

HEDONIC AND EUDAIMONIC PERSONAL GOALS AS MOTIVATIONAL FACTORS TO ATTEND A RELIGIOUS MEGA EVENT

Barbara Sofia Pasaco-González
Ana María Campón-Cerro
Universidad de Extremadura

Francisco Sánchez-Cubo
Universidad de Málaga

Ricardo Gouveia Rodrigues
Universidade da Beira Interior & NECE - Research Centre for Business Sciences

ABSTRACT

This study aims to determine to which extent hedonic and eudaimonic personal goals motivate individuals to participate in religious events. The World Youth Day (WYD) was selected as a research context, and the sample accounts for 171 valid responses to a face-to-face survey to pilgrims. Data were subjected to a descriptive analysis to identify the level of importance of personal goals, and chi-square tests were also performed to assess the influence of sociodemographic characteristics on personal goals. The results confirm that hedonia and eudaimonia function as drivers of the decision-making process by shaping the motivations that drive individuals to participate in a religious event. Also, it was found that mainly sex, age and country of residence produce variations in personal goals. This study offers further evidence that goes beyond the general motivations of attendants to religious events, contributing to a new theoretical approach, including hedonic and eudaimonic goals.

Keywords: Eudaimonia; Hedonia; Personal Goals; Religious Event; Tourism Management

Acknowledgments

Project developed within the framework of the Margarita Salas aid modality of the Universidad de Extremadura, granted within the actions for the concession of subsidies to public universities for the requalification of the Spanish university system (Ministerio de Universidades, R.D. 289/2021) (Ref. MS-23).

NECE-UBI, Research Centre for Business Sciences, Research Centre and this work are funded by FCT – Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia, IP, project UIDB/04630/2020 and DOI identifier 10.54499/UIDP/04630/2020

1. INTRODUCTION

Among all types of tourism, some strongly differ from others by their inner character. That is the case of religious tourism, which is defined as the “type of tourism whose participants are motivated either in part or exclusively for religious reasons” (Rinschede, 1992). However, that basic assertion may lead to some trouble while identifying which activities fall under the umbrella of religious tourism and, above all, stating in which circumstances a person can be considered either a pilgrim or tourist; or, at some point, both (Nolan and Nolan, 1992). Thus, one of the most contributed research topics within religious tourism studies is their classification according to their level of spiritual attachment to the place or festival, as can be seen in Durán-Sánchez et al. (2018). Despite all the nuances, religious tourists could be classified into four general groups, from the most secular to the most religious: Leisure travelers, Cultural enthusiasts, Religious pragmatists and Devout believers (Wang et al., 2020). Nevertheless, it should be noted that, according to Rinschede’s definition (1992), only the two latter types of tourists should be considered as such, but the two formers are usually also considered in religious tourism studies.

Moreover, apart from tourists, the type of activity is also important when addressing religious tourism. Using the classification proposed by (Nolan and Nolan, 1992), they can be (1) No touristic Pilgrimage Shrines, (2) Religious Tourist Attractions and (3) Religious Festivals. While the first of the categories is strictly reserved for devotees, the other two may combine religious pilgrims and secular tourists, and differentiating and quantifying them represent a highly difficult task. Since religious tourist attractions are widely studied in the scientific literature, this work addresses religious festivals, which remain understudied. In this sense, to avoid territorial bias, the authors selected a religious event whose location changes each time: The World Youth Day (WYD), organised by the Catholic church.

The WYD has been celebrated every two to three years (the next one will be in Seoul, South Korea, in 2027) since 1985, and entails a week of religious activities organised for young people who gather from all around the world in the organising city. The week culminates with a massive mass given by the Pope (Niedźwiedz, 2019). Despite this event being open to the general public and among the millions of attendees there might be all sorts of visitor profiles, studies suggest that most participants are strongly linked to religious organisations, which organise the trip (Rymarz, 2007; Cardoso et al., 2023). That might also explain why the WYD webpage section dedicated to tourism receives little attention (Narbona and Arasa, 2018), which does not entail a lack of interest of the participants in visiting the host city or country.

Therefore, considering all the above, the WYD can be considered a religious event, which lies under the definition of religious tourism, and which participants can both perform pilgrimage and tourism activities. Also, given the massive attendance to WYD events, the festival can be considered a mass gathering (MG) event, which involves the need for good management and event organisation. To do so, lessons learnt from MG events must be applied to carry out properly WYDs. Also, thoroughly analysing who participates in the event and what are their reasons is of high relevance for event and destination managers as this led to successfully attracting event attendants (Saha et al., 2021; Yan and Halpenny, 2019).

To address which factors motivate people to attend religious events, this study proposes the application of the concepts of hedonia and eudaimonia. While the main theories and applications of hedonia and eudaimonia come from the field of psychology, it is observed and increased implementation of these constructs in tourism research due to the experiential context in which the tourism industry currently operates, and the growing recognition of the tourism experience as a source of well-being and happiness (Demeter et al., 2023). Hence, given the expanding importance of religious events, the few studies that have explored this context, and the need to address the motivation of contemporary religious tourists, this study aims to determine to which extent hedonia and eudaimonia motivate individuals to participate in religious events. Further, this study also assesses the variability of these motives concerning certain demographic variables. To achieve these objectives, the following section compiles the result of a literature review about directly applicable studies to both MG events and the characterisation of the attendees to religious festivals, together with hedonia and eudaimonia. Then, in the ‘Results’ section, statistical analyses are performed to self-gathered data collected from 2023 WYD in Lisbon, to shed light on the above issues. Lastly, the results are discussed, some conclusions are drawn, and the limitations and practical implications are presented.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Mass gathering events and religious festivals

Tourism events are celebrations developed by public or private organisations, and whose content is associated with a specific theme (Folgado-Fernández et al., 2021). Regardless of the specific type of event, mass gatherings entail several challenges for the organisers that need to be addressed before being held. That is also the case for religious events and festivals, which capture most of the attention in related research. More specifically, the extant literature – which mostly focuses on religious festivals carried out in developing countries – delves into sanitary issues such as food poisoning (Bajaj and Dudeja, 2019), potable water safety (Othman et al., 2022) and other problems due to dipping in water or even physical safety – including clashes between rival groups or stampedes (David and Roy, 2016). In this sense, crowd accidents are widely addressed and, while no direct relation between the size of the crowd and accident rates is demonstrated, there is evidence about income level and larger odds for accidents in developing countries (Feliciani et al., 2023).

In addition, accessibility also plays a significant role in these festivals since people of all conditions attend, which implies the necessity to assess the accessibility of the event and adapt it to handicapped people (Gołębieszka et al., 2020) or to facilitate access to all publics. Nevertheless, some spaces cannot be adapted and some authors state that, despite burdening religious tourism, it might be beneficial to keep the spirituality of certain events (Aulet and Duda, 2020). Even so, that does not excuse organisers from providing basic services and facilities – food and water supplies, toilets, signage, and security... –, which also influence satisfaction (Gupta and Basak, 2018) and event experience (Armbrecht and Andersson, 2020; Neuhofer et al., 2020).

Concerning the latter, it is of high interest in the religious tourism literature – specifically in the religious festivals and events studies – the trade between religiousness/spirituality and tourism. That is, religious festivals are proven to have a positive impact on local communities since they reinforce local identity (Nair and Babu, 2022), and locals and religious agents do feel positive about embracing tourists with them, given the open nature of the events, and to show their culture and traditions (Suntikul and Dorji, 2016). However, caution is advised since authenticity – together with emotions (Lee et al., 2015) – is crucial for the festival's identity, and it is what leads to supporting tourism development (Lee et al., 2015, 2021). Still, also, excessive tourism development may be detrimental to authenticity. To avoid losing authenticity, some religious events have strategies to protect it and keep its religiousness (Rubio-Gil and Esteban-Curiel, 2008). That leads to overall satisfaction with the event and the likelihood of the participant visiting again, which is very important even for spiritual tourists (Piramanayagam and Seal, 2021).

Religious tourists, of various types, seek a religious experience for different motivations. Although these motivations are mostly related to religion or spirituality, it is currently observed that the motives of contemporary religious tourists have evolved towards more diversified aspects (Liro, 2021), and could even be related to the need to achieve certain objectives, such as socialisation, learning, spiritual growth, personal development, escaping from daily routine, relaxation, among others (Bond et al., 2015). Personal goals can be addressed from a hedonic and eudaimonic perspective (Huta and Waterman, 2014; Vada et al., 2019). In tourism literature, several studies have analysed hedonia and eudemonia as motives/objectives that determine participation in tourism experiences (e.g., Ewert et al., 2020; Pomfret, 2021; Saragih and Amelia, 2020; Vada et al., 2019). However, this issue has attracted little attention within the context of religious tourism, and even more so for religious events. Therefore, this study aims to explore the extent to which hedonia and eudaimonia shape the motivations that drive individuals to participate in a religious event, and how these work as personal goals within this context.

2.2. Hedonic and eudaimonic personal goals

From the point of view of positive psychology, hedonia and eudaimonia are central concepts for the study of people's well-being and happiness (Deci and Ryan, 2008; Fowers *et al.*, 2010; Huta and Waterman, 2014; Kashdan *et al.*, 2008; Ryan and Deci, 2001; Sheldon *et al.*, 2019). From this psychological conception, hedonia consists of the pursuit of pleasure, enjoyment, and comfort within the physical, emotional and/or cognitive aspects. In contrast, eudaimonia is associated with leading a meaningful life and the pursuit of personal development (Huta and Ryan, 2010). While both concepts are aimed at meeting the needs of an opposing nature (*i.e.*, leading a pleasurable life versus having a meaningful life), the two conditions are not mutually exclusive and can occur simultaneously (Huta, 2015).

For the study of hedonia and eudaimonia, Huta and Waterman (2014) proposed four categories of analysis: 1) orientations, 2) behaviours, 3) experiences, and 4) functioning.

Through these categories, they seek to explain different stages of a person's behaviour, i.e., what they seek and why (i.e., orientations), what they do (i.e., behaviours), what they feel (i.e., experiences), and the results they have achieved for their life (i.e., functioning). While this classification seeks to reach a consensus on how to analyse hedonia and eudaimonia, it also implies that the conceptual and operational definition of each construct varies according to the approach applied. Because of this, Huta and Waterman (2014) suggest that, when opting for one or the other category of analysis, it would be most appropriate to define both concepts symmetrically. Thus, following the classification proposed by these authors and considering the objective of this study, hedonia and eudaimonia will be addressed through the approach of orientations.

From the orientations approach, a better understanding of the interplay between hedonia and eudaimonia as motives underlying a person's behaviour (e.g., Gentzler et al., 2021; Giuntoli et al., 2021; Huta and Ryan, 2010; Pearce and Huta, 2023), which is directed towards the achievement of certain goals or the satisfaction of specific needs (Saha et al., 2021). In the event literature, little research has addressed motivation from a hedonic and eudaimonic perspective. For example, Payini et al. (2022), in the context of a wine festival, segmented visitors according to their hedonic motivations. Saha et al. (2021) assessed the hedonic aspects of participants' motivations for a sports event. (Saragih and Amelia, 2020), in the context of a music festival, classified visitors according to hedonic and eudaimonic motivations. Gursoy et al. (2006) found that festival-goers' motivations involve both hedonic and utilitarian aspects. According to these studies, hedonic and eudaimonic motivations have a notable presence among event-goers' preferences. However, it seems that hedonic factors have gained greater recognition, while eudaimonic motivations are attracting increasing attention.

The literature suggests that hedonic and eudaimonic motivations may differ depending on the socio-demographic characteristics of individuals. For example, in the field of psychology, LeFebvre and Huta (2021) found that there are significant differences between hedonic and eudaimonic motivations across the adult life span of men and women. Gentzler et al. (2021) found that the importance of hedonic motivations for the pursuit of well-being differs in groups of children and adolescents. In the field of tourism, Pomfret (2021) assessed the hedonic and eudaimonic motives of family members to participate in adventure tourism activities. The results showed that there are differences between the motivations of parents and young children aged 5-10 years and older children aged 11-17 years. While these studies have shown that age and sex influence the assessment of both types of motivations, other socio-demographic variables could also be considered. Therefore, this study proposes that in addition to age and sex, educational level and country of residence also influence the evaluation of hedonia and eudaimonia. According to this, the following hypothesis is proposed.

H1_There are differences between hedonic and eudaimonic personal goals according to demographic variables like sex, age, educational level and country of residence.

3. METHODOLOGY

To test the hypothesis drawn in the previous section, the data from a face-to-face survey were analysed. A questionnaire for the survey was prepared in English, French, Spanish, Italian and Portuguese which were the official languages of the WYD. Before the data collection, a pilot test was carried out to verify the proper functioning of the survey. To measure hedonic (HEG) and eudaimonic personal goals (EUG), the scales from Vada et al. (2019) were adapted to the context of this study. Following the guidelines of Chen et al. (2015), the variables were measured using a 5-point Likert scale. Questions to identify the socio-demographic profile of the sample were also included.

For data collection, a non-probability convenience sampling was employed. The sample comprises attendees to the WYD over 18 years old. Data was collected during the Days in the Dioceses. It consisted of a gathering celebrated one week before the official event of the WYD. Specifically, data collection took place from 28 to 30 July 2023 in the cities of Covilhã and Coimbra (Portugal). The survey was administered during this previous stage to capture the personal goals that motivate young people to attend the WYD. After data collection, the final sample consists of 191 valid questionnaires.

The type of participation in the WYD can be differentiated between pilgrims, volunteers and members of the organisation. Considering this, 171 of the total observations correspond to pilgrims, and the other 20 responses pertain to volunteers and members of the organisation. It might be argued that the personal goals of volunteers and members of the organisation may differ from pilgrims' ones – e.g., volunteers perceive very high value from the experience (Floristán Imízcoz et al., 2013), are willing to help others and spiritually benefit a lot from the experience (Janus and Misiorek, 2019). Thus, the analyses were only performed with the group of pilgrims.

With the data obtained, a descriptive analysis was carried out by employing the SPSS statistical programme (IBM Corp. Released, 2021). The analyses included a characterisation of the sample profile and a description of the importance of the personal goals. Furthermore, it is of high interest for this study and for contrasting the hypotheses mentioned above whether there are relations between the sociodemographic variables and the scores given by the respondents to each of the questions. This test aims to assess whether certain personal characteristics may influence certain personal goals. Thus, chi-squared tests were performed for every pair of variables and question. The choice of the chi-squared test for assessing the relationship between variables is based on the fact that the sociodemographic variables are nominal, and the survey questions are Likert-scale. Therefore, this test is a suitable way of contrasting their relation.

4. RESULTS

Table 1 shows an overview of the demographic data of the sample concerning the pilgrims who attended the 2023 WYD in Lisbon. Overall, the variables ‘Sex’ and ‘Country’ are homogeneously distributed, while the rest of them are visibly skewed. Such skewness responds to the nature of the event as it is aimed to attract young people. Therefore, it is reasonable that 75% of the sample is under 25 years old. In this vein, since the survey was filled by the young over 18 years old, the occupation is another interesting variable. Mostly, the interest lies in the fact that 53.3% are full-time students, and 22.4% study and work, which sums up to 75.7% of the total. Also similarly, 75.3% of the sample has higher-education studies. Despite, the proportion of ‘18-25’ years old and ‘higher-education’, both variables are independent (chi-squared test: p-value of 0.277). On the contrary, ‘educational level’ and ‘occupation’ are dependent, both adding the students who work into the ‘student’ category (chi-squared test: p-value of 0.039) and split as presented in Table 1 (chi-squared test: p-value of 0.074).

Regarding the two remaining variables, a slightly larger presence of women is observed. For the variable ‘country’, the responses were grouped into categories, as respondents reported their country of residence, resulting in 25 different countries. Also, representativeness was considered of high importance. From all the reasonable criteria to group the attendees, the classification established in the World Economic Situation and Prospects 2024 was adopted. This is a report produced by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA, 2024). According to this report, countries are categorized depending on their basic economic conditions, that is, developed economies, economies in transition and developing economies. Considering this classification, the 25 countries reported were grouped into two categories: developed economies and developing economies. The first group includes Italy, Spain, Portugal, Netherlands, Germany, Hungary, France, Poland, the United States and New Zealand. The other group includes respondents from Ecuador, Panama, Brazil, Puerto Rico, Guatemala, Colombia, Chile, Mexico, Madagascar, Philippines, Indonesia, Timor-Leste, Dominican Republic, Peru and Angola. In this case, the ‘Country’ of residence does have a relationship with the ‘Educational level’ (chi-squared test: p-value of 0.002), since 86.6% of the participants from ‘Developing economies’ have a higher-education degree.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of the sociodemographic variables.

Variables	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sex (n=168)	Female	94	56.0
	Male	74	44.0
Age (n=168)	18-25	126	75.0
	26-35	30	17.9
	36-45	8	4.8
	46-60	4	2.4
Country (n=168)	Developed economies	85	50.6
	Developing economies	83	49.4
Educational level (n=166)	Primary School	1	0.6
	High School	33	19.9
	Higher Education	125	75.3

Occupation (n=165)	Other	7	4.2
	Study	88	53.3
	Work	36	21.8
	Study and work	37	22.4
	Unemployed	2	1.2
	Other	2	1.2

Source: Authors

Once the respondents' profiles were defined, the relevance of the study lies in their responses to the questions regarding hedonic and eudaimonic personal goals. The values obtained from 1 to 5 on a Likert scale are graphically shown in Figure 1. Overall, the scores are strongly skewed to the highest values, but no patterns were identified in the answers. The nature of the event could influence these high scores as participants look forward to attending this religious experience and preparing it beforehand. Also, as shown by Rymarz (2007), the young who participate in the event are very religious or are very involved within their parishes. Table 2 shows the results of the mean scores obtained for each variable and their respective indicators. More specifically, Table 2 shows that compared to EUG, the HEG variable obtained a slightly higher mean score. This implies that individuals decide to participate in religious events primarily motivated by personal hedonic goals. Of the three HEG items, the item referring to 'I would like this experience to makes me feel good' achieved the highest mean score (M=4.72) and is therefore arguably the most relevant. As for EUG, the highest rated factor was the item 'I would like this experience to help me grow as a person' (M=4.76).

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of the sociodemographic variables.

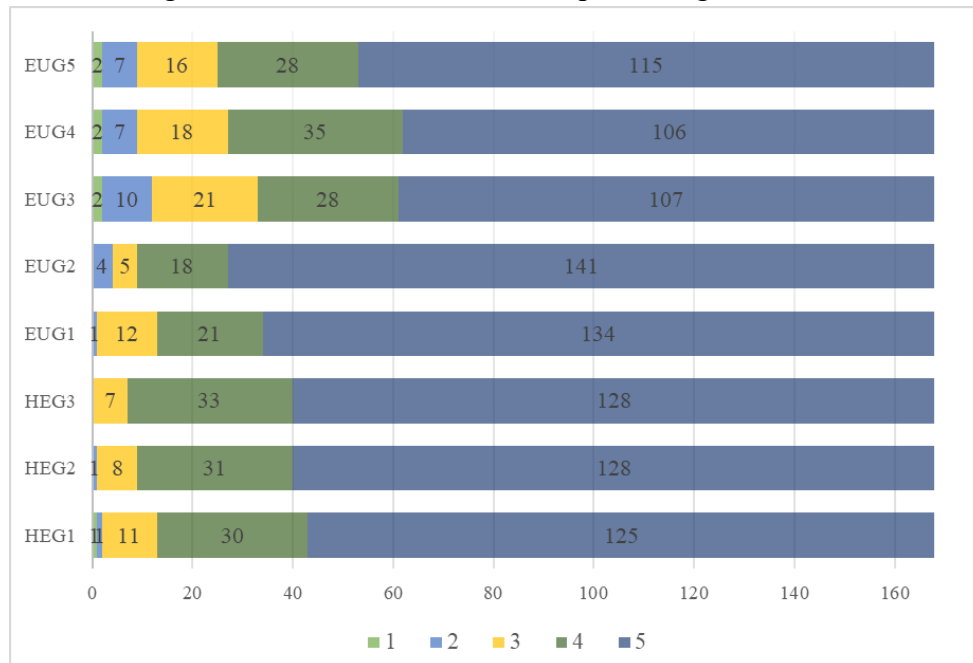
Variables/Items	Min.	Max.	M	SD
Hedonic personal goals (HEG)			4,69	0,508
HEG1_ I would like this experience to be pleasant.	1	5	4,65	0,685
HEG2_ I would like this experience to be enjoyable.	2	5	4,70	0,585
HEG3_ I would like this experience to make me feel good.	3	5	4,72	0,535
Eudaimonic personal goals (EUG)			4,54	0,676
EUG1_ I would like this experience to help me learn new things.	2	5	4,71	0,620
EUG2_ I would like this experience to help me grow as a person.	2	5	4,76	0,621
EUG3_ I would like this experience to help me identify my strengths.	1	5	4,36	0,993
EUG4_ I would like this experience to help me cultivate my strengths.	1	5	4,40	0,924
EUG5_ I would like this experience to help me meet life's challenges.	1	5	4,47	0,915

Note 1: Min=minimum score; Max=maximum score; M=Mean; SD=Standard deviation

Note 2: M and SD included for illustrative purposes; no statistical meaning.

Source: Authors

Figure 1. Hedonic and eudemonic personal goals scores.



Note: 1=strongly disagree; 2= disagree; 3=neutral; 4=agree; 5=totally agree

Source: Authors

According to data in Figure 1, given that there is a substantial proportion of high scores but also rate responses, certain profiles may arise from testing their likely relationship the previously analysed variables. Hence, chi-squared tests were performed for each pair of sociodemographic variables and questions in the survey. Also, Cramer’s V tests were carried out to measure the effect size of the given relationships. This statistic also has a p-value assigned, which is directly related to the one for the chi-squared test. The results are shown in Table 3 for HEG and in Table 5 for EUG. A general sight of the findings shows that most of the variables present heterogeneous results for both constructs, except ‘Country’, which is entirely statistically significant, and ‘Occupation’, which is not. Also, Tables 4 and 6 show the mean scores for each item of HEG and EUG, and each item of the sociodemographic variables.

For hedonic personal goals, starting with the variable ‘Sex’, it is interesting how the strongly statistically significant results are concentrated in HEG1 and HEG2. Looking at Table 4, that difference perhaps corresponds to the lower values for men than women, which illustrates higher interest in females to this extent. Next, in the variable ‘Age’ was were significant differences just for HEG3. Table 4 shows that this factor was the most highly valued by young people between 18 and 25 years old. ‘Educational level’ also presents partial statistical significance, which concentrates on HEG1 and HEG3. This variable records more neutral responses among ‘high-school’ levels but, overall, the scores are high. Finally, while ‘Country’ returns statistically significant results for all questions, ‘Occupation’ does not. In the first case, looking at the detailed data, there is a clear tendency for residents in ‘Developed economies’ to provide lower scores among the questionnaires. That might be due to several reasons which are out of the scope of this work and might require further attention in the future

but reflect that South Americans, Africans and Asians were more excited to participate in this event.

Table 3. Chi-squared and Cramers' V tests for hedonic personal goals.

Items	Sex	Age	Country	Educ. level	Occupation
<i>HEG1</i>	^a 14.043*** ^b (0.289***)	16.911 (0.317)	36.803*** (0.468***)	32.833*** (0.445***)	12.195 (0.272)
<i>HEG2</i>	2.729 (0.127)	9.703 (0.24)	18.583*** (0.333***)	3.722 (0.15)	10.338 (0.25)
<i>HEG3</i>	9.290*** (0.235***)	15.235** (0.301**)	21.414*** (0.357***)	12.040* (0.269*)	4.805 (0.171)

Note 1: Statistical significance at *0.1; **0.05 and ***0.01.

^a Chi-square value.

^b Cramers' V values in brackets.

Source: Authors.

Table 4. Mean values for HEG items and sociodemographic factors.

Sex (n=168)	Female		Male	
HEG1	4.81		4.45	
HEG2	4.73		4.66	
HEG3	4.80		4.62	
Age (n=168)	18-25	26-35	36-45	46-60
HEG1	4.67	4.53	4.50	5.00
HEG2	4.73	4.67	4.38	4.75
HEG3	4.75	4.60	4.50	5.00
Country (n=168)	Developed economies		Developing economies	
HEG1	4.40		4.90	
HEG2	4.52		4.89	
HEG3	4.54		4.90	
Education level (n=166)	Primary school	High school	Higher educ.	Other
HEG1	5.00	4.48	4.75	3.86
HEG2	5.00	4.67	4.72	4.71
HEG3	5.00	4.76	4.75	4.14

Note: M and SD included for illustrative purposes; no statistical meaning.

Source: Authors.

For eudaimonic personal goals, in ‘Sex’ significant differences were found only for EUG2, which was highly valued by women than by men, as shown in Table 6. Next, the variable ‘Age’ has two statistically significant questions, specifically, in EUG1 and EUG2 differences were found. The data shows that the two variables are likely to differ because of lower scores in the younger groups of respondents, even though EUG1 refers to ‘learning new things’ and it would be expected to score less within elder attendees. For ‘Country’ significant results were obtained for all questions, as the same was found in HEG. Lastly, the results for ‘Education level’ and ‘Occupation’ show that there are no differences between groups and so the variables are independent. Thus, all in all, these tests are aimed to point out differences between groups, but the interpretation of the results does not lead to positive or negative conclusions. These analyses are merely descriptive, so they are discussed in the following section.

Table 5. Chi-squared and Cramers' V tests for eudaimonic personal goals.

Items	Sex	Age	Country	Educ. level	Occupation
<i>EUG1</i>	a2.4 b(0.12)	23.315*** (0.373***)	20.639*** (0.350***)	6.884 (0.204)	5.355 (0.18)
<i>EUG2</i>	7.377* (0.210*)	17.018** (0.318**)	26.954*** (0.401***)	10.792 (0.255)	5.457 (0.182)
<i>EUG3</i>	5.673 (0.184)	7.316 (0.209)	34.734*** (0.455***)	5.712 (0.186)	7.663 (0.216)
<i>EUG4</i>	4.505 (0.164)	7.036 (0.205)	37.465*** (0.472***)	11.435 (0.262)	6.981 (0.206)
<i>EUG5</i>	6.431 (0.196)	6.178 (0.192)	37.455*** (0.472***)	12.687 (0.276)	12.241 (0.272)

Note: Statistical significance at *0.1; **0.05 and ***0.01.

^a Chi-square value.

^b Cramers' V values in brackets.

Source: Authors.

Table 6. Mean values for EUG items and sociodemographic factors.

Sex (n=168)	Female		Male	
EUG1	4.77		4.65	
EUG2	4.87		4.62	
EUG3	4.48		4.20	
EUG4	4.47		4.32	
EUG5	4.62		4.28	
Age (n=168)	18-25	26-35	36-45	46-60
EUG1	4.74	4.67	4.38	5.00
EUG2	4.75	4.83	4.50	5.00
EUG3	4.32	4.43	4.38	5.00
EUG4	4.37	4.47	4.38	5.00
EUG5	4.44	4.57	4.38	5.00
Country (n=168)	Developed economies		Developing economies	
EUG1	4.52		4.92	
EUG2	4.54		4.99	
EUG3	3.95		4.77	
EUG4	4.00		4.82	
EUG5	4.08		4.87	

Note: M and SD included for illustrative purposes; no statistical meaning.

Source: Authors.

5. DISCUSSION

This study aimed to determine the extent to which hedonic and eudaimonic personal goals motivate individuals to participate in religious events. The results of the study highlight that both types of personal goals are part of the motivations of people attending religious events. This is in line with theoretical claims that hedonia and eudaimonia can occur simultaneously (e.g., Huta and Ryan, 2010). It also confirms that hedonia and eudaimonia function as drivers of the decision-making process, and that the application of the orientations approach helps to explain people's motivations from a hedonic and eudaimonic perspective.

The results also reveal that hedonic personal goals prevail over eudaimonic ones. These findings are similar to those obtained by Demeter et al. (2023) who found that when people travel for holidays they are more motivated by hedonic than eudaimonic aspects. One possible explanation for this result could be that the majority of WYD attendees were young people. According to Mackenzie et al. (2018), personal goals tend to become more intrinsic with age. Thus, while adults are more likely to pursue eudaimonic interests, young people tend to manifest aspirations of a hedonic nature. Another possible explanation can be found in the statements of Ewert et al. (2020) that motivational appraisal depends on the stage of analysis of the experience. That is, before the experience individuals tend to express a more hedonic motivational perspective, and after the experience they express a more eudaimonic perspective. Thus, the hedonic perspective may prevail in this study given that individuals' perceptions were obtained before the event.

Although eudaimonic goals scored lower, this does not imply that they are less important. It is interesting to note how participation in events, in this case of a religious nature, can contribute to the achievement of eudaimonic aspirations. Previous studies argue that the religious/spiritual dimension of an experience plays an important role in personal development (Dierendonck and Mohan, 2006). This can be seen in the results of the EUG indicator scores, as the highest rated factor was the item 'I would like this experience to help me grow as a person'. This result is consistent with Cardoso et al. (2023) who, in their study applied to WYD 2016 in Krakow, found that the main motivation for young people to attend WYD was the opportunity to achieve greater personal growth. This could be because the event's offer of activities focused on celebrating faith and promoting peace and togetherness leads young people to reach a deep spiritual and emotional connection that drives the process of personal growth. Cardoso et al. (2023) argue that this process may also be reinforced by the intercultural coexistence with other young people and the numerous learning opportunities, as this leads participants to develop new skills and explore aspects of themselves that they were not aware of.

In assessing whether personal characteristics might influence certain personal goals, it was found that the setting of certain personal goals differed according to the socio-demographic characteristics of the participants. Specifically, for hedonic personal goals, statistical significance was found for the variables of sex, age, country, and education level, whereas for eudaimonic personal goals, statistical significance was found only for sex, age, and country.

For the variable 'Sex', differences were found for the items HEG1, HEG3 and EUG2, which have been more highly rated by women. This could imply that women are more goal-oriented when they decide to attend an event, and mainly value that the event experience was pleasant, made them feel good and allowed them to achieve personal growth. The high score given by women to EUG2 is in line with the findings of LeFebvre and Huta (2021) who found that women give higher priority to eudaimonic factors than men. In contrast, the scores attributed to HEG1 and HEG3 disagree with LeFebvre and Huta (2021) who found that men tend to be more hedonic-motivated. The difference in findings between the two studies, beyond the research context, could be attributed to the phase of the experience at which the evaluation

was made. Fayos Gardó et al. (2014) found, in the context of a religious mega-event, that before the event women were much more enthusiastic than men. Thus, it could be argued that in this study the hedonic perspective probably prevails among women due to the emotional state before the event. To explore this question further, future studies could examine how hedonic and eudaimonic motives would relate to the emotional state of individuals.

For the variable 'Age', significant differences were found for the items HEG3, EUG1 and EUG2. Similar results were obtained by Gentzler et al. (2021), Pomfret (2021) and Mackenzie et al. (2018). These findings imply that people's age is positively associated with the type of goals or aspirations they pursue. This is in line with the foundations of socioemotional selectivity theory (SST) which predicts that people of different ages prioritise different types of goals due to the influence of time horizons. This means that goals, preferences, motivations, and even cognitive processes change as time horizons are perceived as longer or shorter. Thus, young people tend to prioritise goals focused on gaining knowledge or experiencing novelty, while older people attach greater importance to optimising psychological well-being (Carstensen et al., 2003). Accordingly, motivational changes across people's lifespan determine the kind of experiences they want to engage in.

Differences by educational level were found just for hedonic personal goals, specifically, for items HEG1 and HEG3. Finally, when analysing the dependency relationship between the participant's place of residence and both types of personal goals, it was found that contrary to the other socio-demographic variables, the 'Country' factor achieved statistically significant results for all HEG and EUG indicators. However, when looking at the differences between groups, it was found that people from developing countries scored better on both variables. This could be attributed to the fact that the level of religiosity of people from developed countries probably differs from that of people from developing countries. In this regard, Diener et al. (2011) detected a relationship between religiousness and societal circumstances. The results showed that, compared with highly developed nations, in countries with more difficult life conditions, a higher percentage of people report being religious. According to these authors, people are likely to find in religion a means to help them cope with difficult situations, being more beneficial when the context surrounding them faces complex social problems. These findings highlight the importance of addressing the effect of socio-economic, cultural or geographical factors to reach a better understanding of religious tourism in contemporary societies.

6. CONCLUSIONS

This study has explored, from a hedonic and eudaimonic perspective, the motivations of people who attend religious events. It also examined the influence of socio-demographic variables in determining these motivations. The results show that participation in religious events is an experience that satisfies both hedonic and eudaimonic interests. However, although people are motivated to achieve both types of personal goals, those of a hedonic nature are the

most prevalent among participants' preferences. When examining the influence of socio-demographic variables, it was found that the attainment of one or the other type of goal depends mainly on the sex, age, and country of residence of the participants. Therefore, motivations should be treated as heterogeneous factors that vary according to the characteristics of the individuals.

On a theoretical level, this study offers the following contribution. The first lies in the application of the study to the context of a religious event. Although religious events are one of the most expanding forms of tourism (Tsai, 2021), they have attracted little attention within tourism and event studies. Maeng et al. (2016), through a review of the literature about motivational factors for festival attendance, found that only a few studies have addressed this issue in the field of religious events. Kim et al. (2013) also identified that, between 1980 and 2010, only 1.1% of the event tourism studies were related to the analysis of religious events. Thus, this study contributes to the current body of tourism and event studies by expanding the knowledge about religious events, and by providing empirical evidence about visitors' motivations within this context.

Another contribution of the study is in the application of the concepts of hedonia and eudaimonia as personal goals that motivate participation in a religious event. While previous studies have assessed motivational factors for attending events, they tend to focus on traditional models of tourism motivation (Yan and Halpenny, 2019). Thus, for example, Maeng et al. (2016) based on a review of the literature on motivations to participate in events, found that the main motives used in the literature include socialisation, excitement, escape, learning and shopping. Therefore, as events represent platforms for achieving specific goals (Colombo and Marques, 2020), this study offers further evidence that goes beyond the general motivations of attendants to religious events and tries to explain how participating in those kinds of events could be a means to achieve personal hedonic and eudaimonic goals. In this way, this study extends the scope of previous studies and contributes to the application of a new theoretical approach to the assessment of participants' motivations for religious events. In turn, it contributes to the literature on hedonia and eudaimonia by applying the orientations approach and analysing these constructs as personal goals.

On a practical level, by knowing that people engage in a certain activity for different reasons, event organisers could tailor the experience to the current needs of visitors (Knobloch et al., 2017; Yan and Halpenny, 2019). To do so, they should consider that the current trend in consumer behaviour is oriented towards personal gain. This is in line with the transition towards the experience economy in which consumers prioritise the symbolic, subjective, and personal value of their experiences. Therefore, the focus of event organisers should be on the design of experiences (Getz and Page, 2020). and the benefits they bring to the personal sphere of participants. Since the pursuit of hedonic and eudaimonic goals are part of people's motivations, organisers of religious events may want to infuse these aspects into the experience. This can be done by providing spaces and activities that offer opportunities for enjoyment and personal growth. For enjoyment, activities could focus on fostering positive feelings (e.g., relaxation, tranquillity, healing, etc.), encouraging socialisation and providing novelty. For

personal growth, activities could include participation in challenging tasks, incorporating elements of learning new things, and improving skills and competencies. These aspects should be aligned with the religious and spiritual essence of the event.

The results also have implications for the tourism sector, as events have a strong impact on the tourism and hospitality industry, even more so when they are mass gathering events (Narbona and Arasa, 2018). While religious events attract people for the very spiritual and emotional experience, they also represent an opportunity to explore the place where they are held. Therefore, knowing the motivations of the target audience attracted by this type of event can allow for the design of a destination experience tailored to the characteristics of the participants and their motivations. Taking into account the hedonic and eudaimonic motives of participants, destination managers should provide the necessary conditions to facilitate the event experience and the achievement of these aspirations. To do so, they should take care of proper planning of tourism infrastructure, facilities and services. For instance, offering and promoting organised tours in and around the city could facilitate learning about the destination and local culture. Providing adequate tourist information and signage could help to guide visitors (Verma et al., 2021), and reduce possible confusion among the crowd (Gupta and Basak, 2018). Adequate transport availability would also help to consider the possibility of extending timetables or increasing the number of transport units. Ensuring the safety of attendees is also an important issue that must be taken into account (Patwardhan et al., 2020).

This research is not without limitations. First, the use of non-probability convenience sampling may somewhat limit the generalisability of the results. Second, this study has been conducted from a demand-side perspective. Other research could analyse the perceptions of the local community, destination managers, and/or tourism businesses. Third, this study has assessed the personal goals associated with the event experience specifically. Therefore, future studies could explore hedonic and eudaimonic personal goals linked to the destination experience. Fourth, while data collection was conducted before the event experience, this has allowed us to capture participants' first impressions of their motivations for attending the event. However, future research could conduct longitudinal measurements to compare perceptions both before and after the event experience. Fifth, this study has addressed the perceptions of people who participated as pilgrims. Further research could explore the perceptions of those attending as volunteers. A comparative study could also be carried out between pilgrims and volunteers to find out to what extent their hedonic and eudaimonic aspirations might differ. Finally, this study has explored the variability of personal goals according to socio-demographic factors. Further studies could identify the effect of hedonic or eudaimonic personal goals on other variables such as quality of experience, satisfaction with the event, behavioural intentions, memorability, happiness, well-being, and personal transformation, among others.

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