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Juergen Gnoth 4798446
University of Otago

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Or, How do tourists achieve well-being?

Introduction

Holiday tourism is a strategy to achieve well-being, but how is well-being structured, and how do people obtain happiness moment-by-moment when having choice? Answering these questions could help destinations better understand their role in such choices. Yet, without an effective measure of 'well-being through leisure tourism', service development would lack an important basis to innovate. This is because existing measures of well-being from general psychology (Waterman et al, 2010; Ryan and Deci 2000; Ryff and Singer 1989) and quality of life research (e.g., Sirgy et al. 2011) produce inconclusive results when related to tourism (e.g., Nawjin et al 2010; Neal et al 2007; Gilbert and Abdullah 2004).

Some of the constructs facilitating well-being relevant for tourism are relaxation, recreation (Kelly, 1981; Neulinger, 1981), flow (Chiksentmihalyi, 1990), self-realization (Mannell and Iso-Ahola 1987), and existentially authentic experiencing (Kim and Jamal 2007; Wang 1999). Flow in particular is defined via a number of characteristics important for describing and analysing tourist experiences in general (Gnoth and Mateucci 2014). However, Chiksentmihalyi and others (e.g. Stebbins 2007) never considered the importance of self-reflexivity in the generation of flow.

Reflexivity is understood as "deliberations that take place through internal conversations" (Archer, 2007:3) that provoke "states into existence by our questions about ourselves [and] quite often supply the materials for accurate answers to those same questions" (Myers, 1986:206). The well-being constructs thus help describe transformations and performances enabling well-being. To satisfy needs for well-being means reflexively considering destinations and activities, and by turning them into attractions (Edelheim 2015) interpret them as mechanism for transformations. Distinguishing between different kinds of self-reflexivity and by applying them to an existing model of experiencing (Gnoth and Mateucci, 2014), this paper works towards a theoretical basis for a diagnostic tool predicting the kinds of happiness tourists find through the ways they seek involvement and relationships with activities, people, culture and environment. This is to assist destinations in shaping their skills and knowledge and assist tourists in their well-being process (Ryan and Deci 2001, 2000).

Literature Review

Most psychology-based measures of well-being are broad, relate to every-day-life (see Waterman et al 2010; Ryan and Deci 2000; Ryff and Singer 1989) and have also been criticised because they are laboratory-based and ethnocentric (Henrich et al. 2010). Holiday tourism is context-specific (Arnould and Price 1993; Battacharkiee and Mogilner 2014), hedonically motivated and cross-cultural. Leaving the constraints of every-day-life behind, holiday tourists self-reflexively form a contextual sense of what authentic tourism experiences are (Kim and Jamal 2007; Wang 1999), by choosing which activities and roles to play at leisure (Yiannakis and Gibson 1992) and how.

The ways in which tourists form their perceptions of their recreation and how to interact with destinations to achieve well-being can be informed by current psychological theory (e.g., Ryff and Singer 2008; Ryan and Deci 2001; Kahnemann et al. 1999; Diener et al. 1999; Waterman 1990). However, existing measures for well-being are incongruent with tourism experience modelling (Cutler and Carmichael 2010; Ryan 2002; Wang, 1999) as they apply to life in general and every-day-life. A further incongruence between research, findings and applicability to holiday tourism scenarios is that the relationships between the constructs measuring well-being, i.e., pleasure, satisfaction and happiness and eudaimonia, are problematic and need clarification. One school of thought treats these constructs as synonymous (Kahnemann et al. 2004) whereas another suggests them to be cumulative, even hierarchical (Ryan and Huta 2010). Gnoth and Mateucci (2014) suggest that experiencing is a function of how the tourist's mind views his/her own activities and, consequently, that not every function or mode of experiencing can achieve every form of well-being. It therefore challenges us to explore the link between reflexivity (mind-works) and types of well-being.

In tourism research, well-being has traditionally been measured via satisfaction based on some expectation standards (e.g., Kozak and Rimmington 2000). Yet for such outcome-oriented judgements tourists have often no or only vague expectations, particularly when new and distant destinations are involved. Satisfaction measures also do not consider how experiencing moment-by-moment is perceived and how well-being emerges (Heidegger 1962; Williams 2011). Previous research thus treated all transformational processes to well-being as the same, does not account for how experiences might impact tourists' future well-being, nor how they will benefit from their memories (Tung and Ritchie 2011). Important, too, is that existing measures do not sufficiently reveal the qualities of tourists' deliberation on the destination's culture, environment and products.

Understanding moment-by-moment experiencing is important as it is during these moments that changes to well-being occur. 'Becoming well' then, is when an internal state changes. It comes about through mental and/or physical activity. It can either lead to discerning a difference in (re)gaining self-esteem - by achieving existential or social goals through the application of previously successful behaviour, or it can lead to individual or personal growth - by obtaining a new outlook on life, or by acquiring new knowledge about the differences in art or society etc. Gnoth and Mateucci (2014) detail how the sources of knowledge and feelings for these changes in feeling states that the tourist becomes conscious of and creates in self-reflections are the existential self on one hand, and the socially constructed self on the other.

During existential experiences, such as when the fisher and the fish fight it out, perceived internal states converge in an existential experience of one-ness with the activity and its environment. Conversely, change can also be perceived when a (socially) induced 'difference' is acutely felt, such as when other hotel guests are welcoming and inclusive. Sensing flow would be an example of existential convergence, whereas a thrill-ride at Disneyland would produce perceptions of sensuous 'difference'. Satisfying social relatedness might be achieved by picking up admiring glances from others when observed in congenial acts of consumption in the hotel lobby, restaurant or beach. Even if only momentarily, both are examples of felt well-being. However, the types of consciousness and thus of reflexivity underlying these experiences differ substantially.

In tourism and leisure, the most discussed example of existential convergence is Chicksentmihalyi's (1990) concept of flow. Flow here is an aspirational goal described as eudaemonist happiness or the realisation of the true self. Since the early 1990s, the concept has re-emerged in positive psychology (see e.g., Boniwell 2012; Filep 2012; Benjafield 2005; Duckworth et al. 2005; Resnick, Warmoth, and Serlin 2001).

The feeling of flow is an existential experience. It can emerge when involved in intrinsically motivated activities that require an individual's effort (Stebbins 2007). Both its characteristic and achievement are the (1) feeling of loss of time and (2) loss of self-awareness that eventuate when (3) both levels of skills and challenge eventually meet. Flow is conditional on the requirements that the tourist needs (4) clear goals, (5) concentration, and (6) a sense of potential control to engage in its pursuit. In addition, Chiksentmihalyi (1992) mentions that (7) awareness merges with action, and that (8) it is a self-rewarding experience.

Clearly, these are complex dimensions which when consciously pursued require time and effort before their presence leads to their full and engaging effectiveness. Some of these dimensions overlap and mix up cause and effect when viewed from the perspective of existential well-being. Existential well-being (Heidegger, 1962) relates to the felt convergence with activities and situations, or one-ness with the world - of which flow is but one form (felt insight, understanding, belongingness incl. to nature are others). Flow forms part of living one's true self – or Eudaimonia (Aristotle 2009). It is a condition of well-being humanists broach when discussing the speed of human life and how it relates to the speed of the world (e.g., Steiner 1968). Achieving the loss of feeling of time (1) and loss of self-awareness (2) actually form one and the same goal in Eudaimonia as time can only be perceived through self-awareness. Dimensions (3-8) are the conditions to bring about the state of flow. When awareness merges with action (7), the awareness of one's awareness is lost and 'self' is no longer necessary as the leisure participant just 'is'. Awareness merged with action is pure being; like the stone in the river or the tree on its bank just 'is'. Flow is thus one's total convergence with the world through an activity, while reflexivity is temporarily suspended.

Furthermore, in flow, control (6) reflects competence which is a pillar in self-determination theory. The other pillars are autonomy and relatedness (Ryan and Deci 2000). While relatedness is of little relevance for flow-activities, autonomy is maintained through intrinsic motivation. If there is no control, skills and challenges cannot be matched. When control slips away, chaos results. For example, the downhill skier falls, the canoeist has to eject, or stitches are dropped while knitting.

When out of control reflexive thinking needs to speed up, in other words, one's awareness of being aware needs to 'kick in' to recapture control. When tourists contemplate and seek understanding of the Other empathically (Coplan and Goldie 2011) the speed of life as an awareness-process is slower than the world. Self-reflectivity here is deliberate.

Given their broadly spaced dimensionality and interrelatedness, the dimensions used to describe flow (awareness, skills, goal-orientation, control, focus, and reflexivity) can also be applied to other activities, albeit differentially weighted. Consciously targeted holiday activities previously known and practiced by the tourist generate recreation and, in case of

effortful activities, if not flow, they result in a sense of self-(re)discovery. As goal-orientation and concentration are high the tourist's mind is considered as telic (Apter, 1989) and existentially engaged (Gnoth and Mateucci 2014). The investment of effort requires, intrinsic motivation (Ryan and Deci 2000) expressing a willingness to close the perceived gap between ideal and real self, and to expand effort (Stebbins 2007).

When relaxing some of the dimensions describing flow, activities turn into casual leisure (Stebbins, 2007) such as, catching a fish off the wharf, cycling, lying on the beach with a good book, or promenading on a boulevard 'to see and to be seen'. Such activities are recursively reflexive, that is, they 'feed' on existing knowledge, perceptions and values, on practiced thought patterns and on embodied behaviour, all perceived as strategies to achieve well-being. In tourism even mundane activities and role-play can become casual leisure activities. When no effort is involved, control and focus are relaxed, the tourist's mind is considered paratelic, or playful and almost random as to which stimuli engage the mind (Apter 1989). Casual role-play activities (Yiannakis and Gibson 1992), or those 'fashionable' consumption behaviours based on socially acquired norms and expectations (Inglis, 2005) employ the weakest form of reflexivity because the tourist's internal deliberations are dependent on external standards (advice/observations) (Archer 2007). Gnoth and Mateucci's (2014) literature review indicates that previously practiced behaviour often become part of strategies used in recursive reflexivity to produce immediate and/or sensuous pleasure.

Gnoth and Mateucci (2014) further differentiate such familiar/recreational activities from exploratory/new activities. Similar to the above, this also changes the types of reflexivity employed for different modes of experiencing, i.e., when either a socially acquired consciousness or an existentially authentic consciousness is involved. Whereas the goal of recreation is to achieve equilibrium using previously practiced strategies, i.e., regaining a previously known state of "optimal functioning and experience" (Ryan and Deci, 2001:142), exploratory learning requires the tourist to engage reflexively with the Other. Reflectivity here changes substantially as control gives way to trust. The locus of control shifts to the Other, while autonomy may either be internally or externally motivated. Self-reflexivity here is focused or telic (Apter 1989), if exploratory behaviour seeks to discern differences cognitively, but is paratelic when casual and seeking convergence (i.e., relaxed and trusting, 'going with the flow').

In short, this brief literature review on aspects of flow, learning and existential experiencing has shown that the issue of self-reflexive thinking has not been sufficiently discussed in tourism research but helps detail the moment-by-moment change that occurs in well-being processes. Naturally, reflexivity is not mentioned in sociologically based discussions on the tourism experience including the Actor Network Theory (Law 2008), conceptualisations of the tourist's gaze (Urry 1992) or historio-sociological descriptions of tourism (e.g., Inglis 2005) nor critical theory approaches (see e.g., Wilson and Hollinshead 2015) as reflexivity is not considered observable and hence not objective.

Modelling Self-Reflexivity in Tourism

Gnoth and Mateucci's Tourism Experience Model (2014) allows a pragmatic categorisation of different forms of reflexivity since they classify all of tourists' activities not by what they do but how their minds are involved, and by whether the activities are known, familiar and practiced, or whether they are new, exploratory and other-oriented. The latter distinction applies to the activities of all sentient beings, including tourists. They all need to a) practice and hone what they have learned in order to maintain their selves (and hence repeat activities, making them familiar, efficient and confident) and b), learn new behaviour to be able to adapt (hence tourists explore, enquire, attempt and play etc.).

Expanding their model of how tourists experience, we here suggest that different types of reflexivity reveal tourists' basic attitudinal orientations and types of interactions with the destination. As mental and emotional orientations, reflectivity reveals how tourists relate themselves to the destination and suggests what types of well-being they pursue, whether pleasure and satisfaction, flow, or personal or existential growth (whereby personal growth measures are socially constructed). Destination management may thereby learn to apply themselves more effectively in developing deep and lasting relationships with the tourist that highlight the destinations' uniqueness. To this end, the following propositions are put forward to capture all tourists' reflective strategies for achieving well-being moment-by-moment:

1. **Flow** is intrinsically motivated and achieved through recursively focusing on the perfection of certain, repetitive movements in total harmony. In these moments of flow, the control necessary is generated entirely by the tourist him/herself. Effort focuses reflexivity to become existential i.e., the self becomes the action and is one with the object within a complex web of interdependent interactions. The activity is self-centred, self-generated, and self-directed. Milder forms of flow are self-discovery

and re-discovery of known and (reflectively) cherished qualities of the self. Recursive self-reflexivity here involves self-critically closing a perceived gap between one's real and one's ideal self. Recursive thoughts of gaining and maintaining control reflect on tourists themselves and are focused or telic (Apter 1980). The tourist seeks (to regain) competence and autonomy, while relatedness is neglected in core holiday activities (see self-determination theory, Ryan and Deci).

2. **Pleasure** is the immediate experience of positively felt 'difference' through familiar activities. When intrinsically motivated, tourists search for pleasurable differences involves the stimulation and satisfaction of one's senses (such as when experiencing thrill, a massage, the warm sun on a beach, or a sauna). When extrinsically motivated, consciousness depends on socially acquired norms and expectations, or those roles the tourist tries to emulate. The difference is felt in reflective thought. It comprises a constant comparison of perceived standards or norms with the tourist's own behaviour as exhibited within the attraction-environment. Pleasure is also received via cues perceived from others. The tourist seeks relatedness while reflexively feeling competent and in control. In their reflections they use familiar and stereotypical activities. Reflexivity here is paratelic (Apter, 1989), i.e., playful and open to multiple stimuli.

   Repeated exposure to novel, attractive activities can lead to the adoption and practice of its norms and standards and the formation of intrinsic motivations. Recursive reflectivity then changes into participatory reflexivity or even disruptive reflexivity (see also Hibbert et al. 2010). Instead of relying recursively on existing knowledge, skills and stereotypes, the tourist here engages in a process of learning and involvement with the Other, signalling willingness to try, taste or test new things, or even change behaviour, convictions and self. Flow as described above is no longer possible, however other forms of convergence (of situations and states of existence) occur.

3. The acquisition of **knowledge and learning** is a natural instinct. When formally applied, i.e., when consciousness is based on socially acquired skills of knowledge acquisition, reflexivity is cautious, and respectfully conscious of the Other in its own right, as the tourist is conscious of differences. Indeed, the emphasis is on perceptions of differences albeit not without also seeking an existential understanding of the

Other. Hence while the application of existing knowledge as tools (Vygotsky 1934), schema and scripts (Abelson) is tangible and observable (e.g. in stereotypical tourist behaviour), the tourist nonetheless engages in new, unknown thought-activities whereby s/he seeks to adopt a new reflexivity. Reflexivity is focused or telic (Apter 1989). The locus of control – even of these thoughts is with the object of attraction. Motivation and reflexivity are here supported by trust and anticipation. Recursiveness here is deliberate (Archer 2007) or participatory but passive (see also Hibbert et al., 2010).

4. **Existential or holistic convergence** (eudaemonist happiness) exhibits a reflexivity that is built on trust in the Other, and on willingness to adopt and adapt a new reflexivity by acquiring and practicing new values. It is driven by a desire for belonging or ability to identify with the other (including nature). Hence, reflexivity is disruptive as the tourist seeks the existential authenticity of the Other (Cohen, 1979). Their activity is exploratory and new, with the locus of control outside of the tourist; it is itself the attraction as much as it is part of the attraction (the transformed destination) and hence a focus for mastery (e.g., learning ethnic dance such as tango, ethnic cooking etc.).

Conclusions

This paper sought to discuss how the study of reflexivity may create a deeper understanding of how changes to well-being come about. The categories that describe the existential transformation achieved through flow (awareness, control, focus, and skill) could be suitably expanded by detailing the type of self-reflexivity involved. At the same time, using the dimensionality of these criteria it could be shown that they can further assist in describing other modes of experiencing. These descriptions are as yet hypothetical propositions and need empirical verification. In any case, understanding more about the kinds of reflexivity tourists engage in can lead to management strategies that help satisfy immediate – e.g., recreational needs, to then stimulate tourists into participatory or even disruptive reflexivity that lets tourist engage with the destination as an end in itself rather than merely as a means to their of recursively self-reflexive ends.

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