

Analysing gender differences in tourist well-being: A macromarketing perspective

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Within 50 years of macro marketing literature, established models of consumer well-being (CWB) have mostly focused on material goods and services (Malhotra 2006; Sirgy 2021) and their link to the quality of life and satisfaction (Lee et al. 2002; Sirgy 2021). There are calls for improving CWB metrics with the more recent constructs of eudaimonia and social well-being (Sirgy 2021). Figueiredo et al. (2015) encourage researchers to reframe CWB as a search for human development, referring to the expansion of what people can be and do in markets and society. Such a view is similar to the concept of eudaimonia – focusing on living in a full, deeply satisfying way and actualising one's human potential (Deci and Ryan 2006). Ryan et al's (2008) work has linked eudemonic living to an individual's motivation concept such as a) pursuing intrinsic goals and values such as personal growth, relationships, community and health, b) behaving in autonomous, volitional or consensual ways, c) being mindful and acting with a sense of awareness and d) behaving in ways that satisfy needs for competence, relatedness and autonomy which can result to benefiting collectively family and society. Integrating the concept of eudaimonia in the macromarketing literature recognises its potential to contribute to understanding how well-being fits in the interface between marketing and society.

In the current study, we examine tourists' well-being to explore eudaimonic well-being and hedonic well-being, moving away from the focus on material goods and services to consumer experiences as a source of well-being. Travel has become imperative to mental health and well-

being (Buhalis 2022). In the past few years, academic research on tourism's contribution to well-being has increased significantly (Zins and Ponocny 2022; Vada et al. 2020). Two streams of subjective well-being— hedonic and eudaimonic – are recognised in tourism literature (Zins and Ponocny, 2022; Buzinde, 2020). Eudaimonic wellbeing relates to aspects such as personal growth, realizing individual potential and self-fulfilment (Al-okaily et al. 2023), whilst hedonic wellbeing relates to the pleasure or happiness aspect of well-being (Su et al., 2020; Lengieza et al., 2019).

Furthermore, literature has demonstrated evidence of the linkages between well-being, friendships and shared travel experiences (Berdychevsky et al. 2013, 2016; Kong et al. 2022; Matteucci et al., 2022). An important segment of wellness tourism is the Girlfriend Getaways (GGA), a fast-growing market that is projected to grow further (Berdychevsky et al. 2016; Gibson et al., 2012). The potential therapeutic effect of bonding during GGA will have positive impacts on health, managing stress and cumulative effects on longer lives (Berdychevsky, et al. 2013). GGA is a space for them to talk, listen and share experiences with each other, providing them with feelings of safety and belongingness (Chen and Mak 2020). In addition, it could potentially improve a couple's relationship satisfaction as women can escape from everyday roles in the relationship (e.g., wife, girlfriend, mother), pursue individuality, female bonding and avoid their partner's personal travel constraints or preferences (Durko and Stone 2017).

However, despite the popularity of the GGA in the media and academic community, the male counterpart of this market segment (mancation or brocation) has remained underexplored. Mancation is defined in Collinsdictionary.com as a holiday for a group of men, especially one that involves typically masculine pursuits, whilst brocation cannot be found in any dictionary. Prior studies have acknowledged that well-being may mean different things to different people

(Sirgy 2021; Leong et al., 2016). Women's friendships, compared to men, are more supportive, intimate, emotionally involved, and interdependent (Baril et al 2009; Rawlins 2017).

The study aims to analyse the relevance of gender to consumer well-being. The paper attempts to respond to calls for work on gender differences that go beyond identifying gendered targeting strategies but also considers societal implications that will reduce gender inequities (see work of Gurrieri, Previte and Prothero, 2020). We raise the following questions: Will well-being also manifest in vacations? Are there gender differences in how women experience tourist well-being compared to male? What could be the policy implications of these gender differences?

Using a qualitative approach, we attempt to address these questions. Data will be collected and analysed in two parts - part one of the study will include a content analysis of Instagram (IG) posts on GGA and vacations; while part two of the study will include interviews. In part one, we will collect images/reels and captions by searching for posts with hashtags #girlstrips, #boystrips, #girlfriendgetaway" and other variations of the term. Adopting the methodology of Lucibello et al (2021), we will allocate 10 days to collect Instagram posts. This data collection aims to capture as many posts as possible during the weekdays and a weekend. Images/reels will be analysed together with captions which may reflect how individuals explicitly used language and hashtags to relate their trips to wellbeing. In part two, the aim will be to identify gender differences in the activities and how they contribute to hedonic and eudaimonic well-being.

We hope that our findings will help us consider the role of gender in understanding consumer well-being. Theoretical and policy implications of this research project will be presented at the conference.

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