

**Reference:**

Lima, J. & Eusebio, C. (2026). Family tourism perceptions: Are there differences between Portuguese fathers and mothers? In H. Schanzel, C. Khoo, & M. J. Yang (Eds.). (2026). *Handbook on children and family tourism*, chapter 10. Edward Elgar Publishing. ISBN: 978 1 03532 483 5.

**Family tourism perceptions: Are there differences between Portuguese fathers and mothers?**

Joana Lima<sup>1</sup> & Celeste Eusébio<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Interdisciplinary Centre for History, Culture and Societies (CIDEHUS) Research Center, University of Évora, Portugal; Email: [jisl@uevora.pt](mailto:jisl@uevora.pt)

<sup>2</sup> Governance, Competitiveness and Public Policies (GOVCOPP) research unit, University of Aveiro, Portugal; Email: [celeste.eusebio@ua.pt](mailto:celeste.eusebio@ua.pt)

**Abstract:**

Research on family tourism indicates the existence of distinct perceptions between fathers and mothers regarding effects and motivations. While some studies suggest these differences, a comprehensive comparative and quantitative analysis is lacking in the current literature. Therefore, the present chapter aims to explore differences between mothers' and fathers' perspectives on family tourism motivations and effects (on individuals and on the family), using a comparative and broader perspective. A quantitative approach was taken, and a survey (N=816) was conducted with Portuguese families with children, in order to test whether differences exist between mothers and fathers regarding those aspects. Results reveal differences in family tourism motivations and the effects of family tourism on individuals and the family when considering mothers' or fathers' perspectives. Results also highlight the need to adapt the type of holiday to each family when the objective is to maximize the positive effects of family tourism.

**Keywords:** family tourism; mothers/fathers; tourism effects; tourism motivations

## Introduction

Family plays a crucial role in society as the most determining social unit, significantly contributing to individual personal and social development (Agate et al., 2007). Despite evolving societal norms and the emergence of diverse types of family structures, the significance of families in shaping society persists, and families remain dynamic entities characterized by unique life stories emerging from biological and/or emotional connections among members who coexist for a defined and prolonged period (Agate et al., 2007).

In the last ten years, a significant volume of research has been published on family tourism (e.g., Chen et al., 2022; Gram et al., 2018; Li et al., 2017; Lima et al., 2018, 2023), but several dimensions of this kind of holiday remain pathways for future research (Qiao et al., 2022). Qiao et al. (2022) and Miyakawa and Oguchi (2022) concluded that the research topic has changed over time, ranging from family travel decision-making, participation, and experience to, since 2012, new research topics such as family tourism destinations and different family tourism types, often associated with learning benefits for children. In the last five years, “motivation” and “benefit” appeared as emerging themes, as new attention was paid to the travel motivations and effects of family tourism on disadvantaged families as well as the broader significance of family travel (Qiao et al., 2022).

Indeed, family tourism offers an interruption from daily routines, creating space for enhanced family interaction and cohesion (Lehto et al., 2009). Consequently, most studies indicate positive effects of tourism on families’ quality of life, particularly in areas such as family interaction, relationship improvement, and relief from daily stressors (e.g., Chen et al., 2022; Gram, 2005; Letho et al., 2009; Lima et al., 2018, 2023). An interesting result from an existing study relates to the differences in the perspectives of mothers and fathers regarding family tourism motivations and the effects of family tourism on individuals and the family as a unit (Lima et al., 2023). Although previous research in tourism already recognizes these different perspectives (Schänzel & Jenkins, 2017), there are no studies, to our knowledge, that analyse in detail the differences between fathers and mothers in terms of motivations and the effects of family tourism. The present chapter aims to

explore these differences, using a comparative and broader perspective, with results from a survey (N=816) of Portuguese families with children.

The following sections aim to reflect on the literature on family tourism, its effects, and motivations, present the chosen methodology for collecting data from families with children, and analyse different perceptions from mothers and fathers regarding motivations, past tourist practices, and their perceived effects (on their individual lives and their families). Some implications that these findings may have in the future are also presented.

(...)

### **Conclusions and Implications**

Concerning the socio-demographic and economic characteristics of the participants' families, most respondents are female, reflecting the predominance of women as those responsible for the education of children in Portugal. Also, the surveyed mothers tend to integrate more into the "divorced/separated" group and to be more concentrated in households with lower incomes than the surveyed fathers.

All the respondents indicated a high level of importance for all the presented motivations, with the motivations related to breaking the routine and relaxing and the emotional connection with family having the highest importance. Mothers tend to feel a higher level of intensity in all the motivations to go on a family holiday than fathers. Regarding the most important family tourism motivation, a difference stands out: Mothers refer, in the first place, to "strengthening family bonds/improving the relationship between family members." In contrast, fathers refer, in the first place, to "regain strength." These results align with the literature published on differences between mothers and fathers regarding preferences, experiences, and effects of tourism trips on families (Lima et al., 2023; Chevtseva & Guillet, 2023).

Concerning the effects of tourism on the family, the one that respondents agree most strongly with relates to "Strengthening the family's emotional bond," which corroborates the results of other studies (e.g., Chen et al., 2022; Gram, 2005; Lehto et al., 2009). The effect that both parents recognized in the first place was that the last family holiday "gave us the opportunity to create good and/or fun memories," with mothers feeling this effect

more intensely than fathers. Mothers also felt a greater intensity of “QoL Improvement & Increase in Socialisation” in the family than fathers.

Analysing the effects of family tourism on individuals, improving professional activity, and negative effects were the types of effects that respondents disagreed with as a result of their last family holiday. Respondents agree more strongly with the occurrence of effects in terms of relaxation and health (contrary to what was reported by Gram et al., 2018), learning about new situations, and changing attitudes/behaviours (as reported in studies for specific types of families, e.g., Minnaert et al., 2009, 2010). While the first type of effect confirms that the benefits sought have been achieved because they meet the most important motivations for the respondents (break from routine and relaxation), the second and third types of effect seem to confirm the importance of family tourism as an instrument for learning and changing behaviour, even when the motivation for the trip is not related to knowledge. Regarding the different perceptions between the two genders, “forget the family problems,” “contributed to starting new behaviours/habits, which I have maintained back home”, “allowed me to re-establish relationships with the people I care about,” and “stimulated my curiosity to learn new things” were felt with greater intensity by mothers than fathers. Fathers felt more than mothers the negative effect of “made me feel unable to solve problems.”

Interpreting the obtained results requires some caution, as it is important to recognize some limitations. These limitations are the pre-COVID-19 data collection, the study's limited regional scope, and the fact that the sample included more mothers than fathers. However, this study attempted to implement rigorous and original methodologies, namely the study of the effects of family tourism on individuals and families according to different perspectives. The results encourage future research to include more voices of fathers and single parents when studying family tourism, which aligns with the recommendation of Schänzel and Yeoman (2014) and Miyakawa and Oguchi (2022). These authors recognized that future research needs to consider different types of family compositions and family tourism, enabling a deeper knowledge of the benefits of family tourism.

The fact that data were collected in a pre-COVID-19 period is believed to have few implications on the interpretation of the results, as holidays have been altered in terms of, for example, the type of holidays desired and the potential fear associated with travelling. However, the one big difference, not related to the pandemics, is that single-parent

families (and other types of families different than the traditional ones) are increasing in society (Eurofound, 2019; Eurostat, 2021) and the role of fathers in the education/lives of children is becoming closer to the one traditionally assumed by mothers. The results from this study demonstrate the differences between fathers and mothers in terms of perceptions of family travel motivations and the effects of family tourism on individual members and the family as a unit. Future research will benefit from a longitudinal approach to clarify if those differences are disappearing due to the greater involvement of fathers in the children's lives. In this context, understanding families' past and current tourism behaviour may also help design future travel experiences that better suit families' and societies' future needs.

## References

Agate,S.T., Zabriskie,R.B., & Eggett,D.L. (2007). Praying, Playing, and Successful Families. *Marriage & Family Review*, 42(2), 51-75.

Alexander,Z., Bakir,A. & Wickens, E. (2010). An investigation into the impact of vacation travel on the tourist. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 12(5), 574-590.

Backer, E. & Schänzel, H. (2012). The stress of the Family Holiday. In H. Schänzel, I. Yeoman, & E. Backer (Eds), *Family Tourism: Multidisciplinary Perspectives* (pp. 105-124). Channel View.

Chen, H., Jiao, Y., Li, X., & Zhang, K. (2022). Family tourism: Interpersonal interaction, existential authenticity and quality of tourist experience. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, 28(1), 82–94.

Cheng, IF.; Su, CJ.; Liao, HH. et al. (2019). Adolescents' perceptions of mother–father dominance in family vacation decisions: a 25-society study. *Service Business*, 13, 755–778.

Chevtaeva,E., & Denizci Guillet,B. (2023). Conceptualizing Parents' Joined Recollected Experiences of Family Travel With Children: Memorability,

Storytelling, and Imagination. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*. doi.org/10.1177/10963480231211739

EC - European Commission (2010). *Calypso Study - Compendium of good practices*. European Commission - DG Enterprise and Industry.

Elands,B.H.M., & Lengkeek,J. (2000). *Typical Tourists: Research into the theoretical and methodological foundations of a typology of tourism and recreation experiences*. Mansholt Studies - Vol. 21. Wageningen University.

Eurofound (2019). *Quality of Life - Household composition and well-being*. Eurofound. Available at: <https://eurofound.link/ef19040>.

Eurostat (2021). Family composition and household structure. Available at:  
[https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Being\\_young\\_in\\_Europe\\_today\\_-\\_family\\_and\\_society#Family\\_composition\\_and\\_household\\_structure](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Being_young_in_Europe_today_-_family_and_society#Family_composition_and_household_structure)

Eusébio,C., & Carneiro,M.J. (2011). Determinants of tourism impact on tourists' quality of life. *International Journal of Leisure and Tourism Marketing*, 2, 313-336.

Fu, X.; Liu, X.; Li, H.; Wang, Y. & Li, Z. (2022). Creating a balanced family travel experience: A perspective from the motivation-activities-transformative learning chain. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 41, 100941.

Gram, M. (2005). A Qualitative Analysis of Family Holiday Experiences. *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism*, 5, 2–22.

Gram, M.; Therkelsen, A.; Larsen, J.R.K. (2018). Family bliss or blitz? Parents' and children's mixed emotions towards family holidays. *Young consumers*, 19(82), 185-198.

Hair, J.F., Anderson, R.E., Tatham, R.L., & Black, W.C. (1995). *Multivariate Data Analysis*. 5<sup>a</sup> ed. Prentice Hall.

Haldrup, M., & Larsen, J. (2003). The family gaze. *Tourist Studies*, 3(1):23–46.

Hazel, N. (2005). Holidays for Children and Families in Need: An Exploration of the Research and Policy Context for Social Tourism in the UK. *Children & Society*, 19, 225–236.

INATEL (2009). *Estudo de impacto sócio-económico do Programa Turismo Séniors de 2001 a 2005*. Universidade de Aveiro, Aveiro (not published)

Ingkadijaya, R. (2018). Family Tourist - is Different Motive, Different Choice of Tourist Activity? *E-Journal of Tourism*.

Jenkins, J. (2009). Nonresident Fathers' Leisure with Their Children. *Leisure Sciences*, 31(3), 255–271. DOI: 10.1080/01490400902837852

Kim, J.-H. (2010). Determining the Factors Affecting the Memorable Nature of Travel Experiences. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 27(8), 780–796. doi: 10.1080/10548408.2010.526897

Kim, S. (2018). How and why fathers are involved in their children's education: gendered model of parent involvement, *Educational Review*, 70(3), 280–299.

Lehto, X.Y., Choi, S., Lin, Y.-C. et al. (2009). Vacation and Family Functioning. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 36(3), 459–479.

Li, M.; Wang, D.; Xu, W. & Mao, Z. (2017). Motivation for family vacations with young children: anecdotes from the Internet, *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 34(8), 1047-1057.

Lima, J. & Eusébio, C. (2021). Social Tourism for Low-Income Families: Challenges and Practical Implications in Pursuing Social Innovation, In J. Lima & C. Eusébio (Eds) *Social Tourism: Global Challenges and Approaches*, 140-157. CABI.

Lima, J., Eusébio, C., & Varum, C.A. (2019). Impacts of Family Tourism on Families' Quality of Life – Differences According to the Family Economic Profile. In: Campón-Cerro, A.M., Hernández-Mogollón, J.M., Folgado-Fernández, J.A. (Eds) *Best Practices in Hospitality and Tourism Marketing and Management. Applying Quality of Life Research*. Springer.

Lima, J.; Eusébio, C. & Amorim Varum, C. (2023). Family tourism effects for low-income families – past reality for future insights. *Family & Consumer Sciences Research Journal*, 51(4), 277–295. DOI: 10.1111/fcsr.12474

Minnaert, L. (2006). *Social tourism: a potential policy to reduce social exclusion? The effects of visitor-related social tourism for low income groups on personal and family development*. PhD Thesis, University of Westminster.

Minnaert, L. (2008). *Holidays are for Everyone. Research into the Effects and the Importance of Holidays for People Living in Poverty*. Brussels.

Minnaert, L. (2012). Social Tourism as Opportunity for Unplanned Learning and Behavior Change. *Journal of Travel Research*. doi: 10.1177/0047287511431324

Minnaert, L. (Ed.) (2013). *Holidays are for everyone: Developments in the facilitation of tourism for people in poverty*. Visit Flanders - Holiday Participation Centre.

Minnaert, L., Maitland, R., & Miller, G. (2009). Tourism and social policy - The value of social tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*. 36(2):316–334.

Minnaert, L., Stacey, J., Quinn, B., & Griffin, K. (2010). *Social Tourism for Low-Income Groups: Benefits in a UK and Irish Context*. In S. Cole & N. Morgan (Eds.), *Tourism and Inequality: Problems and Prospects*. CABI.

Minnaert, L., Maitland, R., & Miller, G. (2011). What is Social Tourism? *Current Issues in Tourism*. 14(5), 403-415.

Miyakawa, E., & Oguchi, (2022). Family tourism improves parents' well-being and children's generic skills. *Tourism Management*, 88, 104403.

Moscardo, G. (2009). Tourism and Quality of Life: Towards a More Critical Approach. *Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 9, 159–170.

Neal, J.D., Sirgy, M.J., & Uysal, M. (1999). The Role of Satisfaction with Leisure Travel/ Tourism Services and Experience in Satisfaction with Leisure Life and Overall Life. *Journal of Business Research*, 44(3), 153-163.

Oh, H., Fiore, A.M., & Jeoung, M. (2007). Measuring Experience Economy Concepts: Tourism Applications. *Journal of Travel Research*, 46(2), 119–132.

Qiao, G., Cao, Y., Chen, Q., & Jia, Q. (2022). Understanding Family Tourism: A Perspective of Bibliometric Review. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.937312>.

Richards, G. (1999). Vacations and the Quality of Life: Patterns and Structures. *Journal of Business Research*, 44, 189–198.

Schänzel, H. (2012). The inclusion of fathers, children and the whole-family group in tourism research on families. In H. Schänzel, I. Yeoman, & E. Backer (Eds), *Family Tourism: Multidisciplinary Perspectives* (pp. 67–92). Chanel View.

Schänel, H. & Jenkins, J. (2017). Non-resident fathers' holidays alone with their children: experiences, meanings and fatherhood. *World Leisure Journal*, 59(2), 156-173.

Schänel, H. A., & Yeoman, I. (2014). The future of family tourism. *Tourism Recreation Research*, 39(3), 343-360.

Shaw, S.M., Havitz, M.E., & Delemere, F.M. (2008). "I Decided to Invest in My Kids' Memories": Family Vacations, Memories, and the Social Construction of the Family. *Tourism Culture & Communication*, 8(1), 13-26.

Small, J. (2008). The absence of childhood in tourism studies. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 35(3), 772-789.

Smith, V., & Hughes, H. (1999). Disadvantaged families and the meaning of the holiday. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 1(3), 123-133.

Van Winkle, C.M., & Lagay, K. (2012). Learning during tourism: the experience of learning from the tourist's perspective. *Studies in Continuing Education*, 34(3), 339-355.

Wigfall, V. (2004). *Extracts from 'Turning Lives Around' - Final Evaluation Report of Family Breaks Pilot Project for Family Holidays Association*. Thomas Coram Research Unit.

World Health Organization – WHO (2004). *Quality of Life (WHOQOL)-BREF*. World Health Organization.

World Tourism Organization - UNWTO (2008). *2008 International Recommendations for Tourism Statistics*. UNWTO.