

**‘FLOW’, SIGHTSEEING, SATISFACTION AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT:
EXPLORING RELATIONSHIPS VIA POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY**

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ABSTRACT

This conceptual paper begins with a short description of positive psychology and its salient, ‘flow’ theory. It then briefly discusses previous research of ‘flow’. A lack of research of this optimal state in the tourism field and particularly in non-physical activity tourism settings is highlighted. In this context, three key topics are identified and discussed: the ‘flow’ state as a tool for understanding optimal sightseeing experiences; the ‘flow’ state as a mechanism for understanding on-site tourist satisfaction; and the ‘flow’ state as a function of tourists’ personal development. The paper concludes with a research agenda for tourism researchers interested in the ‘flow’ model.

Keywords: ‘flow’, sightseeing, satisfaction, development, positive, psychology.

INTRODUCTION

“...it is surprising that our industry has not stepped forward to support research that would upgrade vacations beyond their traditional break mould, to help establish the relationship between tourism and wellness” (Jafari, 2005; p.5).”

These words have been a stimulus for this paper on one of the theories from positive psychology and its relationship to tourism. While recent contributions in the wellness tourism field (Smith and Kelly, 2006; Lea, 2006; Weiermair and Steinhauser 2003; Mueller, 2001) seem to be in line with Jafari’s thinking, the wellness agenda does not appear complete without a strong psychological contribution.

Positive psychology is “an umbrella term for the study of positive emotions, positive character traits, and enabling institutions (Seligman, Steen, Park and Peterson, 2005, p.410).” The field has flourished in the last decade and particularly in the last five years (Seligman *et al* 2005). Its broad aims are to investigate what makes life worth living (Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). It has emerged from the ground-breaking works of Rogers, (1951), Maslow (1954, 1962), Erikson (1963, 1982), Deci and Ryan (1985), Ryff and Singer (1996) and other pioneering works dealing with positive aspects of human existence. However, explorations of positive psychology do not seem to be currently present in the tourism literature. Despite this absence, certain theories and models from this spectrum of psychology such as the ‘flow’ model have relevance to tourism (Ryan, 1995, 1997, Han, Um and Mills 2005).

The objective of this paper is to further explore the links between the ‘flow’ state and tourism, particularly in three non-physical activity tourism contexts. For the purposes of this paper, these contexts broadly refer to tourism settings which are non-sport and non-adventure related. As today’s world battles with tsunamis, terrorism and increasing rates of depression, crime and social disintegration (Huppert, Baylis and Keverne, 2004), an exploration of these links appears pertinent at this moment.

Relevant literature in relation to ‘flow’ is first analysed. This section is followed by a discussion of the links between the following three tourism topics and ‘flow’:

1. optimal sightseeing experiences;
2. on-site tourist satisfaction; and
3. tourists’ personal development.

The article concludes with a research agenda for further studies of 'flow' in tourism. A discussion of the 'flow' state and its presence in the relevant literature follows.

THE 'FLOW' STATE AND THE LITERATURE

An exploratory literature analysis suggests that the 'flow' state is a peak, hedonic - eudemonic state with several dimensions. Activities which lead to 'flow' appear to vary across cultures. However, it appears that the 'flow' state has not been sufficiently explored in tourism - not even in the Western cultural context.

Csikszentmihalyi (1990) asserts that the 'flow' state can be thought of as an optimal experience. The state therefore exemplifies moments when everything comes together for an individual (Jackson and Eklund, 2004). According to Csikszentmihalyi's (1975) initial study of a group of artists, this optimal experience is characterised by six key dimensions: merging of action and awareness; limitation of stimulus field and alteration of time; loss of self-consciousness; control of actions; clear goals and clear feedback; and autotelic nature. The 'control of actions' element is also known as the merging of skills and challenge dimension (Jackson and Eklund, 2004).

Waterman (1993) has reported that these dimensions form a powerful, cognitive – affective state which has both eudemonic and hedonic qualities. Waterman's research shows that moderate and comparable correlations exist between levels of eudemonia associated with activities and their associated levels of perceived skills and challenges. On the contrary, the alteration of time dimension is found to be more strongly associated with hedonism than with eudemonia.

There is evidence to suggest that this powerful experience is universal in the sense that the challenge/skill ratio in the activity seems to be a good indicator of peak subjective experiences across many cultures (Moneta, 2004). Yet there are cultural differences as to the activities under which 'flow' would more often occur and the East-West dichotomy would not necessarily capture these cultural differences (Moneta, 2004). Hence an ability to experience 'flow' in a tourist activity such as white-water rafting (Ryan, 1997) may be different between a group of Australian tourists and a group of American tourists.

Nevertheless, there is a general dearth of research of 'flow' in relation to tourism in any cultural context. The 'flow' state has traditionally been reported to occur in individuals involved in various sports (Jackson and Eklund, 2004; Jackson and Marsh, 1996; Jackson and Eklund, 2002) perhaps due to the challenge-skills dimension. It has also been noted to occur while reading (Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, 2000), during yoga (Phillips, 2005), while playing chess and during dancing (Jackson and Eklund, 2004) and in music, games and religious rituals and other creative activities (Csikszentmihalyi, 1999). More often, however, 'flow' occurs while working (Csikszentmihalyi and LeFevre, 1989).

Even though its links to tourism are scarce, a few previous works link the 'flow' state to various adventure tourism settings (Priest and Bunting, 1993; Ryan, 1997, Ryan, 1995). There are also works that link the concept to more passive tourism activities such as virtual tourism (Skadberg, Skadberg and Kimmel, 2005) or food experiences in tourism (Quan and Wang, 2004). In general, however, the relationships between the 'flow' state and non-physical activity tourism settings are minimal.

Perhaps for this reason, links between 'flow' and sightseeing have been barely explored (Han, Um and Mills, 2005). The work of Han, Um and Mills (2005), mentions 'flow' in the context of cultural heritage site experiences but does not go further than to acknowledge a possible relationship of such experiences to the concept. In a similar manner, Ryan (1995) barely touches on the link between sightseeing and 'flow' in his book on tourist satisfaction.

As a result of these apparent gaps, the 'flow' state is next discussed in the context of optimal sightseeing experiences.

Optimal Sightseeing Experiences and 'Flow'

It appears that the 'flow' state is related to optimal tourists' sightseeing experiences. This relationship is better understood by linking Beardsley's (1982) 'aesthetic experience' concept with the 'flow' state.

The 'aesthetic experience' is a peak visual experience characterised by the following key dimensions:

- object focus (the person willingly invests attention in a visual stimulus);
- felt freedom (the person feels a sense of harmony that pre-empts everyday concerns and is experienced as freedom);
- detached affect (the experience is not taken literally – for instance, in the case of art);
- active discovery (a cognitive involvement in the challenges presented by a stimulus and a feeling of excitement from that involvement); and
- wholeness (the person has a feeling of self-acceptance and self-expansion) (Csikszentmihalyi and Robinson, 1991).

Csikszentmihalyi and Robinson (1991) effectively draw connections between the 'flow' state and the 'aesthetic experience'. Hence they argue that:

- the 'flow' dimension of merging of action and awareness resembles Beardsley's (1982) object focus;
- the limitation of stimulus field from 'flow' is similar to felt freedom;
- the loss of self-consciousness is comparable to detached affect;
- the control of actions resembles active discovery; and
- the clear goals and unambiguous feedback dimension links with the concept of wholeness.

Therefore, under a basic assumption that optimal sightseeing experiences can be interpreted through the 'aesthetic experience' concept, there appears to be a strong relationship between 'flow' and optimal sightseeing experiences.

The above work on the 'aesthetic experience' focused on experiences at museums. However, links between the elements of the 'aesthetic experience' and thus the 'flow' state, to other optimal sightseeing contexts are axiomatic. Han, Um and Mills (2005) identify concepts such as immersion, selflessness, convergence, alteration of time, exploration and feelings of pleasure as pertinent to peak cultural heritage site experiences. Pearce (2005a) also links a dimension of the 'flow' state to on-site experiences through his discussion of skills. He observes that much of tourist behaviour is gaze related and then discusses the value of skills to this behaviour at sites. Pearce (2005a) indirectly links the 'flow' dimension of skills and challenges to on-site experiences and hence sightseeing. De Botton (2002) discusses a sublime reaction that tourists have when confronted with impressive mountains, ocean views, other remarkable landscapes as well as cultural heritage sites; and Harrison (2001) illustrates how the sensual, aesthetic perception of the tourist experience becomes extraordinary and special for many tourists.

These descriptions of sublime, special and extraordinary sightseeing experiences appear to resemble the elements of 'flow' and the 'aesthetic experience' and thus further support the link between 'flow' and optimal sightseeing experiences. In particular, the 'aesthetic experience's element of 'wholeness' and flow's 'clear goals and unambiguous feedback' dimension bear a resemblance to Han, Um and Mills' (2005) 'immersion' and 'convergence' or De Botton's (2002) 'sense of sublime'.

Hence, optimal sightseeing experiences may be better understood by exploring related concepts of 'flow' and the 'aesthetic experience' and linking those concepts to tourists' accounts of fulfilling sightseeing experiences. This approach may offer new insights into tourists' experiences at various cultural and natural sites, particularly their immediate conscious experiences. The immediate conscious experiences can be thought of as experiences of the present moment (James, 1890) or as the texture of what leisure participants do or feel during their participation (Borrie and Roggenbuck, 2001).

These experiences are next considered in terms of using the 'flow' state measures to interpret satisfaction at sites.

On-site Tourist Satisfaction and 'Flow'

As 'flow' is an intrinsically satisfying state (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975), the concept is relevant to tourist satisfaction (Ryan, 1995). Ryan acknowledges this link. However, the scope of his text does not explore methodology used to study 'flow' and its possible usefulness in measuring tourist satisfaction. This section is to discuss some common methods of measuring 'flow' and then link those methods to tourist satisfaction, particularly to on-site satisfaction measurement.

In social sciences, 'flow' has typically been measured through the Experience Sampling Method (ESM) (Csikszentmihalyi and Larson, 1987; Csikszentmihalyi and LeFevre, 1989), to some extent through self-initiated-tape-recording methods (Lee, Dattilo and Howard, 1994), through in-depth interviews (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975; Jackson, 1996), and ESM related measures of 'Flow' State Scale and Dispositional 'Flow' Scale (Jackson and Eklund, 2004).

The Experience Sampling Method is an attempt to provide a valid instrument to describe variations in self-reports of mental processes (Csikszentmihalyi and Larson, 1987). ESM usually "requires a signalling device (or beeper) that randomly indicates when subjects should complete a questionnaire (Stewart and Hull, 1996, p.12)." The questions are normally related to the respondent's momentary situation and psychological state. ESM has thus been used to study cognitive, emotional and conative dimensions of experience and, hence, the 'flow' state (Csikszentmihalyi and LeFevre, 1989).

A related *in situ* measure, the self-initiated-tape-recording method (SITRM), was used by Lee, Dattilo and Howard (1994) in leisure research. In this case, respondents were issued a tape-recorder and had to verbally respond to a set of questions immediately after or during a leisure activity (Stewart and Hull, 1996). Due to their emphasis on evaluating the experience *per se*, both methods might be useful in interpreting satisfaction derived from an immediate or an almost immediate conscious tourist experience. Hence, subjects may be asked to verbally comment on their thoughts and feelings while at a site (SITRM) or fill out a questionnaire regarding their perceptions of emotional states at certain time periods during their site experience (ESM).

However, despite their possible usefulness in measuring tourist satisfaction, the 'flow' state methods of ESM and SITRM are not without their limitations. Two notable limitations are: alteration of experience and lack of compliance with the self-administration (Stewart and Hull, 1996). Stewart and Hull suggest that "invasiveness to the on-site experience is higher with *in situ* compared to traditional methods (1996, p.15)" and thus more likely to alter experience. So, using a signalling device or a tape-recorder during a site visit may detract the tourist from his/her experience at the site. Similarly, in the case of ESM, a tourist may not respond to the questionnaire when signalled or may not answer each item on the questionnaire. In an ESM compliance study, Hormuth (1986) found that more than 95% of participants responded to signals. However, the percentage of participants doing so within 5 minutes was as low as 60% in one population and around 80% in another. This finding suggests some tourist groups may

not be willing to fill out a questionnaire when instructed, especially if they are experiencing 'flow' at the site.

More appropriate 'flow' methods for on-site satisfaction measurements may therefore be in-depth interviews (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975; Jackson, 1996), the 'Flow' State Scale (FSS) and Dispositional 'Flow' Scale (DFS) (Jackson and Eklund, 2002). The scales are based on the general ESM principle of measuring reactions to an experience or an activity. However, they have an advantage of being designed in a way that allows respondents to fill them out immediately after their experience as opposed to during the experience (Jackson and Eklund, 2004). Hence, no signalling device may be necessary and so the problem of alteration of experience may be minimised. Compliance may also be greater than with a traditional ESM approach. Tourists could be asked to fill out the scales in front of researchers following their site visit, possibly increasing the chances of participation. When combined with the in-depth interview method (Jackson, 1996), the scales may accordingly offer powerful measurements of 'flow' and therefore on-site satisfaction. A description of the interview method and the questionnaires follows.

The in-depth interview approach was employed in Csikszentmihalyi's (1975) original study of visual artists, as well as Csikszentmihalyi and Robinson's (1991) study of the 'aesthetic experience' at museums. Jackson (1996) further used this qualitative technique in her study of 'flow' in elite athletes in seven different sports. Even though Jackson used the technique in a sports setting, it appears that Jackson's interview structure for measuring 'flow' could be used by tourism researchers. Namely, the author (1996) suggests that, at the beginning of the interview, respondents should be asked to describe an experience which stands out as being better than average in the activity in which they normally participate. The interviewees should then be given three quotes to orient their attention to 'flow' (Fave and Massimini, 1988; Han, 1988). An example of one of these quotes is provided:

"My mind isn't wandering, I am not thinking of something else. I am totally involved in what I am doing. My body feels great. I don't seem to hear anything. The world seems to be cut off from me. I am less aware of myself and my problems (Jackson, 1996, p.78)."

Following the respondents' general descriptions of their 'flow' state, more specific questions about the dimensions of 'flow' can then be asked (Jackson, 1996). Afterwards, additional questions, which address some key on-site satisfaction themes (Pearce, 2005a), could be directed at tourists. Some of these themes are: mindfulness (Moscardo, 1999), gaze (Urry, 1990), authenticity (MacCannell, 1976) and psychological risk and stress (Ryan, 1995). A few of these concepts, such as gaze and mindfulness, appear to resemble cognitive dimensions of 'flow' so their inclusion in the in-depth interviews may be very worthwhile. Nevertheless, an exploration of possible relationships between these tourism concepts and 'flow' are beyond the scope of this paper.

Following the in-depth interviews, the tourists may be asked to complete FSS and DFS questionnaires. The scales are theoretically based in Csikszentmihalyi's (1990) nine dimensions of 'flow' as opposed to his earlier six key dimensions (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975). These new nine elements are: challenge-skill balance, action-awareness merging, clear goals, unambiguous feedback, concentration on task, sense of control, loss of self-consciousness, time transformation and autotelic experience. The FSS and DFS respectively assess 'flow' experiences within a particular event and the dispositional tendency to experience 'flow' in an activity (Jackson and Eklund, 2002). In FSS, each element of 'flow' consists of a subscale of the total inventory, and "is assessed by four items on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) (Jackson, Thomas, Marsh and Smethurst 2001, p.134)."

The DFS is a parallel version of FSS with items re-phrased to measure frequency of 'flow' while taking part in an activity. However, in DFS, the five-point Likert scale ranges from 1 (never) to 5 (always) (Jackson et al., 2001).

The scales have been validated and applied in sports, but according to Jackson and Eklund (2004) could be potentially adapted to non-physical activity settings. As the items are theoretically grounded in earlier works of 'flow' which were not sports related (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975, 1990) it is easy to conceive how the scales could be adapted to non-physical activity tourism contexts. Hence, it might be possible to adapt the scales to examinations of 'flow' at natural or cultural heritage sites.

Yet, the application of the 'flow' state measures to tourist satisfaction may not be limited to on-site experiences. Uriely and Belhassen's (2005) recent study of drug-related tourist experiences shows that those experiences are heterogeneous and typically involve pursuits of mere pleasure or a search for meaningful and profound experiences. Similarly, Ryan and Kinder (1996) note that both activities of tourism and soliciting the services of a prostitute involve satisfaction of needs of fantasy fulfilment and the search for something new. A natural link therefore emerges between 'flow' as an optimal experience and an instant 'high' received from drugs or a sexual orgasm. Hence, the 'flow' state measures may also be used to study satisfaction derived from some of these tourist activities.

Clearly, the usefulness of the 'flow' interviews, FSS and DFS may extend to various facets of tourist satisfaction. In some instances, however, it may be useful to combine the interviews and the questionnaires with on-site observation (Pearce, 2005b). This approach may involve observing tourists' posture, walking speed and measuring pause times at sites (Eibl-Eibesfeldt, 1989; Pearce, 2005b). The observational study could be used to support or contradict findings from the interviews and the surveys. Thus, if the scales and the interviews show that tourists experienced the 'flow' dimension of alteration of time at a site, observational measures of pause time and walking speed may be valuable to the findings.

In addition to the above psychological measures, 'flow' can be measured through analysing neural processes (Marr, 2006). 'Flow' is therefore said to reflect a reduction in brain metabolism, as represented by indices of cortical activity (Goleman, 1995). While existence of such methods is acknowledged, these neuropsychological measures may presently be too abstruse to tourism researchers with backgrounds in social sciences. Hence, an analysis of these methods in the context of tourist satisfaction at sites is not addressed here.

Before concluding this section, it may be useful to point out a major deficiency in current tourist satisfaction measures. Namely, there is a lack of affective measures of tourist satisfaction. Bigné, Andreu and Gnoth (2005) have recently noted that there is a scarcity of research on the emotional or affective element of tourist satisfaction, despite a recognised need for a cognitive-affective approach (Wirtz et al, 2000). Purely cognitive approaches to tourist satisfaction are noted as being inadequate due to the emotional elements of the tourist experience (Wirtz and Bateson, 1999; Liljander and Strandvik, 1997; Ryan, 1999; Barsky and Nash, 2002). It is hoped that recognition of this and other deficiencies may re-enforce the need for alternative measures of satisfaction, such as the cognitive-affective 'flow' state methods.

The discussion now turns to the links between 'flow' and tourists' personal development.

Personal Development and 'Flow'

Relationships between 'flow' and tourists' personal development are explored through an analysis of Csikszentmihalyi's (1990) concept of autotelic personality and a discussion of well-being concepts of hedonism and eudemonia. In line with the theme of this article, the concepts are mainly discussed from a psychological perspective, as opposed to a more philosophical standpoint (Angner, 2005).

The satisfaction section stressed that DFS measures individual differences in the propensity to experience 'flow'. The phrase *autotelic personality* "refers to this propensity to experience 'flow' (Jackson and Eklund, 2002, p. 135)." Factors such as a desire for challenge (Logan, 1988) and exceptional concentration skills (Csikszentmihalyi and Csikszentmihalyi, 1988) constitute parts of autotelic personality. However, "just what makes up the autotelic personality is somewhat of a mystery (Jackson and Eklund, 2002, p.135)." It is, however, known that autotelic persons are more psychologically capable of experiencing 'flow' regardless of the situation (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). As these people may be able to experience 'flow' on a regular basis, a constant accumulation of these peak experiences may lead to their personal development (Csikszentmihalyi, 1999, 1990; Moneta, 2004; Asakawa, 2004). Therefore, Adlai-Gail (1994) and Hektner (1996) suggest that autotelic persons, tend to experience "more positive states overall and feel that their lives are more purposeful and meaningful (Csikszentmihalyi, 1999, p.825)."

The links between autotelic personalities and personal development may also be explored in the context of certain tourist groups. Asakawa (2004) discovered that certain samples of university students have autotelic personalities. Additionally, Tkach and Lyubomirsky (2006) suggest that university students pursue happiness through mental control and goal pursuit as well as passive and active leisure. The concepts of mental control and goal pursuit somewhat resemble the autotelic personality elements of concentration and challenge (Logan, 1988; Csikszentmihalyi and Csikszentmihalyi, 1988).

Due to these links, university student travellers and other young tourists appear to be good candidates for explorations of the personal development theme through the concept of autotelic personality. There is strong evidence to suggest that personal growth and development occurs in many study-abroad university students (Coleman, 2006). However, some time ago Nash (1976) found that this personal growth is typically short-lived. He suggests that the personality changes derived from overseas study-abroad experiences do not persist after returning home.

So, the question of what kind of personal growth and well-being is being pursued and acquired while travelling remains. It is thus necessary to briefly explore two common conceptions of well-being related to 'flow': hedonism and eudemonia (Ryan and Deci, 2001; Waterman, 1993). Ryan and Deci (2001) stress that a hedonic approach defines well-being in terms of pleasure attainment and pain avoidance whereas the eudemonic approach tends to be more long-term; it centres on meaning and self-realization and broadly defines well-being in terms of the fully functioning person. In simple terms, affective aspect of well-being is more aligned with hedonism and cognitive aspect more closely matches eudemonia (Gilbert and Abdullah, 2004).

Hedonism, characterised through openness to pleasurable experiences, traces its roots to Aristippus of Cyrene who argued that pleasure is the *sole* good (Waterman, 1993). Perhaps, for this reason it is often rejected on moral grounds, as many studies have shown that pleasure seekers may end up in despair (Veenhoven, 2003). Yet, it has also been found that enjoyment improves capacity to cope with life problems (Iversen and Irwin, 1997) that pleasurable experiences reduce stress (Warburton, 1996) and that hedonism has a positive effect on physical health (Warburton and Sherwood, 1996). In this way, hedonism may contribute to subjective well-being. In the tourism field, hedonism can be linked to discussions of positive leisure

experiences (Argyle and Crossland, 1987; Hills and Argyle, 1998), pleasure related motivations (Crompton, 1979; Dann, 1977; Iso-Ahola, 1982; Pearce, 1988; Plog, 1991), and tourist satisfaction (for example, Ryan, 1995; Noe, 1999). Nonetheless, recent evidence suggests that certain groups of holidaymakers, namely young travellers, are not solely faithful to hedonism (Schott, 2004).

Therefore, a consideration of potentially more profound travel induced subjective well-being may be necessary. Aristotle regarded hedonism as a vulgar ideal, "...making humans slavish followers of desires (Ryan and Deci, 2001, p.145)." This view has later been adopted by various psychologists (e.g. Ryan and Deci, 2001) advocating a more thoughtful approach to well-being. Thus, the eudemonic approach to well-being has been mainly embraced through discussions of the concept of psychological well-being, which describes aspects of human actualization (Ryff and Singer, 2000; Ryff and Keyes, 1995; Diener, Sapyta and Suh, 1998) and through self-determination theory (Ryan and Deci, 2000).

In the tourism and travel psychology fields, eudemonia has been barely explored (Pearce 2005a; Brein, 2006). However, few studies or commentaries which have dealt with this issue (Brein, 2006; Gilbert and Abdullah, 2004), have suggested that there are strong relationships between travelling and achievement of higher order needs and peak experiences (Brein, 2006). There is also evidence that holidaytaking can increase life satisfaction and improve overall subjective well-being (Gilbert and Abdullah, 2004).

It has already been established that the 'flow' model is a synthesis of both hedonic and eudemonic approaches to subjective well-being (Waterman, 1993). Moneta (2004) further argues that the 'flow' theory is in line with the first approach as it has "a direct impact on subjective well-being by fostering the experience of happiness in the here and now (2004, p.116)." A logical way of interpreting this line is that 'flow' produces feelings of pleasure and joy during an immediate conscious experience. On the other hand, 'flow' is also consistent with the eudemonic perspective. It fosters "the motivation to face and master increasingly difficult tasks, thus promoting lifelong organismic growth (Moneta, 2004, p.116)." As 'flow', hedonism and eudemonia are all linked to tourism, 'flow' methods may be useful in better understanding travel induced well-being from both perspectives.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The relationships between the 'flow' state and the three non-physical activity tourism contexts have now been established. Clearly, the 'flow' model offers further insights into on-site experiences, tourist satisfaction and tourists' personal development. The exploration of these links has created a challenging, but important array of research opportunities for tourism scholars. Three notable opportunities have emerged:

- An opportunity to examine peak visual tourist experiences through the 'flow' concept;
- An opportunity to use the 'flow' state methods to measure tourist satisfaction at various sites and in different tourist activities; and
- An opportunity to investigate tourists' personal development and travel induced well-being through the 'flow' model. This may be done through reflective essays which could ask the tourists to describe meaningful and special experiences during their holiday, or through in-depth interviews (Jackson, 1996).

Additionally, tourism researchers may wish to further study 'flow' in youth travellers and older travellers, male and female travellers and in different cultural groups. Furthermore, potential relationships between 'flow' and other on-site experience concepts, such as mindfulness and gaze could be explored.

A fulfilment of this research agenda is important for more than the altruistic reason of investigating subjective well-being. Such an agenda may further theoretical developments in tourism. Potential discovery of new models of tourist behaviour through 'flow', or a refinement of the existing ones, would undoubtedly enrich the field which prides itself on multidisciplinary approaches to knowledge (Jafari, 2005). These potential discoveries may also reduce or eliminate criticisms that positive psychology is a study of the *bleeding obvious* (Matchett, 2005). Additionally, more theories of positive psychology could be explored and applied to tourism, for example, 'the broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions' (Fredrickson, 2001). Through these pursuits, this tourism research agenda may also create new lines of inquiry amongst positive psychology researchers. Jafari's call "...to upgrade vacations beyond their traditional break mould (2005, p.5)" may indeed be partially realized once tourism reflects on past achievements, deals with future challenges and embraces 'flow' and positive psychology.

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