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Examining the change in wellbeing following a holiday

Abstract

Building on existing evidence that tourism contributes to wellbeing, this study aims to investigate how both hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing changes after a holiday. A longitudinal inquiry involving three waves of observation (during, the fourth week, and the eighth week following a holiday) was carried out in five tourism cities in China, using Latent Growth Curve models to analyze change. Results suggest that life satisfaction – an indicator of hedonic wellbeing – does not decline as expected whereas other indicators of hedonic wellbeing declined dramatically in the first month and then mildly in the second month following a holiday. Comparatively, eudaimonic wellbeing declined gradually and mildly during the same two-month intervals. Higher levels of optimal tourism experiences predicted slower declines of both hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing. Theoretical, methodological, and practical implications are discussed.

Key words: hedonic wellbeing, eudaimonic wellbeing, wellbeing change, optimal tourism experience, latent growth curve model, longitudinal design

1. Introduction

Living a quality life is an essential pursuit of all human beings. Most human activities are driven by this very basic motivation, and tourism has frequently been cited as one of these activities. The contribution of tourism to wellbeing has drawn much interest for the last few decades, and research efforts on this subject – many of which involve longitudinal studies – have generated sound evidence that tourism facilitates wellbeing (Chen et al., 2013; Gao et al., 2020; Gilbert & Abdullah, 2004; McCabe & Johnson, 2013). Further, these longitudinal studies have also revealed that the promotion of wellbeing triggered by tourism fades in a short time following the experience (De Bloom et al., 2013; De Bloom et al., 2010; Kwon & Lee, 2020; Su et al., 2020). Consequently, a common assumption is that tourism facilitates wellbeing, but the effect fades soon after.

These longitudinal studies are of substantial value in helping us understand the contribution of tourism to wellbeing. Nevertheless, *how* the promoted wellbeing changes following a holiday remains unclear. This study therefore aims to solve this problem. A critical review of existing longitudinal studies on tourists' wellbeing reveals three questions that remain unanswered which would push research on tourists' wellbeing to another level. First, *how* does wellbeing change? Or what is *the trajectory of wellbeing change*? Second, most studies have focused exclusively on tourism's impact on hedonic wellbeing, so the question remains, *what is its impact on eudaimonic wellbeing*. Third, and more importantly, *does the nature of a holiday experience influence the change in wellbeing after the holiday*? In other words, are there experiential properties of tourism that are more strongly associated with changes in wellbeing after a holiday? This study will advance research on tourist's wellbeing from a group level to an individual level.

Building on existing evidence on the fading effects of tourism on wellbeing, this study examines how wellbeing changes after a holiday by answering these three substantive questions. To that end, this study carried out three observations on wellbeing during and after a holiday to delineate the trajectory of change in both hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing. Latent Growth Curve models were used to investigate the variation in the trajectories of

wellbeing change across individuals, and included different aspects of optimal tourism experiences into the models to explain wellbeing change after a holiday.

2. Literature review

2.1 Wellbeing

Wellbeing indicates how well a person has been living his/her life. Ryan and Deci (2001) have identified two dominating paradigms of wellbeing: hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing. Hedonic wellbeing places more emphasis on subjects' sensory pleasure. In this sense, people have been living well when they experience more pleasant and less unpleasant emotions, and when they are satisfied overall with their lives (Diener, 2000). The eudaimonic view contends that wellbeing comes from fulfilling or realizing one's human nature, capacities, and talents. In this view, hedonic happiness is not a principal criterion of wellbeing. They argue that subjectively felt goods are naturally different from objectively valid goods. The fulfillment of former goods just produces, at best, positive emotion while the latter is conducive to human flourishing (Fromm, 1978; Ryan & Deci, 2001; Waterman, 1993).

Although both hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing have been constructed and developed in the Western culture, they are transferable to the Chinese culture despite its notable difference. There is a substantial overlap between the Aristotelian notion of eudamonic wellbeing and the Chinese/Confucian concept of 'Le' (Zeng & Guo, 2020, as cited in Rahmani et al., 2018). 'Le' corresponds to '幸福' in modern language, which is the literal translation of wellbeing. A review of Chinese studies of hedonic wellbeing (operationalized as subjective wellbeing), suggests that its resilience is consistent with findings of research conducted in Western countries, and that the reliability and validity of corresponding measures carried out in China are also as good as those in Western countries. In addition, empirical studies applying hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing concepts in the Chinese context have reached the quite similar results as Western studies, such as positive relationships between meaning in life and hedonic wellbeing (Yang et al., 2017), positive relationships between mindfulness and eudaimonic wellbeing (Chang et al., 2015), and

positive relationships of existential authenticity to both hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing (Yu et al., 2020). Thus, the hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing concepts are transferable to the Chinese culture.

Wellbeing in tourism research

Scholars have shown increasing interest in tourists' wellbeing, and their efforts have generated considerable insights. Studies employing cross-sectional data have identified many factors related to tourists' wellbeing, such as motivation (Kim et al., 2015), recreational involvement and flow experience (Cheng & Lu, 2015), satisfaction (Kim et al., 2016), and service quality (Su et al., 2015). Notably, most of these studies focused on tourists' hedonic wellbeing.

Tourism promotes wellbeing

Studies that deserve particular attention are the ones that employed a longitudinal design because they provide tremendous insights into the tourism-wellbeing relationship. In studies that have involved regular British tourists (Gilbert & Abdullah, 2004), regular Chinese tourists (Chen et al., 2013), British social tourists (McCabe & Johnson, 2013), and Chinese adolescent tourists (Gao et al., 2020), researchers have compared people's wellbeing before and after a holiday, and have provided fundamental evidence of tourism facilitating wellbeing. De Bloom and his colleagues did much more meticulous studies by observing tourists' wellbeing before, during, and after a holiday, with one making five observations (De Bloom et al., 2010) and the other making 10 observations (De Bloom et al.,2013), both of which suggested that tourists' self-reported health and wellbeing increased quickly during the vacation, but faded rapidly within the first week after they returned home. Further, it did not appear that the length of the vacation was linked to the amount of change in wellbeing. They also reported that vacation experiences, especially the experiences of pleasure, relaxation, savoring, and control, have served to preserve the effect of vacation on wellbeing. Recently, Kwon and Lee (2020) reported that travel satisfaction has a direct effect on the decline of life satisfaction after a holiday, and that expectation and serendipity prolongs the happiness after a holiday.

Drawing on prior studies, we assume that tourism promotes wellbeing with a positive effect fading after a holiday, and that more optimal tourism experiences could buffer the fading effect. This leads to the three vital questions that (in)form the purpose of this study.

Three vital yet unanswered questions

The first vital yet unanswered question is: *What is the trajectory of wellbeing change after a holiday*? Chen et al. (2013) observed tourists' wellbeing before a holiday, three days after, and again two months after. Because there were only two observations used to delineate the trajectory of wellbeing change after the tourism experience, the trajectory was assumed to be linear. While this conclusion might seem reasonable, it might not necessarily be the case because of the limited available evidence. In the study by Gao et al. (2020) of Chinese adolescents, wellbeing was assessed one week before, one week after, and one month after a holiday; their study suffers from the same problem of limited evidence. Gilbert and Abdullah (2004) and McCabe and Johnson (2013) have just observed tourists' wellbeing before and after a holiday, so they were not able to project the trajectory of wellbeing change in either study.

To provide a valid delineation of the trajectory of wellbeing change after a holiday, the present study makes observations of tourists' wellbeing during, in the fourth week, and in the eighth week after their tourism experience, and uses Latent Growth Curve modeling to estimate the trajectory. Such a research design allows for the comparison of wellbeing change in two time intervals, providing a more detailed and precise calculation of the wellbeing change after a holiday.

The second vital yet unanswered question is: *Are there any differences between the change in hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing after a holiday*? Gilbert and Abdullah (2004), Chen et al. (2013), and Gao et al. (2020) have focused exclusively on the effects of tourism on hedonic wellbeing, although some specific life domains associated with hedonic wellbeing were also considered. While McCabe and Johnson (2013) have observed both hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing, and have also included the dimensions of positive functioning and social wellbeing to indicate eudaimonic wellbeing, their observations nevertheless were on

one time point after the tourism experience, and were therefore unable to draw much information about how eudaimonic wellbeing changes over time.

Notably, as an insight on this second question, Su et al. (2020) have investigated the change patterns of wellbeing. Their results suggested that both hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing have gone through a 'first rise and then fall' trajectory of change over the course of a vacation, and the intensity of change in eudaimonic wellbeing is lower than that of hedonic wellbeing. While this study is of great value in understanding the different change characters of hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing, its longitudinal process was initiated by an experimental stimulus. For example, the time point of During-trip was initiated by the stimulus, 'I have been at tourist attraction X for two days', and the $Post_2$-trip was initiated by, 'It's been a week since I returned from attraction X'. Thus, more valid and reliable evidence is needed for examining how hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing changes.

Examining change in eudaimonic wellbeing is particularly of interest because it is conceptually different from hedonic wellbeing (Ryan & Deci, 2001), and even though both indicate how well a person has been living, hedonic wellbeing places more emphasis on the subjects' sensory pleasure and emotion, whereas eudaimonic wellbeing focuses on exercising human nature and fulfilling human potentials (Fromm, 1978; Ryan & Deci, 2001; Waterman, 1993). The stability of each over time differs as well; for example, hedonic treadmill theory claims that every individual has a baseline of hedonic wellbeing and it is primarily determined by the person's inborn dispositions. Consequently, hedonic wellbeing fluctuates temporarily around its baseline following life events (Brickman & Campbell, 1971; Headey & Wearing, 1992; Lykken & Tellegen, 1996). Therefore, hedonic wellbeing may be elevated temporarily by an event, such as tourism, but is likely to return fairly quickly to its baseline level. In contrast, Smith and Diekmann (2017) argued that following an event, an increase in eudaimonic wellbeing is sustained for a relatively longer period of time, but they did not provide any empirical evidence to support their argument.

Given these distinct properties, any changes in hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing after a holiday are expected to present different trajectories. This study aims to determine if

changes in eudaimonic wellbeing do in fact differ from hedonic wellbeing in its response to a holiday and thereby offer valuable insight on how tourism may help people live – and perhaps sustain – a quality life.

The third unanswered vital question is: *Does the nature of a holiday experience influence the change in wellbeing after the holiday*? Most existing studies either just reported the change, if any, in wellbeing by comparing measures of it before and after a holiday, or simply compared the wellbeing of people who engaged in tourism with those who did not (Chen et al., 2013; Gao et al., 2020; Gilbert & Abdullah, 2004; McCabe & Johnson, 2013). From these studies, we only know if change in wellbeing has occurred, but do not know *how* the change has come about. In other words, we do not know what mechanisms are responsible for bringing about any changes in wellbeing. A limitation of these studies is that they report the effect of tourism on wellbeing at the group level and impose an overall mean trajectory for all tourists. However, the trajectory of change in wellbeing might differ across individuals – the change could be faster, flatter, or slower for some than for others. These variations might be attributed to particular tourism experiences; for example, De Bloom et al. (2013) reported that vacation experiences, especially those that were characterized by pleasure, relaxation, savoring, and control, served to sustain the effect of a vacation on wellbeing. The recent longitudinal study by Kwon and Lee (2020) has revealed that tourism satisfaction influences the change in wellbeing after a holiday. Thus, a tourism experience is very likely to influence the change in wellbeing after the holiday, which is one focus of the present study.

To capture individual variations, this study employs Latent Growth Curve modeling to understand how different tourism experiences explain change in wellbeing following a holiday. In other words, this study explores whether people who have different tourism experiences have different trajectories of change in their wellbeing after their holiday. To that end, this study examines three optimal tourism experiences that might influence the change and sustainability in wellbeing after a holiday.

2.2 Optimal tourism experiences

Tourism is essentially defined by experience, which includes everything that people go through when they are traveling on a holiday or vacation (Oh, Fiore, & Jeoung, 2007). Tourism experiences are not, however, homogeneous (Knobloch, Robertson, & Aitken, 2014). When people are travelling, their experiences may encompass the feeling of fully functioning, the exercising of human nature, and the fulfillment of human potential, which all reflect the experiential dimension of wellbeing. As such, these experiences specify and embody a flourishing life, and are characterized as optimal tourism experiences. This study uses optimal tourism experiences as an umbrella term to cover diverse tourism experiences that give rise to optimal psychological functioning, rather than a unique construct that identifies a specific tourism experience. Self-Determination theory posits that experiencing competence, autonomy, and relatedness is conducive to wellbeing (Ryan & Deci, 2000, 2001), and taking a similar approach, this study argues that occurrences of optimal tourism experiences contribute to wellbeing. Three optimal tourism experiences are considered in this study to explore how they predict change in wellbeing after a holiday.

The first optimal tourism experience is Sense of Meaning in Life, which is "the extent to which people comprehend, make sense of, or see significance in their lives" (Steger, 2009, p.682). Experiencing sense of meaning in life is reported in many tourism activities, such as volunteering (Zahra & McIntosh, 2007), pilgrimage (Nilsson & Tesfahuney, 2016), and adventure (Knobloch et al., 2016).

The second optimal tourism experience is Sense of Growth. People develop from experiencing conflicts, difference, and disagreements in specific activities, along with which their thinking, knowledge, and beliefs are involved (Kolb, 2015). The consequence of such experiences could result in the transformation from a fixed and closed mind to a more inclusive, discriminating, open, and reflective one (Mezirow, 2003). Tourism has often been seen as a medium to life extension (Chen et al., 2014); for example, many backpackers (Pearce & Foster, 2007), volunteer tourists (Pan, 2012), and general tourists (Liang et al. 2015) have reported a positive transformation arising from an optimal tourism experience.

The third optimal tourism experience is Sense of Positive Relations. Human beings are social animals and social relations are a salient part of our lives (Reis, 2001). Social relations could be recurring interactions between individuals who know each other and the transitory social interactions between strangers; both types of interactions are crucial to wellbeing (Cox et al., 2016; Reis, 2001). Indeed, many tourists enjoy the company of families (Germann, 2016) and the kindness extended by strangers (Filep et al., 2017).

These three types of optimal tourism experiences could be replaced by others, such as the experiences of competence, autonomy, inspiration, and achievement. But in this study, these three types are chosen because they are very often reported by tourists (Chen et al., 2014; Knobloch et al., 2016; Nilsson & Tesfahuney, 2016) and emphasized in wellbeing definitions and theories (Ryan & Deci, 2000, 2001), which suggests their potential to contribute to a change in wellbeing after a holiday.

Building on these types of optimal tourism experiences, this study makes observations of tourists' wellbeing during, in the fourth week after, and in the eighth week after a holiday, and by using Latent Growth Curve model analysis, examines how optimal tourism experiences predict change in hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing after a holiday.

The time lag between two waves of survey is critical in a longitudinal study. When the time lag is too short, any change in X has likely not unfolded completely yet; however, when the time lag is too long, there may be other factors coming into play that contribute to change (Ployhart & Vandenberg, 2010). Thus, the length of the time lag should correspond well with the actual causal lag, but it is almost impossible to know what the actual causal interval is (Mitchell & James, 2001). Although most longitudinal studies adopt the time interval based upon pragmatic grounds, such as funding, support, and time that the researchers have, Mitchell and James (2001) suggested that good studies should avoid pragmatic stands, and instead should draw on related theories and extant findings for appropriate time intervals. Chen et al. (2013) have claimed that two months "provided sufficient time to gauge the potential enduring effect of vacation" (p.293). Their longitudinal study has supported this estimation, which revealed that 70.5% growth of global life satisfaction induced by tourism

fades out in two months after the tour. Gao et al (2020), in their longitudinal study, revealed that almost 100% growth in global life satisfaction fades out in one month after the tour. Although some decline of wellbeing might still happen after two months following the holiday, the decline is more likely to be influenced by other life events occurring in the interim rather than the tourism experience. Thus, two months are sufficient to trace most of the decline of wellbeing after a holiday and the time interval cannot be too short for a change in wellbeing to unfold. For example, the most recent longitudinal study by Kwon and Lee (2020) did not find any significant change in life satisfaction or affect immediately after the trip to 15 days after the trip, but the change was significant when a 30-day time interval was considered. Thus, one or two weeks is too short to observe a significant change in wellbeing, and one month is attested to be an appropriate time interval.

3. Methods

To capture changes in wellbeing following a holiday, the study administered three waves of survey to the same tourists over an eight-week period. The first survey was conducted during the holiday, the second was conducted four weeks after the holiday ended, and the third survey was conducted eight weeks after the holiday ended. Information concerning the nature of the holiday experience (i.e., optimal tourism experiences) and the characteristics of the tourists and their trip was gathered in the first survey, while measures of wellbeing were gathered in all three waves to assess changes over time.

3.1 Instrument

The instrument includes three sections. The first section assessed the occurrence of the three optimal tourism experiences, and the second section assessed tourists' hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing. The third section collected information about the participants and characteristics of their trip. For all items, modifications were made according to the context under which each survey was executed, a blind back-to-back translation technique was used to ensure equivalence (see Table 1 for details about the items used in the questionnaire).

Wellbeing

Hedonic wellbeing encompasses two aspects – affective and cognitive. The affective aspect was measured by the Scale of Positive and Negative Feelings (Diener et al., 2010), which is a 12-item scale comprising six items respectively in assessing negative and positive feelings. Each item was measured on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 = "Almost never" to 7 = "Almost always". The psychometric properties of this scale have been supported by Li et al.'s (2013) study with 21,322 Chinese respondents. The cognitive aspect was measured by the Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener et al., 1985), which comprised five items and was measured on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 = "Strongly disagree" to 7 = "Strongly agree". This scale has been used by many tourism studies that involve Chinese tourists' wellbeing (Chen et al., 2013; Gao et al., 2020). Finally, the Flourishing Scale (Diener et al., 2010) was used to assess eudaimonic wellbeing. This scale covers primary aspects of optimal psychological functioning from the respondent's own point of view and comprises eight items, each of which is also assessed using a 7-poit agreement scale. This study used the Chinese version validated by Tang et al. (2016).

Optimal tourism experiences

The assessment of Sense of Meaning in Life was adapted from the Meaning in Life Questionnaire by Steger et al. (2006), which includes five items. The assessment of Sense of Growth was adapted from the Personal Growth subscale of the Psychological Wellbeing Scale (Ryff, 1989), which includes seven items. The assessment of Sense of Positive Relations was adapted from the subscale for Relatedness, one of the three basic psychological needs recognized in Self-Determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Gagné, 2003). This subscale includes eight items. For all items, slight modifications were made to the wording to fit the tourism context and all were measured using a 7-point agreement scale. The scales for optimal tourism experiences were only used in the first wave of survey so they captured the experiences *during* the tourists' holidays.

Characteristics of the tourists and their holidays

In addition to wellbeing and optimal tourism experiences, the survey also collected information about the participants and their holidays. Demographic information included age,

sex, marital status, education, and income. Information concerning the participants' holiday trip included the time participants had already been travelling by the time they completed the first survey, their anticipated time of finishing their current holiday (used to determine the timing of the subsequent two waves of surveys), the type of accommodation where participants most often stayed, and with whom participants were traveling. The time interval between each wave of the survey was four weeks, so it was possible that participants had also travelled between two of the surveys, which might influence their responses to the second and third surveys. Thus, participants were also asked to indicate how many days, if any, they had travelled during the four weeks prior to the second and third surveys respectively. This information was used to control for its possible influence on responses to subsequent surveys.

3.2 Data collection

Data collection was conducted from mid-September 2018 to early February 2019. The first wave of the survey took place in five cities in China: Lijiang, Dali, Kunming, Chengdu, and Xi'an. These cities were chosen because they are among the most popular destinations for domestic tourists and offered a large variety of attractions, such as culture, nature, food, history, fashion, ethnicity, and both rural and urban features, all of which portends a diverse sample. Further, there are a large number of hostels in these five cities, and they provided the sites where the data were collected.

Three waves of surveys were administered so it was necessary to obtain, with permission, participants' contact information in the first wave. Hostels were chosen as the site to conduct the initial survey to gain access to a larger pool of potential participants at a site that encouraged interactions among guests, thereby giving the researcher and potential participants a chance to get acquainted. It is important to note that the hostel guests who were approached were not just low-budget tourists as might be normally expected, but rather, they were very diverse with annual incomes ranging from low to very high. The price for one bed for one night ranged from 15 Yuan up to 99 Yuan, which is relatively expensive especially during non-peak season. As a reference, the price for some hotels was less than 60 Yuan for a single room for one night during the time of data collection. The selection of a specific hostel

within each city was based on those with the most online reviews posted on travel agency websites.

The first wave of the survey was conducted between mid-September and mid-December 2018, at 23 hostels in the five cities. A convenience sampling method was used, with the researcher approaching every available guest in a common space at each hostel. Almost all participants provided WeChat for their contact information (only three individuals provided email address instead), which allowed the researcher and participants to chat, post, and transfer money. All questionnaires for the three waves of the survey were administered and completed electronically. The second wave of survey was carried out from mid-October 2018 to early January 2019 with every participant contacted in the fourth week following their holiday. The third wave of survey was conducted from early November 2018 to early February 2019, with every participant again contacted in the eighth week after their holiday.

Overall, 228 participants were recruited in the first wave, 215 of them engaged in the second survey, and 212 in the third survey, so the study only lost 16 individuals by attrition. Participants were compensated ￥5, 10 and 15 Yuan for finishing the first, second, and third surveys respectively. Throughout all three waves, the researcher kept in touch with participants on WeChat by giving thumbs up, liking, or commenting on their posts, which helped to keep attrition low.

3.3 Analysis plan

This study investigates how optimal tourism experiences predict change in wellbeing after a holiday by employing Latent Growth Curve modeling, which has only recently been introduced to hospitality and tourism research (Hsu, 2014; Xu & Martinez, 2018; Xu et al., 2018). Even though attrition was relatively low in this longitudinal study, it used a Full Information Maximum Likelihood approach to handle missing data, a strategy that has been increasingly used in Structural Equation Modeling to handle incomplete data (Cham et al., 2017; Duncan et al., 2013; Von Hippel, 2016).

Latent Growth Curve modeling is based on the analysis of mean and covariance structures, and is used in longitudinal studies to focus on within-individual and inter-

individual changes (Burns et al., 2018; Cheong et al., 2003; Xu & Martinez, 2018). To achieve this, the minimum sample size for Latent Growth Curve models is 200 at each time point (Byrne, 2016), which this study met. The Latent Growth Curve modeling analysis was carried out using the statistical software package AMOS.

The Latent Growth Curve model presented in Figure 1 illustrates observed measures of wellbeing (denoted by X_1, X_2, and X_3) taken at each of the three time points. The Intercept and Slope, which are latent factors, together capture the trajectory of the wellbeing change over time. The numerical values assigned to paths leading from the Intercept and Slope indicate fixed parameters and they define the trajectory. The paths leading from the Intercept to each of the measures of wellbeing are specified with 1, fully constraining the model to a value of 1 so the value of the intercept remains constant across the three times for each individual (Byrne, 2016). The path from the Slope to X_1 is specified with 0, to X_2 is specified with "a", and to X_3 is specified with "b", which are estimated values and determine the function form of the trajectory. For example, if linear growth is anticipated, "a" could be constrained to 1 and "b" constrained to 2 to reflect equal time intervals between measurements. If quadratic growth is anticipated, the "a" could be constrained to 1 and "b" constrained to 4. If no specific function form is anticipated, "b" could be constrained to 2, and free the second path, this unspecified model lets data determine the value of "a" (Chan & Schmitt, 2000; Serva et al., 2011). While the values assigned to paths are somewhat arbitrary, the specific choice determines the interpretation of the Intercept and Slope factors.

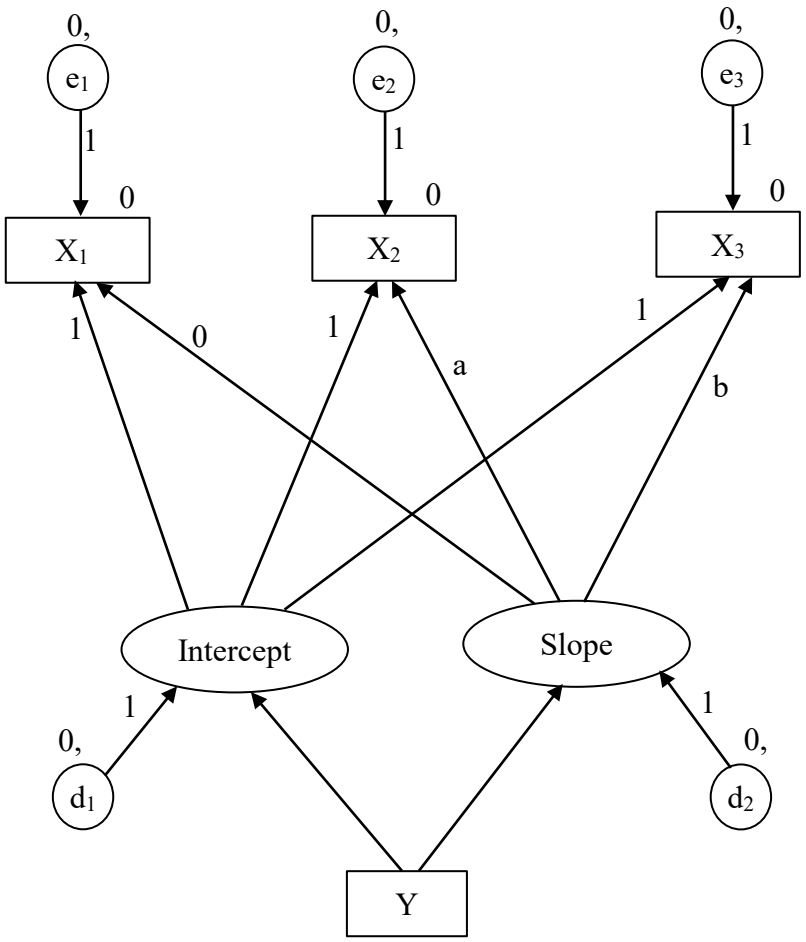

Figure 1. Latent Growth Curve model with the second order predictors

394 Table 1. The items, normality, unidimensionality, validity, and reliability of constructs

Constructs	Items	Mean	SD	Ske.	Kur.	AVE	CR
Sense of Meaning in Life	I feel I have a clear sense of purpose about my life when I am travelling I find my life purpose on this trip I feel I have a good sense of what makes my life meaningful when I am travelling I feel I have a good understanding about my life's meaning when I am travelling I feel I have a clear life orientation when I am travelling	4.61	1.04	-.26	-.42	.54	.85
Sense of Growth	I feel my horizons have been expanded on this trip I feel I am becoming a better person on this trip I feel I am becoming a person I've always wanted to be on the trip I have a more positive attitude to life when I am travelling I feel I am becoming more confident to life when I am travelling I feel I am growing when I am travelling How I think about the world has been changed on the trip	5.29	.90	-.64	.47	.48	.87
Sense of Positive Relations	I get along well with people I come into contact with on the trip I really like the people I interact with during the trip The people I interact with during the trip seem to don't like me much People I interact with during the trip are generally pretty friendly towards me	5.97	.72	-.67	.21	.44	.75

Positive Emotions							
Time 1/	Contented, Happy, Joyful, Pleasant, Good, Positive	5.38/	.87/	-.55/	.47/	.64/	.91/
Time 2/		4.71/	.87/	-.30/	.06/	.64/	.91/
Time 3		4.69	.92	-.48	-.31	.65	.92
Negative Emotions							
Time 1/	Negative, Unpleasant, Sad, Afraid, Bad, Angry	2.35/	.75/	1.1/	2.23/	.46/	.83/
Time 2/		2.87/	.80/	.54/	.31/	.46/	.83/
Time 3		2.96	.81	.50	-.37	.52	.86
Life Satisfaction	I am satisfied with my life						
	So far I have gotten the important things I want in my life						
Time 1/	The conditions of my life are excellent generally	3.87/	1.01/	.26/	-.20/	.46/	.77/
Time 2/	In most ways my life is close to my ideal	4.17/	1.03/	-.15/	-.21/	.43/	.79/
Time 3		3.99	1.06	-.04	-.73	.42	.78
Flourishing	In my life, I am always optimistic about my future						
	My social relationships in my life are supportive and rewarding						
Time 1/	In my life, people respect me	5.09/	.82/	-.16/	-.27/	.36/	.81/
Time 2/	I lead a purposeful and meaningful life	5.00/	.75/	-.47/	.18/	.33/	.79/
Time 3	I am competent and capable in the activities that are important to me	4.87	.78	-.22	-.65	.37	.82
	I am engaged and interested in daily activities						
	I actively contribute to the happiness and wellbeing of others						
	I am a good person and live a good life						

Note: Four items for the Sense of Positive Relations and one item for the Life Satisfaction were deleted for low factor loadings.

SD = Standard Deviation, Ske. = Skewness, Kur. = Kurtosis, AVE = Average Variance Extracted, CR = Composite Reliability

The basic Latent Growth Curve model reveals *within*-individual information about how the construct of interest – in this case, wellbeing – changes over time, and *inter*-individual differences in change over time are estimated by incorporating a second level factor (Y). Two paths flow from the predictor variable "Y" to the Intercept and Slope (see Figure 1), which explains how the Intercept and Slope differ across individuals. To determine how the trajectories differ across individuals, the means of the Intercept and Slope factors and their matching variances are first checked to indicate deviations from the mean. While the mean provides information concerning average population values of the Intercept and Slope factors, the variances provide information concerning individual deviations from those population means (Byrne, 2016). Thus, variance in the Intercept indicates whether individuals differ from each other in their initial score on wellbeing, and variance in the Slope indicates whether individuals differ from each other in the rate of change over time. Notably, the variance must be significant before incorporating a second level factor into the model to examine if it predicts the Intercept and Slope factors (Barnes, Reifman, Farrell, & Dintcheff, 2000) because non-significant variance indicates that the average trajectory reflects individual trajectories (Serva et al., 2011).

4. Results

4.1 Characteristics of the sample

A total of 224 complete and usable questionnaires were completed during the first wave of the survey. Following the second wave of the survey, the usable sample was 211, and following the third survey, it comprised 208 individuals, all of whom completed all three waves of the survey. The characteristics of the sample are presented in Table 2. The adequacy of the sampling was examined by running the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's test, the value of KMO test is higher than the low limit of .60, and the Bartlett's test of sphericity is significant (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2012).

Table 2. Profile of the sample (*N*=224)

Variable	Attribute	Mean / Pct.
Age		26.4
Female		41.9
Marital status	Never married	87.5
	Married	9.4
	Divorced/Separated	3.1
	Widowed	0
Education	High school and lower	8.0
	College or university	82.1
	Master's	8.9
	Ph.D.	0.9
Income (RMB)	<10,00	17.4
	10,000 to 40, 000	11.2
	40000 to 70,000	13.8
	70,000 to 100,000	13.8
	100,000 to 130,000	11.2
	130,000 to 160,000	5.4
	160,000 to 190,000	1.8
	190,000 to 220,000	0.4
	220,000 to 250,000	1.3
	> 250,000	5.4
	Prefer not to say	18.3
Company	Partner	3.0
	Families	4.6
	Friends	21.3
	Alone	71.1
Travel days less than 1 week by the first survey		68.3
Primary	Hostel	86.2
Accommodation	Hotel	8.5
	Airbnb	2.7
	Friend's place	0
	Relative's place	0
	Others	2.7

4.2 Measurement models

Before undertaking the Latent Growth Curve analysis, the normality of each construct was examined, and the criterion was met (see Table 1) (George & Mallery, 2016; West et al., 1995). Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was then undertaken using maximum likelihood estimation to assess the unidimensionality, validity, and reliability of measurement models.

To establish the unidimensionality, the standardized factor loadings of all items for the matching construct should be larger than .40 (Hair et al., 1998). To assess validity and reliability, the Average Variance Extracted of a construct should be larger than .50, although the criterion could be extended to .40 if the composite reliability is higher than .60 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). In most cases, if any of these criteria was violated, the item with low factor loading should be deleted, and this procedure continued until all criteria were met. In this study, this approach was applied (see Table 1).

All of the measurement models except the one for Flourishing met the suggested criteria. The average variance extracted of Flourishing for the three surveys was .36, .33, and .37 respectively, each of which was lower than the minimum standard of .40 with the composite reliability larger than .60. Although average variance extracted could be improved by deleting items, this was not done because unlike other scales with different items assessing the same construct, the Flourishing Scale generates a summary measure of respondent's perceived satisfaction based on different essences of life. It provides a composite measure of eudaimonic wellbeing and yields an overview of full functioning across diverse and important domains of life (Diener et al., 2010). The psychometric properties of the Flourishing Scale have been demonstrated by substantive empirical studies (Hone et al., 2014; Silva & Caetano, 2013; Sumi, 2014), and the Chinese version of the Flourishing scale validated by Tang et al. (2016) used in this study has shown "excellent internal consistency, solid one-factor structure, strong convergent and discriminant validity, and incremental validity" (p.591).

4.3 Structural models

This study used Latent Growth Curve modeling to examine the change in wellbeing following a holiday. The first step was variance analysis, which produces the initial score and slope of the construct of interest across time, and depict the trajectory at the group level. The unspecified model recommended by Chan and Schmitt (2000) and Duncan and Duncan (2004) was employed to explore the trajectory form. In addition to the value of intercept and

slope, the variance analysis also served to identify their variation across individuals, which served to depict the trajectory at the individual level.

4.4 Variance in wellbeing changes across individuals

Change in Positive Emotions

The Latent Growth Curve model on Positive Emotions fit the data well ($\chi^2 = 3.41$, CFI = .99, RMSEA = .056). The average for Positive Emotions at the time of travelling was 5.376, and the mean slope was -.345, which indicates a declining trajectory (see Table 3). The significant variance of intercept suggested the incorporation of the optimal tourism experiences explained the inter-individual difference. The results suggested all optimal tourism experiences were positive predictors of Positive Emotions when tourists were travelling and the significant variance of the slope suggested the incorporation of the three optimal tourism experiences explained the inter-individual difference. The results for optimal tourism experiences were also all negatively related to the slope, indicating that higher levels of optimal tourism experiences lead to slower decline of Positive Emotions (see Figure 2). The regression weight ($b = 1.84$, $p < .001$) of the path from the Slope to the second observation suggested that Positive Emotions decreased by 11.83% in the first month, then decreased by 1.01% in the second month, so 92.13% of the decline happened in the first month (calculation based on Duncan et al., 2013, p.34) (see Table 4 and Figure 2).

Table 3. Results of Latent Growth Curve modeling analysis

		Constructs			
		Positive Emotions	Negative Emotions	Life Satisfaction	Flourishing
b of the 2nd path		1.843***	1.743***	12.207	1.144***
Intercept		5.376***	2.347***	3.905***	5.095***
Slope		-.345***	.301***	.022	-.108***
Variance of Intercept		.408***	.161*	.561***	.433***
Variance of Slope		.056*	.023	-.002	.051**
The intercept is predicted by (b)…	SoMiL	.357***	-.126***	.297***	.369***
	SoG	.460***	-.176***	.327***	.455***
	SoPR	.663***	-.421***	.340***	.410***
The slope is predicted by (b)…	SoMiL	-.059*			-.075**
	SoG	-.077*			-.099***
	SoPR	-.172***			-.090*

Notes: SoMiL = Sense of Meaning in Life, SoG = Sense of Growth, SoPR = Sense of Positive Relations.
* p <.05, ** p <.01, *** p <.001

Table 4. Percentage change in wellbeing across three observations

Constructs	1st month	2nd month	Total change	Ratio of 1st month
Positive Emotions	-11.83	-1.01	-12.84	92.13
Negative Emotions	+22.35	+3.30	+25.65	87.14
Life Satisfaction	-	-	-	-
Flourishing	-2.42	-1.81	-4.23	57.21

Note: The amount of change is based on the regression weight of the path from Slope to the second observation, the second path for the Life satisfaction is not significant, thus its change is not reported.

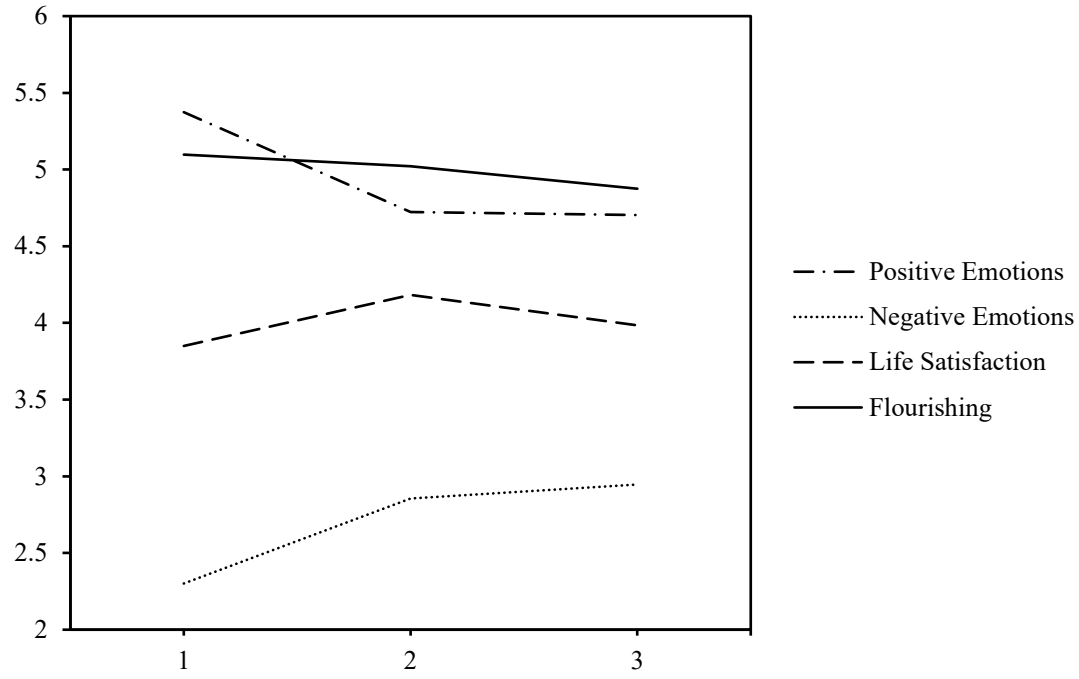

Figure 2. Change in Positive Emotions, Negative Emotions, Life Satisfaction, and Flourishing in the two months following a holiday

Change in Negative Emotions

Consistent with the findings for Positive Emotions, the optimal tourism experience model on Negative Emotions fit the data well (χ^2 = .005, CFI = 1.00, RMSEA = .00). The mean of Negative Emotions at the time of travelling was 2.347, and the mean slope was .301, which in this case indicates a growing trajectory (see Table 3), such that all optimal tourism experiences were negative predictors of Negative Emotions. The variance of the slope was not significant, indicating that individual trajectories of Negative Emotions were not significantly different from the mean trajectory, thus optimal tourism experiences were not incorporated. The regression weight suggested that Negative Emotions increased by 22.35% in the first month, then increased by 3.30% in the second month, so overall, 87.14% of the growth happened in the first month (see Table 4 and Figure 2).

Change in Life Satisfaction

The Latent Growth Curve model on Life Satisfaction also fit the data well (χ^2 = 2.27, CFI = 1.00, RMSEA = .025). The mean of Life Satisfaction at the time of travelling was 3.905, and the mean slope was not significantly different from zero (see Table 3). This non-

significant result might be because Life Satisfaction on average grew in the first month, but then declined in the second month, thereby canceling the initial growth (see Figure 2). The results suggested that all optimal tourism experiences were positive predictors of Life Satisfaction. The variance of the slope was not significant, so individual trajectories of Life Satisfaction were not significantly different from the mean trajectory, and therefore, optimal tourism experiences were not incorporated. The regression weight of the path from the Slope to the second observation was not significant, and the slope was not significant either, thus the amount of change for the two-time intervals and the ratio of change in the first month were not reported (see Table 4).

Change in Flourishing

Finally, the Latent Growth Curve model on Flourishing also fit the data well (χ^2 = .86, CFI = 1.00, RMSEA = .00). Average Flourishing at the time of travelling was 5.095, and the mean slope was -.108, indicating a small declining trajectory (see Table 3). The results suggested that all optimal tourism experiences were positive predictors of Flourishing when tourists were travelling on holiday. The results also revealed that all optimal tourism experiences were negatively related to the slope, indicating that higher level of optimal tourism experiences led to a slower decline of Flourishing (see Figure 2). The regression weight (b = 1.144, p < .001) suggested that Flourishing decreased by 2.42% in the first month, then decreased by another 1.81% in the second month, and 57.21% of decline happened in the first month (see Table 4).

5. Discussion

Building on previous studies that demonstrated tourism promotes wellbeing, this study focused on how wellbeing changes after a holiday, the amount of change over a specific period of time, how optimal tourism experiences predict the change in wellbeing, and the difference in the nature of change between hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing.

5.1 How wellbeing changes after a holiday

Positive Emotions. The results suggest that tourists' Positive Emotions were relatively high during their holiday, but declined in the two months following the trip. The decline was

rapid in the first month, then slowed in the second month, so most of the decline happened in the first month following the holiday.

Results also suggest that people who experienced greater optimal tourism experiences had a higher level of Positive Emotions during the trip. These findings reflected the positive association of optimal tourism experiences to Positive Emotions found in other substantive studies (Garcia & Siddiqui, 2009; Hicks et al., 2012; Siedlecki et al., 2014; Steger et al., 2006).

Negative Emotions. The results suggested that tourists' Negative Emotions were relatively low when they were traveling, but they increased in the two months following a holiday. The growth in Negative Emotions was rapid in the first month, but then slowed in the second month, so most of the growth happened in the first month following a holiday.

The results also suggested that people who had greater optimal tourism experiences reported less Negative Emotions during the trip, which has been reported in other substantive studies that showed negative associations of optimal tourism experiences with Negative Emotions (Park et al., 2010; Sanjuán, 2011; Siedlecki et al., 2014).

Life Satisfaction. Results suggested that the average level of Life Satisfaction did not significantly change across the times when three observations were carried out. The reason could be that life satisfaction is a stable construct. Diener (1994) argued that the whole life experience should be considered in the assessment of life satisfaction, and that it would remain relatively stable over time unless life circumstances change considerably (Steger & Kashdan, 2007), in response to an event such as divorce or unemployment (Lucas, 2005; Lucas et al., 2004). Consequently, a single holiday does not represent a significant event that could change life satisfaction dramatically.

Indeed, this relative stability in life satisfaction has been demonstrated by most longitudinal studies that examined tourism's impact on wellbeing. For example, Gilbert and Abdullah (2004) reported the change in life satisfaction from 30.78 before tourism to 31.78 after tourism. Chen et al. (2013) reported the change from 6.85 three days after tourism to 6.42 two months after tourism. McCabe and Johnson (2013) revealed that only one of five

items of life satisfaction was significantly changed by tourism (from 3.66 to 4.07). Thus, life satisfaction was only mildly changed by a tourism experience when it was examined in a time range less than three months following the trip. When a longer period is examined, the stability in life satisfaction is even more apparent; for example, Steger and Kashdan (2007) reported that life satisfaction remained the same one year after the initial assessment.

The analysis also indicated that people who had greater optimal tourism experiences reported somewhat higher Life Satisfaction during the trip, which actually supports the positive association of optimal tourism experiences to Life Satisfaction as revealed in other substantive studies (Butler & Kern, 2016; Siedlecki et al., 2014; Steger et al., 2006). The non-significant variance of slope indicated that, no matter how much optimal tourism experiences individuals experienced, Life Satisfaction did not change significantly across individuals, which again points to the stability in Life Satisfaction.

Flourishing. Turning to eudaimonic wellbeing, the Latent Growth Curve model analysis suggested that people had a high level of Flourishing during the trip, but it declined in the two months following the trip. Differing from hedonic wellbeing, the decline in Flourishing was relatively gradual, with the decline in the first month just a little bit greater than the decline in the second month. Overall, the total change in Flourishing in the two months following the holiday was also much less than the change in hedonic wellbeing.

The analysis also suggested that people who had greater optimal tourism experiences also reported a higher level of Flourishing during the trip, which is also consistent with the positive associations of optimal tourism experiences with Flourishing reported in other substantive studies (Butler & Kern, 2016; Diener et al., 2010; Howell, Passmore, & Holder, 2016).

5.2 Optimal tourism experiences predict the change in wellbeing

Positive Emotion. The results further revealed that the decline of Positive Emotions was slower for those individuals who experienced greater optimal tourism experiences during the trip; in other words, optimal tourism experiences buffered the decline of Positive Emotions after a holiday. This buffering effect could be attributable to a long-term memory

591 effect of optimal tourism experiences on people's daily life (Campos et al., 2017; Tung &
592 Ritchie, 2011) such that positive emotions would still be triggered when people reflected
593 back on peak moments from the trip. For example, Curtin (2006) reported that one participant
594 had the same wonderful feeling in the water as she did when she reflected upon her
595 experience of swimming with dolphins. Tung and Ritchie (2011) also found that positive
596 emotions related to a holiday were most often recalled. Thus, optimal tourism experiences
597 establish good memories that evoke positive emotions whenever people reflect on them in
598 daily life, which helps to slow their decline following a holiday.
599 *Negative Emotions.* The results further indicated that what happened during the trip
600 was not necessarily related to how much Negative Emotions people experienced in their daily
601 lives. When people were traveling, optimal tourism experiences just led to the absence of
602 Negative Emotions, which was reflected in their lower levels, and compared to the presence
603 of positive emotions, Negative Emotions acted as a weaker predictor of wellbeing (Kuppens
604 et al., 2008). In other words, the absence of negative emotions while travelling cannot be felt
605 (e.g., we cannot feel "not angry"), so their absence would not be experienced and a memory
606 effect would not result. Thus, the level of Negative Emotions after a holiday is more likely
607 influenced by bothersome factors in people's daily life, and what they experienced during the
608 trip does not spill over and influence their wellbeing.
609 *Flourishing.* The decline of Flourishing after the holiday was slower for individuals
610 who experienced greater optimal tourism experiences during the trip. The reason could be an
611 optimal experience is a "generalization for the best moments of the human being, for the
612 happiest moments of life" (Maslow, 1971, p.101), which are naturally conducive to
613 wellbeing. This argument resonates with the Self-Determination theory that posits
614 experiencing competence, autonomy, and relatedness facilitates both hedonic and eudaimonic
615 wellbeing (Ryan & Deci, 2000, 2001). Having multiple optimal experiences in the long run
616 are additive and contribute to wellbeing (Huta, 2013; Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2014).
617 This argument is also in line with bottom-up spillover theory (Kim et al., 2015; Neal et al.,

1999), which is frequently used to explain the contribution of tourism experiences to wellbeing. Thus, the accumulation of optimal tourism experiences is conducive to wellbeing.

5.3 Differences in the nature of change between hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing

Hedonic wellbeing declined rapidly while eudaimonic wellbeing declined slowly after a holiday. This is in line with recent findings by Su et al. (2020) that the change intensity of eudaimonic wellbeing after a holiday is significantly lower than that of hedonic wellbeing.

The distinct patterns of decline in hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing are grounded in their unique properties. Distinct from hedonic wellbeing which is essentially a momentary pleasure (Ryan & Deci, 2001), eudaimonic wellbeing is based on the presence of meaning and self-realization (Ryan & Deci, 2001). It reflects a process of striving to fully functioning and the engagement with existential challenges of life (Keyes et al., 2002), and tends to be more stable once higher eudaimonic wellbeing is attained.

The results revealed that Positive Emotions declined and Negative Emotions increased rapidly after a holiday. Emotion is "a reaction to personally significant events" (Parrott, 2001, p.376) and positive emotions are essentially momentary experiences of good feelings, and are typically brief (Fredrickson, 2001). This outcome is consistent with empirical evidence reported by Chen et al. (2013) and Gao et al. (2020), who also reported that positive emotions declined in a short time following a holiday. When people are traveling, positive emotions are dominant and people are less likely to experience negative emotions although sometimes they do (Grappi & Montanari, 2011; Nawijn, 2016). However, when a holiday is over, people typically return immediately to daily life, which re-introduces many factors that can cause negative emotions, such as pressure from work, conflicts in social relations, and boredom from a repetitious life. A holiday provides people with opportunities to relax mentally, avoid the hustle and bustle of daily life, and relax physically (Ryan & Glendon, 1998), and to escape from daily routine and release work pressure (Li & Cai, 2012). Considering the momentary and context-specific nature of negative emotions, the nettlesome factors in daily life might induce the growth of negative emotions rapidly after a holiday.

The results also suggested that the sense of Flourishing declined slowly after a holiday. The reason could be that optimal tourism experiences may inspire people on how to live, which then decelerates the decline of eudaimonic wellbeing after a holiday. Tourism offers people a liminal space to reflect on the life they live and the changes they can make, and such reflections help people experience moments of vision – a vision of an authentic self and a life worth living – and serves as a catalyst for authentic living after tourism (Brown, 2013). More than just a theoretical inference, empirical studies have provided considerable evidence that tourism influences people's life in a positive way, such as finding purpose and meaning in life after a significant loss (Knobloch et al., 2016), starting life over with positivity after a cancer diagnosis (Morgan et al., 2015), and becoming more confident in themselves (Cutler et al., 2014). All these transformations arising from optimal tourism experiences will influence how people live after tourism in a positive way, which slows the decline of eudaimonic wellbeing.

6. Conclusion

6.1 Summary

Building on previous studies that illustrated tourism promotes wellbeing and wellbeing fades out after a holiday, this study focused on how wellbeing declines after a holiday, how tourism experiences influence the decline, and differences in the nature of decline between hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing. To this end, Latent Growth Curving model was used, and the results revealed that people who had greater optimal tourism experiences during their trip also reported higher levels of both hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing. The decline in Positive Emotions after the holiday was slower for people who reported a higher level of optimal tourism experiences, and while Negative Emotions grew for the two months following the trip, the growth was very homogeneous, with no inter-individual differences being found. Life satisfaction did not change significantly across individuals or over time following the holiday. With respect to eudaimonic wellbeing, the

673 decline of Flourishing was slower for people who reported a higher level of optimal tourism
674 experiences.
675 The results also suggested that Positive Emotions declined dramatically in the first
676 month and then marginally in the second month, that Negative Emotions increased
677 dramatically in the first month and then marginally in the second month, that Life
678 Satisfaction did not decline or increase significantly in the two months following a holiday,
679 and that the sense of Flourishing declined gradually and marginally in the same two time
680 intervals after a holiday. In conclusion, tourists' wellbeing declines after a holiday, with
681 hedonic wellbeing declining more quickly than eudaimonic wellbeing, but more optimal
682 tourism experiences could serve to buffer the decline.
683 **6.2 Implications**
684 Psychologists recognize that hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing are related but
685 distinct aspects of positive psychological functioning, and neither alone depicts a complete
686 picture of wellbeing. However, studies on tourists' wellbeing have been dominated by a
687 consideration only of hedonism, so most of our knowledge on the contribution of tourism to
688 wellbeing is built on this singular perspective. In recent years, tourism scholars have realized
689 the imbalance and started calling for more attention to tourists' eudaimonic wellbeing (Hao &
690 Xiao, 2021), but empirical studies on the effect of tourism on eudaimonic wellbeing are still
691 lacking. This study, by incorporating both hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing, provides
692 evidence that their patterns of change following a holiday are different, as is the influence of
693 optimal tourism experiences on such changes.
694 Previous studies that adopted longitudinal and quasi-experimental methods have
695 contributed much to our understanding the impact of tourism on wellbeing. However, all of
696 these studies focused solely on the change in wellbeing before and after the tour, which
697 provide little insight into the nature of the change in wellbeing following a vacation. Thus, by
698 observing wellbeing during, four weeks after, and eight weeks after a holiday, this study has
699 extended the knowledge gained from previous studies to better understand *how* wellbeing
700 changes. Overall, we conclude that tourism can boost hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing, and

that they both decline in distinct ways following a holiday. Consequently, this study has helped us better understand the *process* of change in wellbeing.

Further, previous studies just considered the impact of tourism on wellbeing at the group level, and inter-individual differences in the change in wellbeing have been neglected. In other words, we only have come to know how much change in wellbeing was triggered by tourism on average. By incorporating a consideration of optimal tourism experiences to explain the variations in the change in wellbeing across individuals, this study strengthens the connection between tourism experiences and wellbeing after a holiday, and provides evidence on how tourism experience may influence tourists' wellbeing in their daily life.

This study is of value to positive psychology research in tourism as well. Positive psychology is concerned with flourishing that entails engagement, meaning, positive relationships, and other aspects that contribute to authentic happiness. Echoing Filep and Laing (2019), this study examined eudaimonic tourist experience through a positive psychology lens, and demonstrated that authentic happiness can be attained in eudaimonic tourist experiences, and these experiences further buffer the wellbeing adaptation after a holiday. Positive psychology has provided an important perspective to understanding tourism experiences in depth and helps to explain how tourism facilitates wellbeing. In addition, this research elicits questions concerning why optimal tourism experiences lead to slower decline of wellbeing; in other words, what are the mechanisms that help minimise the decline? The latest development of positive psychology in capitalization (i.e., the cognitive and behavioral strategies for augmenting and prolonging the happiness caused by positive events, such as recalling and sharing) can be used to probe the mechanism (Gable et al., 2004; Kaczmarek et at., 2021). When people have optimal tourism experiences, they tend to recall and share them with friends, which contribute to wellbeing and result in slower adaption. Future studies are recommended to examine this mechanism using a positive psychology perspective.

Methodologically, the longitudinal design has not been prevalent in tourism studies, as most quantitative inquiries are based on cross-sectional data, which restricts their ability to examine the dynamic nature of key variables and their interrelationships (Ployhart &

729 Vandenberg, 2010). Among the limited number of longitudinal tourism studies, most use
730 repeated measures analysis of variance (ANOVA) or hierarchical linear models. The use
731 Latent Growth Curve modeling has shown substantial advantages, such as the ability to
732 examine within-individual and inter-individual changes over time; access to better methods
733 of handling missing data; the ability to assess higher-order constructs in predicting the change
734 of lower-order constructs; the ability to test models with multiple levels of hierarchically
735 structured data; and the opportunity to estimate changes in more complex causal models that
736 involves antecedents, mediators, moderators, and outcomes of change (Tomarken & Waller,
737 2005). Consequently, the application of Latent Growth Curve modeling in this study has
738 provided an example for future studies using longitudinal designs.
739 In addition to academic contributions, this study has practical implications for tourists
740 and tourism managers. This study informs tourists that the effect of a holiday on hedonic
741 wellbeing will fade out in a short time whereas the positive effect on eudaimonic wellbeing is
742 sustained for a longer time. Although pleasure tourism might bring about hedonic wellbeing,
743 such trips are less likely to foster eudaimonic wellbeing. Instead, higher eudaimonic
744 wellbeing is more likely to be derived from more "serious" tourism, such as volunteer
745 tourism or nature tourism – tourism linked more seriously to a purpose or a meaningful life.
746 Therefore, this study could provide insights for tourists in making decisions about the kinds
747 of holidays they want to take and what outcomes they could expect from their choices.
748 For managers of tourism companies, this study helps them rethink what benefits their
749 services could offer to their customers. If the result of their service evaluation is primarily
750 hedonic wellbeing, they should consider how long the benefits may last, so they can target
751 their marketing accordingly. For example, a plan within one month following a holiday might
752 not be the best time point to follow up with ads to their recent customers because they are
753 still likely enjoying the hedonic wellbeing outcomes from their last trips. The ads should be
754 delivered at least two months after the trip because the effect of the most recent holiday on
755 hedonic wellbeing will have dissipated by that time. In addition, if the result of a service
756 evaluation is primarily that eudaimonic wellbeing can been enhanced, managers could adjust

their marketing strategies to place less emphasis on the pleasure, fun, and happiness associated with their tourism products. Rather, they should highlight the eudaimonic benefits such as personal growth, positive relations, knowledge, presence of meaning in life, and self-discovery. Such a strategy might attract potential tourists who want to derive more meaning from their tourism experiences.

6.3 Limitations and future research

Notwithstanding the aforementioned benefits, this study has limitations that can be considered as opportunities for future research. First, while this longitudinal study did reveal how tourism was significantly associated with eudaimonic wellbeing, the evidence does not permit the making of a solid conclusion that tourism *promotes* eudaimonic wellbeing. Thus, this study is limited in that the eudaimonic wellbeing was not observed before the holiday was initiated, so we cannot conclude that eudaimonic wellbeing was enhanced during the holiday, even though we have attested that it declined gradually and marginally following the holiday. To understand the whole life cycle of eudaimonic wellbeing and its association with tourism experiences, future studies should assess wellbeing before, during, and after a holiday, and when possible, over multiple time periods.

Second, this study, like previous studies, showed how wellbeing generally declines after a holiday. We still do not know why the decline takes place. Although there have been conjectures that the return to the challenges of daily life counteract any benefits derived from tourism, we need empirical evidence to confirm it. Future studies therefore should consider including aspects and events of people's daily lives that might inhibit or cancel any enhancements to their wellbeing arising from tourism. Doing so could help us better understand how to live a quality life that includes the benefits of tourism.

It is important to note that this longitudinal study did its data collection at the hostels to recruit as many committed participants as possible, which might produce a biased sample. As has turned out in this study, the majority of participants are older than 26, never married, receiving at least college education, traveling alone, and with an annual income under 130,000 RMB. These demographic characteristics could have well influenced the results.

Although they are an important segment of domestic travelers, they cannot represent the entirety of Chinese tourists. Hence, caution must be exercised before making any generalizations. In addition, prior research suggests that life events after a tour could influence the change in wellbeing. While this research has controlled for their potential influence, future studies are suggested to take more life events into consideration.

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