

# Benefits of Tourist Experiences in Terms of Personal Development and Well-Being (2021年3月博士学位授与)

Erika Miyakawa (College of Liberal Arts, International Christian University)

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Tourism has long been considered an important experience in many people's lives, and there is an emerging interest in identifying the benefits of tourism-related experiences. As tourism activities and experiences are often related to human emotions, behaviors, and actions, tourism-focused scholars have investigated a range of related topics, including tourists, hosts, communities, and industries, from a psychological perspective (e.g., Filep et al., 2017; Oguchi, 2006; Pearce & Packer, 2013; Uysal et al., 2016). In particular, there is an emerging trend of studying tourists to determine ways to create better experiences and enrich their lives (e.g., Filep & Laing, 2019; Vada et al., 2020). However, despite the societal importance of tourism, it has been considered a "neglected topic of study for psychologists" (Berno & Ward, 2005, p. 593). Proponents of tourism research in psychology contend that tourism provides real-life experimental settings to develop and expand psychological theories and groundbreaking research opportunities for the field.

Following this trend, several research gaps have been identified as needing further investigation. First, studies on the psychological benefits of tourism experiences have not sufficiently examined well-being, including hedonic and eudaimonic views, although some research has contended that considering

both views is critical (e.g., Filep & Laing, 2019; Filep et al., 2017). Second, most studies examining well-being have not gone beyond individual-level benefits; however, tourism may have group-level and organizational-level benefits worth considering. Finally, despite the increased research on tourist experiences and emotions (e.g., Gao et al., 2018; Nawijn et al., 2013), a dearth of research has explored how regulating positive emotions during tourism experiences influences tourists' well-being. This dissertation sought to address these research gaps.

The primary focus of this research was to investigate the psychological benefits of tourism by examining their effects on personal development and well-being induced by tourist experiences. With this focus guiding the current research, the specific goals of this dissertation were to determine (1) the psychological benefits of tourism for employees and family members and (2) the role of savoring strategies in tourism-related benefits. Goal 1 was explored in Part I and Goal 2 in Part II.

## **Part I: Psychological Benefits of Tourism for Employees and Family Members**

Part I included two studies investigating the psychological benefits of tourism on personal

development from group and organizational perspectives. Study 1 examined past travel experiences of full-time employees and explored how travel experiences affected job performance by improving generic skills and self-efficacy. Data were collected using a questionnaire administered to 232 Japanese employees of a temporary employment agency. Additionally, an objective measurement (i.e., financial data) was used to assess employees' job performance. The results revealed that travel experiences positively influenced job performance with generic skills and general self-efficacy as mediators. Although the identified effect was small, the findings suggest an indirect benefit of traveling on employees' job performance. This study represents only the first step toward understanding the effects of travel on organizations. However, its results could provide managers and organizations with a unique perspective by showing that travel is not merely meant to provide recovery experiences but also offers opportunities for employees' self-development.

Study 2 employed a longitudinal design to examine the beneficial effects of family tourism on parents' well-being and their children's generic skills. Data were collected from 217 families with elementary school children who took family trips. Both children and parents were asked to complete the questionnaires. The results showed that parents' well-being and children's generic skills increased from before to after the family tourism experience. Moreover, a memorable tourism experience and children's skill development through family tourism were positively associated with changes in parents' well-being through family tourism. Overall, Study 2 contributes to existing tourism literature by highlighting the importance of examining multiple perspectives from family members and identifying the benefits. Further, Study 2 increases the field's understanding of the benefits of family tourism using a unique approach by including data from both parents and children. Understanding the psychological

benefits of family tourism is essential for tourism agencies to customize the optimal experiences for families.

Overall, Part I of this dissertation highlighted the importance of understanding the eudaimonic aspects of well-being, such as personal development through tourism experiences, which appears to have benefits that extend beyond the individual level to the group and organizational level. These findings indicate the importance of considering the benefits of tourism from different perspectives.

## **Part II: Savoring Tourism Experiences**

Part II targeted tourist experiences and focused on their regulation of positive emotions during their tourism experiences. Before examining how tourists savored their experiences, Study 3 was conducted to evaluate the reliability and validity of the Japanese version of the Ways of Savoring Checklist (WOSC-J), adapted from the original English version (Bryant & Veroff, 2007). For this study, the WOSC-J was translated and back-translated before being administered online to 520 Japanese adults. Consistent with previous studies (e.g., Jose et al., 2012), a two-factor model (*amplifying* and *dampening*) best fit the data. Each factor showed adequate internal consistency. Additionally, the amplifying subscale showed a stronger positive relationship with positive mood states compared with the dampening subscale. Overall, the WOSC-J appears to be an acceptable tool for measuring savoring strategies in Japanese adults. Additionally, Study 3 provided preliminary data that can assist in future investigations of savoring in the Japanese population and research on cross-cultural differences regarding savoring.

Studies 4 and 5 considered the psychological effects of overseas educational tourism on students while examining the influence of savoring strategies during such tourism experiences. This study first explored

whether educational tourism could improve generic skills and well-being. In addition, it tested whether savoring strategies influenced the psychological benefits of overseas educational tourism. For Study 4, data were collected from 18 high school students before, during, and one month after an overseas school trip. The results showed that students' well-being changed marginally from before to during the trip and returned to the original level one month after the trip. This trend showing a temporal benefit is consistent with existing findings regarding the effect of vacationing on employees' well-being (e.g., Kühnel & Sonnentag, 2011; Westman & Eden, 1997). However, generic skills did not significantly change over the three time-points. Additionally, the impact of savoring strategies on students' well-being during and after the trip was examined and showed that amplifying savoring positively influenced well-being during and after the trip.

Similar to Study 4, Study 5 targeted overseas training trips, collecting data from 41 undergraduate students at six time-points over the trip. A total of 15 students who embarked on the overseas training trip were assigned to a travel group, and 26 students who did not go on the trip were assigned to a control group. The results indicated that compared to the control group, the well-being of the travel group significantly improved during and immediately after the trip, remaining at this elevated level for up to four weeks after the trip. Although generic skills improved immediately after the trip, the difference between the travel and control groups was not substantial. Moreover, amplifying had a positive effect on well-being both during and after the trip but only showed positive effects on generic skills after the trip. This tendency did not differ between the travel and control groups, implying that amplifying plays a role in prolonging and maintaining individuals' well-being in general. In sum, Studies 4 and 5 suggest that amplifying plays an important role in enhancing and

prolonging the psychological benefits of educational tourism for tourists.

Finally, Study 6 expanded the scope of the research by including employees' vacations. This study investigated the underlying mechanisms of leisure travel's positive effects on well-being, focusing on recovery experiences and savoring strategies. The study analyzed the well-being of three groups: those engaging in leisure travel (travel group), those visiting friends and relatives (VFR group), and those spending leisure time in their daily environment (daily group). The results revealed that the travel group had a significantly higher well-being score than the VFR and daily groups, with no significant differences in well-being between the VFR and daily groups. Leisure travel positively affected well-being through relaxation and mastery. Furthermore, employees who used amplifying increased the well-being induced by leisure travel, whereas those who used dampening decreased their well-being. These results suggest that leisure travel may be more beneficial than spending leisure time VFR or at home, but these benefits may occur only when individuals have certain types of recovery experiences and/or amplify their positive tourism experiences.

In summary, the studies in Part II identified the importance of amplifying during tourism experiences and showed that such amplifying might enhance and prolong tourists' well-being. The use of dampening appears to decrease tourists' well-being, but further research is necessary to provide stronger evidence of its effects.

## **Conclusions**

This dissertation expanded the field's understanding of the psychological benefits of tourist experiences through a series of six studies. Overall, this dissertation investigated the psychological benefits of tourism on personal development and well-being

using a positive psychological perspective. The findings indicate that tourist experiences may enhance not only hedonic well-being but also enhance more comprehensive aspects of well-being, such as aspects of personal development and eudaimonic well-being. Moreover, these tourism benefits may not be limited to an individual level but also have positive effects at the group and organizational levels. However, merely traveling may not provide sufficient benefits; rather, the amplifying tourism experiences appear to be a key factor in maintaining and enhancing those psychological benefits. Further research that examines the causal relationship between tourists' experiences and well-being is necessary to address some of the methodological limitations of the current dissertation.

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