring new habits in daily life, visitors incorporating what they learned into their routines, and changing consumption habits. Thus, travelers learn while experiencing MTEs and begin to transfer part of that knowledge acquired into their daily habits.

The relevance of some personal abilities that had not been established by Scarinci and Pearce (2012) were confirmed in this study (namely, an open mind, tolerance, and patience) were changes in skills resulting from MTEs. Therefore, it is not only the number of trips previously made (Scarinci & Pearce, 2012) but also the memorability and the perception of the relevance of the experience that is critical to the development of tourist abilities from the experience of the activity. These results confirm that experiences that provide learning and transformations are more memorable than ordinary experiences (Pine & Gilmore, 1998), including for tourists.

Other skills initially modeled as transformations of worldview and empathy were perceived as transformations in personal abilities. They included being more active and generous, putting oneself in another's shoes, being more willing to listen to different opinions, enjoying a different pace of life, feeling self-fulfilled, being more interested in other matters, perceiving life as more meaningful, worrying about new issues, and learning new facts or information. All these variables were raised by Pan (2012; 2014) and Sorensen and Jensen (2015), but they had not been previously tested in a quantitative way, being an important contribution of this study.

MTEs generate feelings of satisfaction and happiness (hedonism); feelings such as being alive, involvement with the activity, belonging and completeness; and a sense of personal adaptation to the experience (eudaimonia). Huta and Waterman (2014) note that hedonism and eudaimonia may be researched as variables in the same analysis category. Therefore, the literature supports the study results that MTEs determine subjective well-being as a single-dimensional construct, considering emotional and utilitarian aspects (Rojas & Camarero, 2008).

Since personal transformation is the result of tourist experiences, the benefits of traveling can go beyond satisfaction and subjective well-being. Contact with other cultures and people induces learning, reflection, and empathy. In this sense, actors involved in tourism may be giving little emphasis to the real benefits of the activity in the long term. From individual transformation, individuals can change their thinking, consumption, and actions within society. Thus, in addition to broad benefits such as life satisfaction, happiness, optimism, family life, and social relationships (McCabe & Johnson, 2013), the tourist experience can promote social transformation.

Behavioral intention has already been studied (e.g., Tsai, 2016, Aroeira et al., 2016, Kim & Ritchie, 2014) and has proven to be a consequence of MTEs. The results confirm previous studies showing that MTEs precede the intention to return and recommend the destination.

The research model demonstrated that, at least for this research sample, both MTEs and the resulting memory impact the intention to recommend and return to a destination. Additionally, related to consumer behavior, a memorable tourism experience can generate a traveler's attachment to a destination (Pine & Gilmore, 1998; Tsai, 2016). Place attachment derives from the construction of an emotional bond between the traveler and the tourist destination, and it is

attested in this study that memory also determines attachment to destinations. That is, what is kept in memory is what creates a link with the destination.

Finally, MTEs deserves attention from tourism researchers, local actors, marketing professionals, and tourism destination managers. MTEs are attractive for tourists due to the intention to recommend and revisit the destination. Additionally, MTEs can be used to generate an emotional bond with visitors through memory and place attachment. Moreover, MTEs contribute to the well-being of travelers and their transformations.

5. CONCLUSION

At least three dimensions of MTEs found in this study were previously unidentified: 1) environment and culture; 2) interpersonal relationships; and 3) individual and psychological. In the dimension of environment and culture, the attractions and tours carried out in the environment determine the degree to which an experience is or is not remembered by tourists. The psychological dimension is the most important for MTEs, with novelty being the most salient element that reflects the memorability of the experience and may help managers devise strategies to exceed tourists' expectations. This may be achieved through the generation of surprise and great emotions when designing tourist experiences.

This paper advances knowledge by assessing mindfulness as an antecedent of MTEs. Different from previous studies, this study attests that full attention interferes negatively with the formation of MTEs. This result means that relaxation is essential, and experiences need to be surprising and remarkable.

It was also shown that trips might significantly impact the personal transformations of travelers. The most remarkable transformations were related to learning, followed by behavioral transformations, such as travelers incorporating new habits into their routines. Finally, the study suggests that a range of personal skills are altered or acquired through remarkable travel, including communication skills, changing world views, and the ability to put oneself in another's shoes. Other MTE consequences that this study confirms are subjective well-being, behavioral intentions, place attachment and memory.

Future studies may consider alternative methods of studying the MTE phenomenon, such as interviews, focus groups, experiments, and neuroscience approaches, aiming to deepen the understanding of each element of MTE proposed in the study. Longitudinal studies may also represent significant advances on the topic. In this way, a tourist may be studied across multiple trips to clarify the extent to which the trip may have been a transforming factor or whether personal transformations were due to other influences, such as a life moment.

The study is not without limitations, given that the sample was nonprobabilistic, the results are not generalizable. Additionally, exploratory theoretical models can have issues with scale validation. The proposed scale should be tested in other contexts (such as cross-country studies), allowing refinement to further validate the proposed theory.

Tourism destination managers should consider how they might generate memorable trips for tourists. From this study, it was noted that novelty was a critical dimension for MTEs. As a result, managers that a) know their consumers and can identify the extent to which they can deliver services that have never been experienced before and b) provide innovative services and products capable of surprising the target audience are more likely to evoke tourists' emotions, memory, and place attachment. Coelho and Valduga (2023), for instance, propose fifteen organizational steps for creating memorable tourist experiences and sixteen tools to help on developing them.

Managers could also develop experiences to enhance personal transformations, such as learning and developing personal abilities and empathy. For example, tour operators could emphasize local culture, provide contact among tourists and locals, and explore cultural aspects of the destination, including culinary, natural, and built attractions. Photos and souvenirs could also serve as memory triggers to help tourists remember a destination and strengthen place attachment. Memorable experiences are also crucial in the creation of connections between tourists and destinations. Therefore, enhancing experiences to be memorable may highlight place attachment and determine future travel behavior, such as recommending and returning.

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a. Appendix

Table A – Research Questionnaire

Questionnaire and variables	Descriptive statistics		
	Mean	SD	FL
COMP1 This trip was defined by great fellowship.	5.77	1.481	0.782
COMP2 The companionship was the most special aspect of the trip.	6.12	1.102	0.856
COMP3 I had the opportunity to approach my travel companion (s).	6.05	1.527	0.822
COMP4 I met people who made a difference on the trip.	5.40	1.854	0.806
COMP5 I still have contact with the friends I made during the trip.	5.65	1.872	0.828
COMP6 I met people I identified with.	4.93	2.068	0.907
COMP7 I was delighted by the hospitality of the local people.	4.03	2.491	0.838
COMP8 I was very well served in the establishments I visited.	4.77	2.148	0.812
COMP9 I had a unique service during the trip. *	5.68	1.394	0.601

CULT6 I had good impressions of the local people.	6.06	1.118	0.681
CULT8 The people at the destination were friendly.	5.05	1.610	0.707
DREAM1 This trip was a dream come true.	5.17	1.957	0.857
DREAM2 I've always had a great desire to make this trip.	5.17	1.947	0.896
DREAM3 This journey represents the fulfilment of an old dream.	4.91	2.057	0.920
INV1 I visited a place I really wanted to go.*	6.61	0.782	0.577
EMOT1 I had a lot of fun on the trip.	6.60	0.759	0.841
EMOT2 I enjoyed the trip.	6.64	0.749	0.849
EMOT3 I remember the sensations I had during the trip.	6.25	1.357	0.697
NOV1 I did things I had never experienced before.	6.32	1.087	0.647
NOV2 I was surprised by what I experienced during the trip.	6.04	1.399	0.746
NOV4 It was a once-in-a-lifetime experience.	6.08	1.409	0.816
NOV5 It was a unique experience.	6.27	1.179	0.787
NOV6 It was different from previous experiences.	6.41	1.093	0.792
NOV7 I experienced something new.	6.40	1.080	0.788
HED1 I was thrilled about having a new experience.	5.81	1.578	0.806
REFR1 It was liberating. *	5.98	1.442	0.651
REFR2 I enjoyed a sense of freedom.	6.33	1.115	0.728
REFRE3 It was refreshing.	6.31	1.129	0.951
REFRE4 I felt revitalized.	6.04	1.320	0.947
MEAN1 I did something meaningful.	5.85	1.461	0.660
MEAN2 I did something important.	5.80	1.544	0.651
MEAN3 I learned about myself *	5.92	1.523	0.542
MEM1 I have remarkable memories of this trip	6.64	0.746	0.901
MEM2 I have wonderful memories of my visit to this destination.	6.60	0.817	0.91
MEM3 I won't forget my experience of visiting this destination.	6.62	0.809	0.853
MEM4 I will remember many positive things about this destination.	6.63	0.742	0.859
PLAC1 That was the best place for what I like to do on holidays.*	5.53	1.526	0.635
PLAC2 I am very attached to this holiday destination.	5.01	1.857	0.800
PLAC3 Holidaying in this destination means a lot to me.	5.15	1.830	0.777
PLAC5 I identify strongly with this destination.	5.47	1.660	0.840
PLAC6 It is a very special destination to me.	5.69	1.608	0.804
T1 Effective communication*	5.12	1.106	0.629
T2 Being open-minded	5.38	1.167	0.851
T3 Self-confidence	5.39	1.192	0.856
T4 Decision-making	5.28	1.184	0.875
T5 General knowledge*	5.67	1.099	0.619
T6 Understanding and awareness	5.41	1.173	0.876
T7 Feeling comfortable around all types of people	5.36	1.206	0.855

T8 Adaptability	5.48	1.202	0.884
T9 Tolerance	5.29	1.233	0.866
T10 Independence	5.47	1.252	0.870
T11 Forward thinking	5.24	1.294	0.818
T12 Management of financial resources*	5.14	1.309	0.646
T13 Self-motivation	5.36	1.244	0.883
T14 Self-evaluation	5.30	1.229	0.885
T15 Dealing with pressures, emotions, and stress	5.24	1.265	0.851
T16 Interpersonal understanding	5.32	1.199	0.888
T17 Responsibility	5.29	1.281	0.878
T18 Patience	5.29	1.246	0.856
T19 Observing caution and vigilance	5.28	1.245	0.863
T20 Making and maintaining relationships	5.16	1.268	0.852
T21 Learning attitude	5.43	1.242	0.875
T22 Stress management	5.16	1.272	0.823
TB23 [Appreciate what I have.]*	5.34	1.226	0.744
TB24 [Be more active.]	5.26	1.228	0.854
TB25 [Be more generous.]	5.10	1.226	0.868
TB26 [Putting myself in another's place.]	5.22	1.247	0.858
TB27 [Being more willing to listen to different opinions.]	5.31	1.226	0.868
TB28 [Trust people more.]*	5.02	1.252	0.647
TB29 [Enjoy a different pace of life.]	5.58	1.204	0.856
TB30 [Having more control over my material desires.]*	5.13	1.318	0.748
TB31 [Feeling more self-fulfilled.]	5.49	1.244	0.858
TB32 [To be more interested in other matters.]	5.41	1.208	0.874
TB33 [Seeing life as more meaningful to me.]	5.57	1.243	0.871
TB34 [Changing some beliefs.]*	5.10	1.272	0.643
TB35 [Worrying about issues I didn't worry about before.]	5.17	1.273	0.844
TB36 [Being more concerned with the quality of life of the place I visited.]*	5.19	1.308	0.665
TB37 [Being more concerned with the quality of life of the people in the place I visited.]*	5.14	1.308	0.639
TB38 [Learning new facts or information.]	5.70	1.188	0.846
TB39 [To better understand some problems in that region.]*	5.41	1.257	0.643
TB40 [Acquire new knowledge.]*	5.80	1.198	0.761
TC41 Changed the way I travel.*	5.36	1.134	0.612
TC42 [Acquiring new habits in my daily life.]	5.09	1.123	0.844
TC43 [Incorporated part of what I learned on the trip into my routine.]	5.14	1.141	0.814
TC44 [Reflected on my life.]*	5.65	1.089	0.631
TC45 [Changed my consumption habits.]	5.06	1.196	0.791

TC46 [Changed my body.]*	4.70	1.181	0.611
TC47 [Changed my physical characteristics.]*	4.56	1.151	0.583
TC48 [Better appreciate my free time.]*	5.39	1.187	0.651
TC49 [Understand people better.]*	5.26	1.172	0.790
TC50 [Started investing more in travel.]*	5.70	1.190	0.534
TC51 [Interfered with other trips I made.]*	5.26	1.237	0.575
BI1 I would like to recommend others to visit the destination.	6.65	0.793	0.815
BI2 Revisiting the destination would be worthwhile.	6.48	1.095	0.750
BI3 I will revisit the destination.	5.86	1.548	0.611
EUDA1 This activity gives me my greatest feeling of truly being alive.	6.01	1.401	0.652
EUDA2 When I engage in this activity, I feel more intensely involved than I do when engaged in most other activities	5.93	1.356	0.797
EUDA3 This activity gives me my strongest feeling of who I truly am	5.48	1.638	0.789
EUDA4 When I engage in this activity, I feel that this is what I was meant to do.	5.61	1.633	0.748
EUDA5 I feel more complete or fulfilled when engaging in this activity than I do when engaged in most other activities.	5.60	1.546	0.883
EUDA6 I feel a special fit or meshing when engaging in this activity.	5.36	1.588	0.843
HFEEL1 When I engage in this activity, I feel more satisfied than I do when engaged in most other activities.	5.75	1.418	0.853
HFEEL6 When I engage in this activity, I feel happier than I do when engaged in most other activities.	5.81	1.388	0.773
LEARN1 The experience allowed me to keep up with new ideas and innovations.	5.45	1.473	0.756
LEARN2 The experience enabled me to come up with new ideas.	5.67	1.380	0.789
LEARN3 I could test my capabilities.	5.27	1.599	0.729
LEARN4 I improved my skills*.	5.20	1.560	0.733
LEARN5 I gained a sense of accomplishment*.	5.90	1.331	0.651
LEARN6 I gained new knowledge/expertise.	6.05	1.224	0.828
LEARN7 I learned a lot through these activities.	6.01	1.230	0.873
LEARN8 These activities stimulated my curiosity to learn new things.	5.94	1.353	0.868
LEARN9 It was a real learning experience.	5.95	1.351	0.889
MIND3 I find it difficult to stay focused on what's happening in the present.	3.33	1.983	0.662
MIND7 It seems I am "running on automatic" without much awareness of what I'm doing.	3.02	1.943	0.859
MIND8 I rush through activities without being truly attentive to them.	3.03	1.877	0.901
MIND9 I get so focused on the goal I want to achieve that I lose touch with what I'm doing right now to get there.	3.09	1.869	0.783
MIND10 I do jobs or tasks automatically, without being aware of what I'm doing.	2.81	1.842	0.897
MIND12 I drive places on 'automatic pilot' and then wonder why I went there.	2.76	1.913	0.740
MIND14 I find myself doing things without paying attention.	3.24	1.961	0.767

MIND15 I snack without being aware that I'm eating.	2.55	1.897	0.704
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Notes: *Variables removed during the refinement procedures, following literature recommendations. "SD" stands for "standard deviation"; "FL" for "factor loading".

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