

Effects of holidays on tourists: a review and directions for future research

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Abstract | Tourism offers opportunities to explore new environments and to participate in new situations, which may originate several effects on tourists. The purpose of this paper is to review the empirical literature that analyses the effects of holidays for tourists, with the objective of identifying the key elements and dimensions to consider in this field. To accomplish this objective, electronic searches were conducted using a specialist research database, SCOPUS, resulting in eighteen scientific articles considered as directly relevant to the subject matter of the paper.

From this review it can be concluded (i) a significant evolution of research on this topic since the 90's; (ii) the predominance of quantitative methodologies for analysing the effects of vacation travel on tourists, particularly some effects that already have some scales developed for its measure; (iii) the existence of a gap in the study of the effects of tourism in families; and (iv) that the most frequently included dimensions of vacation travel effects on tourists are those associated with well-being, behaviour and emotional dimensions. The review of literature undertaken provides an analysis of the evolution of published research and also helps to set up research pathways for the future.

Keywords | tourism effects; tourism experience; tourist; vacation travel; family holiday.

Resumo | O turismo oferece oportunidades para explorar novos ambientes e para participar em novas situações, que podem proporcionar vários efeitos nos turistas. Neste contexto, o presente estudo visa analisar os estudos científicos empíricos existentes acerca dos potenciais efeitos das férias para os turistas e sistematizar os elementos-chave e as dimensões a considerar quando se analisam estes efeitos. Na prossecução desse objetivo, foram realizadas pesquisas eletrónicas numa base de dados especializada, SCOPUS, tendo-se obtido um conjunto final de dezoito artigos científicos considerados diretamente relevantes para a temática em análise.

Assim, a presente revisão permite concluir: (i) uma evolução significativa da investigação sobre esta temática desde os anos 90; (ii) a predominância de metodologias quantitativas para análise dos efeitos das férias nos turistas, particularmente a utilização de algumas escalas desenvolvidas para medir alguns desses efeitos; (iii) a existência de uma lacuna no estudo dos efeitos do turismo nas famílias; e (iv) que as dimensões mais frequentemente incluídas nos estudos acerca

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destes efeitos do turismo são dimensões associadas ao bem-estar, comportamento e dimensões emocionais. A revisão da literatura realizada possibilita analisar a evolução da investigação publicada e identificar caminhos para investigação futura.

Palavras-chave | efeitos do turismo; experiência turística; turista; viagem em férias; férias em família.

1. Introduction

Tourism offers opportunities to explore new environments and to participate in new situations, which may originate several effects. The impacts of tourism can be divided into three broad categories - physical impacts, social impacts and economic impacts (Mathieson and Wall, 1990). These categories, in turn, can be subdivided according to the beneficiary: (i) effects for the tourist, (ii) effects on the regions of origin, and (iii) effects on the destination regions of the tourists.

Recognizing these potential effects, the majority of literature undertaken in this field focuses on the effects of tourism on destinations and host communities (Kadt, 1979; Mathieson and Wall, 1990; Liu, 1998; Eusébio, 2006; Moscardo, 2008). However, from the 90's there has been an increasing interest among academics on the effects derived from the practice of tourism for tourists themselves (Mannell and Iso-Ahola, 1987; Mitchell, 1998; Chon, 1999; Richards, 1999; Obrador, 2012). There are, however, few empirical studies addressing this issue. Notable contributions on this regard are, for example, the studies from Neal *et al.*, 1999; Gilbert and Abdullah, 2004; Minnaert *et al.*, 2009; Moscardo, 2009; Alexander *et al.*, 2010; McCabe *et al.*, 2010; Dolnicar *et al.*, 2012. In this context, the present study aims at reviewing and organizing the academic published literature, which is a necessary step for developing research in this field. This systematization of the literature provides an analysis of the published research in the last decades. From the analysis of its main results, it is possible to identify gaps in the literature which help to set up research pathways for the future. The main contribution is the in-depth

analysis of empirical articles about the effects of tourism on tourists. In doing so, it raises awareness with regard to future analytical methods and to the most frequently included dimensions of vacation travel effects on tourists.

The paper is structured as follows: section 2 describes the methodology; the third section is divided in two parts – the effects of tourism for individuals and the effects of tourism for families; the fourth section presents the methodologies frequently adopted by these studies and the last section of the paper brings together some conclusions and implications for future research on the effects of tourism for families.

2. Methodology

This article reviews research literature, particularly empirical studies, on the effects of tourism for participants.

To accomplish this objective, electronic searches were conducted using a specialist research database - SCOPUS. The searches were performed during one day of December 2011, using several combinations of the terms "on tourist", "on visitor", "holiday", "vacation", "effect" and "family" as keywords. These keywords were searched on "Abstract, Keywords and Title", in the areas "Social Sciences & Humanities" and "Health Sciences". Results were then restricted to "Articles" or "Articles in press", using as only source "Journals". The period covered was the widest permitted by the SCOPUS platform, from 1960 to 2012. A total of 1,217 results were found (Figure 1).

After filtering these results through abstract reading by the authors, only forty-two scientific articles were considered as directly relevant to the subject matter of this paper (Figure 2). From this list, only eighteen are empirical studies (the list is provided in the appendix A; Figure 2).

These empirical studies have been published in the following Journals: International Journal of Tourism Research, Annals of Tourism Research, BMC Public Health, Journal of Hospitality & Leisure Marketing, Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism, Psychosomatic Medicine, Journal of Sustainable Tourism, Hungarian Geographical Bulletin, Tourism and Hospitality Research, Journal of Business Research, Tourism Management and Leisure Sciences (appendix A).

3. The effects of vacation travel on tourists

The importance of holidays and travel for well-being has been formally recognized since 1948 with the recognition by the United Nations of vacations as a basic human right. The importance of vacation was reiterated by some governments, who over the years have been recognizing the right to leave paid (Hall and Brown, 2006). As Richards (1999) argues, holidays attenuate two constraints of everyday life - time and place, creating conditions for individuals to engage in their personal and social fulfilment.

Indeed, the effects of tourism can be evaluated on the perspective of the effects that tourism brings to visitors, both individually and in group. This paper chose to analyse these effects of tourism separately.

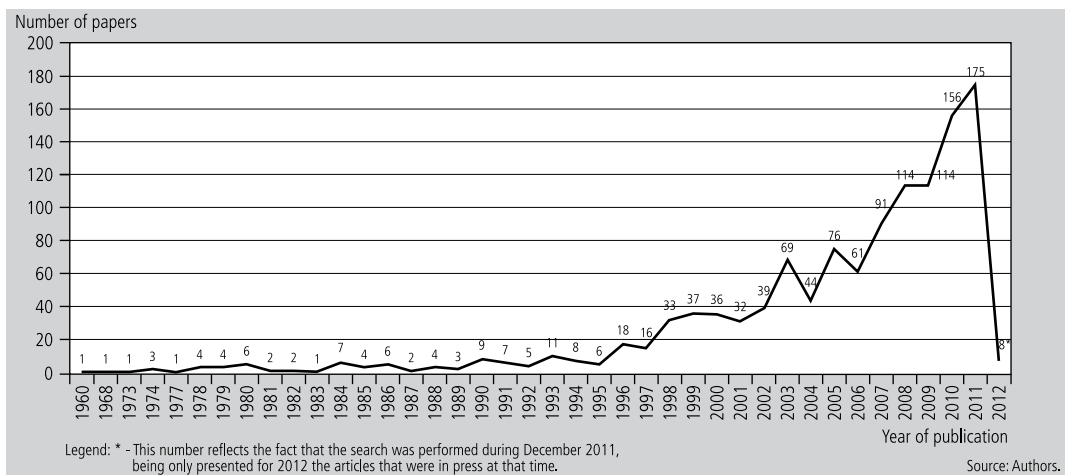


Figure 1 | Evolution of the number of results found with the search keywords.

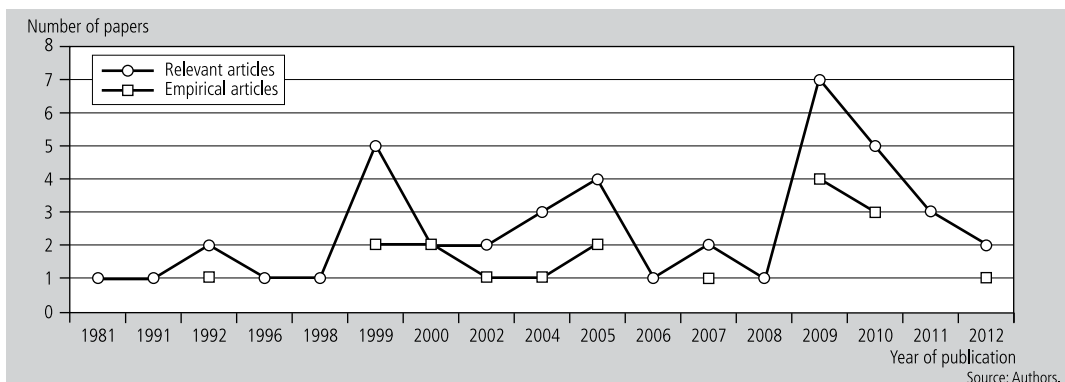


Figure 2 | Scientific articles directly relevant to the subject matter of the paper.

This option is based on the belief that although many of the dimensions studied in the broader group “individuals” would apply to other units of analysis, when the travel party is a family – a group of individuals who seek/ share experiences together (Gram, 2005) – the effects of that experience will affect tourists both as individuals and as a family. The recognition by Gram (2005) and Letho *et al.* (2009) of a gap in literature about the tourism effects on families has also increased our interest in analysing this topic separately.

However, the findings from our review support the argument of Alexander *et al.* (2010), Cooper *et al.* (2005), Gram (2005) and Mathieson and Wall (1990) that this approach is relatively neglected in the literature. Nonetheless, there is a number of published empirical studies on the matter, and in the sections that follow, we review this literature with the aim of mapping the main results both for tourists as individuals and as a group (family), methodologies and avenues for future research.

a. Effects on individuals

As observed before (Figure 2), several empirical studies focused on the effects of tourism on tourists have been conducted, especially since the 90's.

One conclusion of this research is that this kind of effects from tourism has been analysed from two angles: effect of vacation travel on the individuals themselves or on families (Table 1).

These studies reveal that access to vacation outside the usual place of residence, with all the associated opportunities for new experiences, has effects on individuals, setting out that these effects can be positive, negative or neutral (Table 2). Additionally, it is important to mention that some studies that analyse families, usually conclude that family tourism affects not only the family as a whole (see section b), but also family-members individually (e.g. Smith and Hughes, 1999, Minnaert *et al.*, 2009 and McCabe *et al.*, 2010). Table 2 provides a systematization of the main effects of tourism on individuals, grouped according the type

of dimensions of tourists' lives that were affected (Health, Behaviour, Quality of Life, Psychological (Psych.)/ Emotional, Learning and Economic). In each dimension, particular effects were identified. The Health dimension includes effects on the following areas: level of tourists' stress; physical complains and illnesses (for example, the reduction on medication); well-being; exposure to risks (for example, situations with an increased level of danger as radical activities). The Behaviour dimension is associated with attitude change, mood, social participation, social network and contacts (either with friends and relatives or with new people), and risk behaviours (for example, alcohol and drugs consumption). Quality of life (QOL) is divided in satisfaction with life and general – QOL as the whole concept¹. The dimension Psych./ Emotional includes effects related to tourists' self-development, their pleasant feelings/ happiness and their self-confidence/ esteem. Learning is a dimension related with behaviours and also knowledge, in general. The Economic dimension respects to new opportunities (for example, job opportunities at the destination, business ideas in consequence of contact with new environments, contact with other people) and expenses related to the holiday.

Tourism promotes the opportunity to forget the everyday, to increase awareness and find other environments, lifestyles and cultures. Tourism also provides access to more sources of information, creating conditions for a generally higher level of social participation. Confirming these theoretically recognised effects, the majority of the studies report positive effects on individuals from tourism. The reduction of stress (especially because of rest and recover from work, relieve the daily pressures), the change in attitudes (promotion of tolerance and understanding resulting from the contact with

¹ QOL is defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) as 'individuals' perceptions of their position in life in the context of the culture and value systems in which they live and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards and concerns' (WHO, 1994:29).

Table 1 | Empirical Studies about tourism effects on participants

Unit of analysis	Empirical Studies
Individuals	Anastasopoulos, 1992; Neal <i>et al.</i> , 1999; Smith and Hughes, 1999; Gump and Matthews, 2000; Pizam <i>et al.</i> , 2000; Strauss-Blasche <i>et al.</i> , 2002; Gilbert and Abdullah, 2004; Lee and Moscardo, 2005; Bellis <i>et al.</i> , 2007; Lee and Jeong, 2009; Michalkó <i>et al.</i> , 2009; Minnaert <i>et al.</i> , 2009; Moscardo, 2009; Alexander <i>et al.</i> , 2010; Quinn and Stacey, 2010; Dolnicar <i>et al.</i> , 2012.
Families	Smith and Hughes, 1999; Gram, 2005; Lehto <i>et al.</i> , 2009; Minnaert <i>et al.</i> , 2009; McCabe <i>et al.</i> , 2010.

Source: authors.

Table 2 | Tourism effects on individuals

Dimension	Effect	Type of effect	Empirical Studies	Moment of the experience
Health	Stress	Positive	Gump and Matthews, 2000; Moscardo, 2009	During and After the holiday
		Negative	Strauss-Blasche <i>et al.</i> , 2002	
		Null	Strauss-Blasche <i>et al.</i> , 2002	
	Physical complains/illnesses	Positive	Smith and Hughes, 1999; Gump and Matthews, 2000; Minnaert <i>et al.</i> , 2009; McCabe <i>et al.</i> , 2010	
		Null	Strauss-Blasche <i>et al.</i> , 2002	
	Well-being	Positive	Smith and Hughes, 1999; Gilbert and Abdullah, 2004; McCabe <i>et al.</i> , 2010	
Exposure to risks	Negative	Moscardo, 2009		
Behaviour (social)	Attitude change	Positive	Lee and Moscardo, 2005; Moscardo, 2009; Minnaert <i>et al.</i> , 2009; Alexander <i>et al.</i> , 2010; Quinn and Stacey, 2010	During and After the holiday
		Negative	Anastasopoulos, 1992; Moscardo, 2009	
		D.E.	Alexander <i>et al.</i> , 2010	
	Mood	Positive	Quinn and Stacey, 2010	
		Negative	Strauss-Blasche <i>et al.</i> , 2002	
	Social participation	Positive	Michalkó <i>et al.</i> , 2009; Minnaert <i>et al.</i> , 2009; Moscardo, 2009; Quinn and Stacey, 2010	
		Negative	Moscardo, 2009	
	Social network/ contacts	Positive	Pizam <i>et al.</i> , 2000; Gump and Matthews, 2000; Moscardo, 2009; Minnaert <i>et al.</i> , 2009; Alexander <i>et al.</i> , 2010; Quinn and Stacey, 2010	
Risk behaviours	Negative	Bellis <i>et al.</i> , 2007		
Quality of Life	Satisfaction with life in general	Positive	Neal <i>et al.</i> , 1999; Gilbert and Abdullah, 2004; Michalkó <i>et al.</i> , 2009	After the holiday
	General	Positive	Gilbert and Abdullah, 2004; Dolnicar <i>et al.</i> , 2012	
Psychol./ Emotional	Self-development	Positive	Moscardo, 2009; Quinn and Stacey, 2010	During and After the holiday
	Pleasant feelings/ Happiness	Positive	Gilbert and Abdullah, 2004; Michalkó <i>et al.</i> , 2009; Moscardo, 2009; Alexander <i>et al.</i> , 2010	
		Positive	Moscardo, 2009; Alexander <i>et al.</i> , 2010; Quinn and Stacey, 2010	
	Self-confidence	Negative	Moscardo, 2009	
		D.E.	Minnaert <i>et al.</i> , 2009	
Learning	Knowledge	Positive	Minnaert <i>et al.</i> , 2009; Moscardo, 2009; Alexander <i>et al.</i> , 2010; Quinn and Stacey, 2010	During and After the holiday
Economic	New opportunities	Positive	Moscardo, 2009	During and After the holiday
	Expenses	Negative	Smith and Hughes, 1999; Moscardo, 2009	

Legend: D.E. - Depends on the experience

Source: authors.

other cultures), the opportunity to increase social participation (enhancing citizenship, social contacts), promote personal and social development of the individual, as well as physical and mental health, and as a result of all these effects, provide improved well-being. The health effects of tourism are also being recognised both by academics and practitioners. For example, Hall and Brown (2006) found that 95% of British doctors recommended their patients to go on holiday as an alternative to medication.

Hall and Brown (2006) and Alexander *et al.* (2010) pointed out that one of the most important aspects of tourism is that individuals have the opportunity to learn more about themselves and increase their knowledge in general, through contact with other people, communities and realities. Surprisingly, the 'learning effect' is one of the aspects less addressed in the analysed studies (Table 2). On this regard Mitchell (1998) stated that, although rarely addressed, the issue of learning through tourism is an important effect of this activity on tourists, and it is often a motivation to travel (Jolibert and Baumgartner, 1997; Park and Yoon, 2009). Emotions can prompt curiosity and create deeper memories that can lead to greater concentration and willingness to learn (Ballantyne *et al.*, 2011). As mentioned above, tourism offers opportunities to explore new environments and participate in new activities, with new people and new situations, which may induce strong emotions. These opportunities can provide tools that tourists need to initiate a learning process. Learning provided by tourism fits into the concept of learning by experience (Beard and Wilson, 2002).

Very few studies raise also concerns over potential negative effects from tourism, which should not be neglected from research and practice. Moscardo (2009), Bellis *et al.* (2007), Strauss-Blanche *et al.* (2002) and Anastasopoulos (1992) are notable exceptions on this regard.

Beyond the overall conclusions from these studies on the effects of tourism, it emerges that the results for participants are conditional on the specific circumstances. Dolnicar *et al.* (2012) and Moscardo (2009)

argued that the intensity and kind of the effects of tourism will differ according to the specific tourist experience and to certain personal/ social characteristics of the individual. Alexander *et al.* (2010) also observed that those tourists who travel frequently, those who return to the same place and/or those who choose the same type of vacation are not in general so affected by their holiday experience. These results corroborate what Cohen (1979) posed about the tourism experience having different meaning depending on the person's attitude towards two central concepts: the person's centre and the centre-out-there. The person's centre refers to the individual values, and the centre-out-there refers to another place with another culture and values. Therefore, "different kinds of people may desire different modes of tourist experiences" (Cohen, 1979:180) and the meaning of tourism will differ according to each visitor's centre and any centre-out-there considered.

Regarding the duration of these effects (last column of Table 2), Quinn and Stacey (2010), Minnaert *et al.* (2009) and Gilbert and Abdullah (2004) stated that the positive effects remain, at least, several months after the trip, confirming the theoretical assumption that besides the experience itself, the post-experience, or "reflection phase of tourist experience" (Pearce, 2007:10) is an important phase of the tourist experience. The post-experience has long been recognized by academics as an important phase of the tourist experience, as it is related to the effects of the tourist experience, involving concepts as memories, emotions, learning, behaviour/attitude changes, evaluation, satisfaction and loyalty to the destination. These memories of the experience will stay in visitors' mind during a period of time, whose duration depends on the intensity of the experience, and will influence not only the possibility of returning to the destination (loyalty) and the type of experience sharing with family and friends (Martin, 2010), but also tourists' life (Pearce, 2007). Additionally, remembering the past good tourism experience may be a way of daydreaming (*create good memories*) and relaxation, contributing to increase the tourist's

sense of well-being, happiness and the satisfaction with life in general (Neal *et al.*, 1999; Smith and Hughes, 1999; Gilbert and Abdullah, 2004; Minnaert *et al.*, 2009; McCabe *et al.*, 2010).

b. Effects on families

Notwithstanding, and despite the growing number of studies examining the benefits derived from the practice of tourist activity for tourists, little research has been conducted on the effects of tourism on families (Hazel, 2005; Gram, 2005). As Gram (2005:6) stated, "the family is a unit of individuals who seek experiences together" and a significant part of the tourism experiences occur in family. The first empirical study on these matters identified in our review is the notable contribution of Smith and Hughes (1999). Six more years passed until a new study was published on the matter. Existing research identifies a number of positive and negative effects of tourism on families, but further research is needed.

Table 3 provides a systematization of the main effects of tourism on families, as a whole, grouped according the type of dimensions of families' lives that were affected (Health, Behaviour and Learning). Similarly to what have been done for individuals, in each dimension, particular effects were identified. The Health dimension includes effects on the level of families' stress, mainly related to escape and freedom (break from stressful routines and freedom to express and receive opinions) and practical problems (effect particularly detected on families with inexperience in travel, that experienced an increased level of stress because of some problems like inadequacy of the clothes to the destination). The Behaviour dimension is associated with the following effects: relationship with children (being with children and vicarious enjoyment of parents through children); attitude change (coping through good memories); tolerance/ understanding between family members; communication within the family;

Table 3 | Empirical studies on tourism effects on families

Dimension	Effect	Type of effect	Empirical Studies	Moment of the experience	
Health (Stress)	Escape/freedom	Positive	Smith and Hughes, 1999; Letho <i>et al.</i> , 2009; McCabe <i>et al.</i> , 2010	During the holiday	
	Practical problems*	Negative	Smith and Hughes, 1999		
Behaviour (within family)	Relationship with children	Positive	Smith and Hughes, 1999; Gram, 2005; Minnaert <i>et al.</i> , 2009	During and After the holiday	
	Attitude*	Positive	Smith and Hughes, 1999; McCabe <i>et al.</i> , 2010		
	Tolerance/ understanding	Positive	Smith and Hughes, 1999; Letho <i>et al.</i> , 2009		
	Communication	Positive	Letho <i>et al.</i> , 2009		
	Share/ togetherness	Depends on the intensity			Gram, 2005
			Positive		Letho <i>et al.</i> , 2009; Minnaert <i>et al.</i> , 2009; McCabe <i>et al.</i> , 2010
			Positive		Smith and Hughes, 1999; Letho <i>et al.</i> , 2009; McCabe <i>et al.</i> , 2010
			Negative		Strauss-Blasche <i>et al.</i> , 2002
	Quality time	Depends on children's behaviour			Gram, 2005
Bonding (family cohesion)	Positive		Smith and Hughes, 1999; Gram, 2005; Letho <i>et al.</i> , 2009		
Raising expectations*	Negative		Smith and Hughes, 1999		
Learning	Change in parenting styles*	Positive	Minnaert <i>et al.</i> , 2009	During and After the holiday	

Legend: * Effects on special groups of families
Source: authors.

share/ togetherness (sharing moments together and sharing more good/ family moments); spend quality time in family; bonding (family cohesion and strengthening family relationship); and raising expectations (particularly for families with social and economic problems, that deal with uncertainty and lack of continuity of subsidised holiday schemes). Learning is a dimension related with changes in parenting styles, as consequence of reproduction of sharing time together and new ways of communicate with children during the holiday.

As for the effects on individuals, the majority of the studies report positive effects on families' behaviour and learning from tourism that remain after the holiday (last column of Table 3). Family vacations provide a temporary disconnection of family from its usual work or other social networks, what usually represents a new configuration of mental and physical space among family members (Letho *et al.*, 2009). Consequently, the main benefits from tourism observed on families, are related to family interaction and cohesion (bonding), improvement of the relationship with children and escape from routine and stressful daily routine (escape/freedom). However, the benefits associated with learning seems to assume special importance, as highlighted by Minnaert *et al.* (2009), but still a less addressed aspect in these studies (Table 3).

Considering special types of families, as the economic and/or socially disadvantaged ones, the main benefits that tourism can bring to families, in terms of promoting socialization and the possible creation of social networks outside the usual circles, are extremely important aspects to consider (Smith and Hughes, 1999; Minnaert *et al.*, 2009). This importance stems from the fact that socialization is strongly structuring the reintegration of families in society and power bases to promote changes in attitudes that perpetuate a situation of social exclusion.

4. Methodologies for studying the effects of holidays on tourists

Most of the studies on the effects of tourism on individuals apply variants of quantitative methodologies (Tables 4 and 5). However, when considering the studies that focus on families, the methodologies more commonly used are of qualitative nature (Table 4).

Quantitative studies usually are based on the necessity of a large sample that ensures sufficient data to determine valid associations between the variables and to allow inferences to be made

Table 4 | Methodologies for collecting data on tourism effects on tourists

Methodology of data collection	Empirical Studies
Qualitative Interviews – Individual – In family Focus-groups Documental analysis (including internet sources)	Smith and Hughes, 1999; Minnaert <i>et al.</i> , 2009; Alexander <i>et al.</i> , 2010; Quinn and Stacey, 2010; Dolnicar <i>et al.</i> , 2012 Gram, 2005 Minnaert <i>et al.</i> , 2009; Quinn and Stacey, 2010 Smith and Hughes, 1999; Moscardo, 2009; McCabe <i>et al.</i> , 2010
Quantitative Questionnaire	Anastasopoulos, 1992; Neal <i>et al.</i> , 1999; Gump and Matthews, 2000; Pizam <i>et al.</i> , 2000; Strauss-Blanche <i>et al.</i> , 2002; Gilbert and Abdulah, 2004; Lee and Moscardo, 2005; Bellis <i>et al.</i> , 2007; Letho <i>et al.</i> , 2009; Michalkó <i>et al.</i> , 2009; Alexander <i>et al.</i> , 2010; McCabe <i>et al.</i> , 2010

Source: authors.

(Alexander *et al.*, 2010). Quantitative studies usually are related to some effects that already have some scales developed for its measure, as for example, Quality of Life, Satisfaction with Life, Family Functioning (Table 4). Otherwise, the basis to use qualitative methodologies in tourism experience studies relies on the fact that tourist's experience is simultaneously an individual phenomenon and a social phenomenon – marked by psychological factors and interaction between individuals (Jennings and Nickerson, 2006; Minnaert *et al.*, 2009). The complexity of these processes associated with the tourist experience, and especially topics that are a relatively under-researched, implies to some difficulty in measuring or evaluating it, and qualitative methods are those that permit to develop a deep understanding of these processes and would give a more accurate image of the studied phenomenon (Smith and Hughes, 1999; Gram, 2005; Moscardo, 2009).

Regarding the data collection, in quantitative studies, questionnaires are the most common instrument. Meanwhile, in qualitative studies, interviews are the most used instrument of data collection (Table 4). In data analysis, descriptive statistics, Mann-Whitney U test, T-tests and Chi-square test (usually using SPSS¹), are the most commonly used in quantitative data. In qualitative studies, content analysis or grounded theory are the most selected methods (Table 5).

In recent studies there is also another tendency related to the methodological approaches – mixed methodology (combining quantitative and qualitative techniques of collection and analysis of data) (Tables 4 and 5). These studies consider that mixed methodologies permit to validate the findings from both methods and to provide further understanding and insights (e.g. Alexander *et al.*, 2010; Dolnicar *et al.*, 2012).

¹ Statistical Package for Social Sciences.

Table 5 | Methodologies for analysing data on tourism effects on tourists

Methodology of data collection	Empirical Studies
Qualitative	
Content analysis	Gram, 2005; Minnaert <i>et al.</i> , 2009; Moscardo, 2009; Alexander <i>et al.</i> , 2010; McCabe <i>et al.</i> , 2010; Quinn and Stacey, 2010; Dolnicar <i>et al.</i> , 2012
Grounded theory	Smith and Hughes, 1999; Alexander <i>et al.</i> , 2010
Quantitative	
Descriptive statistics	Anastasopoulos, 1992; Neal <i>et al.</i> , 1999; Gump and Matthews, 2000; Pizam <i>et al.</i> , 2000; Strauss-Blanche <i>et al.</i> , 2002; Gilbert and Abdulah, 2004; Lee and Moscardo, 2005; Bellis <i>et al.</i> , 2007; Letho <i>et al.</i> , 2009; Alexander <i>et al.</i> , 2010; McCabe <i>et al.</i> , 2010; Dolnicar <i>et al.</i> , 2012
Principle components analyses	Letho <i>et al.</i> , 2009
Reliability - Cronbach's Alpha	Neal <i>et al.</i> , 1999
Exploratory factor analyses	Letho <i>et al.</i> , 2009
Analysis of variance	Dolnicar <i>et al.</i> , 2012
Hazard models	Gump and Matthews, 2000
Cluster analyses	Letho <i>et al.</i> , 2009; Dolnicar <i>et al.</i> , 2012
Mann-Whitney U test	Lee and Moscardo, 2005; Bellis <i>et al.</i> , 2007; McCabe <i>et al.</i> , 2010
T-tests	Anastasopoulos, 1992; Gilbert and Abdulah, 2004; Lee and Moscardo, 2005
Chi-square test	Neal <i>et al.</i> , 1999; Bellis <i>et al.</i> , 2007; Alexander <i>et al.</i> , 2010
Correlations tests	Strauss-Blanche <i>et al.</i> , 2002
Non-parametric tests	Gilbert and Abdulah, 2004
Logistic regressions	Bellis <i>et al.</i> , 2007
Multiple regressions	Pizam <i>et al.</i> , 2000
Structural Equation Model	Neal <i>et al.</i> , 1999

Source: authors.

5. Conclusions and implications for the analysis of the effects of tourism for families

The literature review conducted in this study systematizes the empirically identified effects that holidays can have on tourists. From the review it is possible to derive some conclusions and directions for future research.

One first conclusion from the review relies on its focus on the individual as unit of analysis. One may argue that many of the dimensions studied in the broader group “individuals” would apply to other units of analysis. Therefore, these broad studies help to frame the research on the effects of tourism on specific participants, families or specific groups, but do not substitute them.

The effects identified range from economic, to health, to social. Social inclusion is an effect of tourism relatively neglected. On this regard one must highlight the notable contributions from McCabe *et al.* (2010), Minnaert *et al.* (2009) and Smith and Hughes (1999). These studies analyse the benefits of tourism for groups with constraints to participation in tourism. They conclude that the type of benefits that socially disadvantaged individuals/ families associate to vacation are similar to those identified by the general population. However, compared to the general population, the disadvantaged groups report a greater intensity of effects (Shaw and Coles, 2004; Smith and Hughes, 1999). The studies on the effects of tourism on families highlight issues related to strengthening family relationships and social networking, access to information and possible change of perspective on life, which can provide a base for visitors to activate their skills and their process of change (Minnaert *et al.*, 2009; Smith and Hughes, 1999). These sparse results seem to indicate that the encouragement of tourism for disadvantaged groups, namely disadvantaged families, may facilitate social inclusion of these families, encouraging social cohesion and solidarity and changing behaviours

that contribute to perpetuate the vicious cycle of poverty and social exclusion. Further research must be however conducted so that more funded conclusions could be drawn.

Existing research provides a solid ground to develop further research, but there is indeed opportunity (and need) for improving, as Dolnicar *et al.* (2012), McCabe *et al.* (2010), Minnaert *et al.* (2009), Moscardo (2009) and Neal *et al.* (1999) very well highlight. Almost all of these studies are based on low response rates, and/or on small samples, that represent often just a specific grouping (e.g. only one nationality, one ethnic or social group). Hence, it is difficult to generalize their conclusions. There is a need for developing studies with more extensive and internationally comparable data.

A good practice for future studies would be to follow the work of Gilbert and Abdullah (2004) that compared the effects of tourism on tourists using a control group. The study compares the results of tourists against a control group of individuals that have not been on holiday. An alternative, or complement, also implemented by Gilbert and Abdullah (2004), is to analyse the respondents’ views before and after their holiday experience. The time dimension could be better explored in future studies. Indeed, it would also be important to study the effects of holidays on tourists in each phase of the tourism experience: before, during and after (medium and long term), because the results may vary (Alexander *et al.*, 2010; Minnaert *et al.*, 2009; Gram, 2005), and to our knowledge there is no study taking this perspective so far.

It results from the review that there is a window of opportunity for research on relevant units of analysis different from the individual. Although since 2004 some empirical scientific research has been conducted on this topic, families are a traveller’s segment that has been object of little research. The present survey identified only 5 published empirical scientific articles on the subject of family tourism/ holidays. To conduct research on this level of analysis

is not an easy task, considering the difficulty in gathering family consumption data and the lack of recognized measurements of tourism benefits (Letho *et al.*, 2009). In this regard, the measurement of family functioning dynamics in terms of the family as a whole should be based both on the perspective of each family member and/or all members at the same time, not only on the basis of only one family member, as happens in the majority of the existent studies (Letho *et al.*, 2009).

Future research is required in order to understand the real and complete effects and potential of tourism as an instrument to enhance family well-being and social inclusion. In a context where new approaches to enhance family well-being and functioning are being sought (Letho *et al.*, 2009), the following types of studies are particularly pertinent: (i) studies that validate or replicate the existent ones, permitting longitudinal comparisons; (ii) studies that analyse/compare the effects of tourism reported by families in each phase of the touristic experience (before, during and after the holiday); and (iii) studies that empirically analyse under-researched effects of tourism on families. When considering particular types of families, as the socially disadvantaged ones, the obstacles to research increase due to the necessity of adaptation of both the research instruments and communication, to the context of these groups (McCabe *et al.*, 2010; Quinn and Stacey, 2010; Minnaert *et al.*, 2009; Smith and Hughes, 1999). These researches should consider the need to combine several methodologies in order to comprehensively understand the complex phenomena's regarding family tourism experience.

A synthesis of the literature about tourism effects on visitors (individuals and families) provides a state of the art in this field and a basis for researchers to consider a set of comparable conceptual dimensions in future research. The existence of comparable dimensions which can be replicated and analysed in empirical research, will add depth and rigor to studies in this area.

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APPENDIX A – List of empirical articles covered in the analysis conducted

- Alexander, Z., Bakir, A., Wickens, E., 2010, An investigation into the impact of vacation travel on the tourist, *International Journal of Tourism Research*, Vol.12, pp. 574-590.
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