

Residential tourism and eudaimonic well-being: A 'value-adding' analysis

Fei Hao*, Honggen Xiao

School of Hotel and Tourism Management, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, 17 Science Museum Road, Kowloon, Hong Kong

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore the linkage between residential tourism and eudaimonic well-being. A "value-adding" approach is applied to this analysis with an extended interpretation. Residential tourism involves a prolonged stay in a destination and thus can lead to fundamental changes in environment, lifestyle, social networks, and values. Residential tourist experience is found to have profound impacts on individuals' eudaimonic well-being in the eight aspects of autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, purpose in life, the extension of youth, positive relations with others, self-acceptance, and inner peace. This study advances Ryff's (1989) eudaimonic well-being model and contributes to tourism and mobility research. Implications for residential tourists and destination managers are also provided.

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Introduction

Well-being in or through tourism has recently been investigated from the perspective of positive psychology (Lee & Jeong, 2019). Well-being can involve evaluations of a broad range of human capabilities and experience. A commonly applied framework of well-being is to distinguish hedonic from eudaimonic well-being (Disabato et al., 2016). The distinction between these two perspectives is based on Aristotle's (384–332 BCE) notion of pleasure versus good life. Hedonic well-being indicates individualistic and emotional experiences of life (e.g., pleasure, joy, happiness, satisfaction), while eudaimonic well-being is a humanistic concept that emphasizes ego development. The Greek term eudaimonia, according to Aristippus (435–356 BCE), founder of the Cyrenaic School of Philosophy, encompasses all human virtue and the aim of striving to be the best within oneself (Dierendonck & Mohan, 2006; Disabato et al., 2016).

Aristotle referred to eudaimonic well-being as the pursuit of the "good life" (Smith & Diekmann, 2017, p.3) and its academic study and practical application have been extensive (Rahmani et al., 2018; Ryff & Singer, 2008). Ryff, Keyes, and Hughes (2003, p.277) defined eudaimonic well-being as the full development of the individual and the effective negotiation of the challenges confronted in life, such as discovering meaning and purpose, possessing a sense of mastery, and acting autonomously. The concept has been interpreted as being one's true self or a fully functioning person (Ryan & Deci, 2001), and as involving self-actualization (Maslow, 1968), maturity (Allport, 1961), life-span development (Erikson, 1959), meaningfulness and growth, cultivating virtue, the meaning-making of one's psychosocial life, and spirituality (Dierendonck & Mohan, 2006). Eudaimonic well-being has been

* Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: ffaye.hao@polyu.edu.hk, (F. Hao), honggen.xiao@polyu.edu.hk. (H. Xiao).

referred to as a “culturally-shaped script of redemption” in the form of “upward social mobility, liberation, recovery, atonement, or the full actualization of the inner self” (Bauer et al., 2008, p.81).

This study is based on the widely accepted psychological well-being model of eudaimonia proposed by Ryff (1989), who identified its six dimensions of self-acceptance, positive relations with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, and personal growth. Ryff and Singer (2008) further explained these dimensions, noting that self-acceptance refers to the endeavor of precisely understanding ourselves and our conduct, motivations, and feelings. Positive relations with others involve the ability to love, develop empathy, affection, and humanity, and identify closely with others and relate to them. Autonomy indicates characteristics such as self-determination, independence, and self-regulation. Environmental mastery suggests the capacity to select or create an environment that is suitable for mental well-being. Purpose in life refers to the inner journey of seeking meaning in one's life. Personal growth refers to optimal psychological functioning, which involves individuals developing their potential, thus growing and expanding as people (Ryff & Singer, 2008).

In this study we propose that recent advances in positive psychology, particularly those concerning eudaimonic well-being, may offer a new perspective for tourism studies. We examine the link between residential tourism and eudaimonic well-being. The “value-adding” analysis of data brings new meanings and interpretation, and is introduced to tourism studies for the first time. This research offers insights for mobility studies and positive psychology. From a managerial perspective, our study may inform the further development of residential tourism to promote tourists' well-being, and encourage destination managers to implement wellness projects.

Residential tourism

The phenomenon of international residential tourists first emerged as an elite offering in the south of France, and particularly in Nice, and spread to Greece and Portugal in the 1990s. The Maastricht Treaty (1992) and the Schengen Agreement provided institutional support for transnational residential tourism within the European Union. Countries such as Spain, Romania, and Morocco became popular destinations for west European residential tourists (O'Reilly, 2007b). Residential tourism has been further developed in the United States, Latin America, and Australia (Huete & Mantecón, 2012). Over the past two decades, residential tourism has grown rapidly, due to increasing interconnections among countries and regions, the unprecedented mobility of modern life, the advanced technology that contributes to time-space compression, the increase in portable pensions and expendable wealth, the social networks formed by accumulated social capital, and the improvement of mobility through transport, policies, and infrastructure.

The definition of residential tourism has evolved over the years. Rodriguez (2001) identified four characteristics of residential tourists: a specific group of people (e.g., older people); different patterns of mobile behavior; individual or economic motivations for tourists; and territorial effects. Rodriguez provided a brief socio-demographic description of residential tourists, but this does not constitute an adequate definition or identification of such a group. Studies of residential tourism predominately focus on retired or older second-home owners, but young individuals can equally experience residential tourism (McWatters, 2008a, p.5).

O'Reilly (2007b, p.3) was one of the first to define residential tourism, suggesting that it is an elite phenomenon in which tourism is constructed as a way of life and involves fluid and leisured lifestyles across different locations. This definition highlights the lifestyle-driven nature of this new form of mobility. McWatters (2008b, p.3) further defined the phenomenon as “the enduring practices and lifestyles which result from a channeled flow of consumption-led, permanent or semi-permanent migration to a particular destination”. This definition bridged the concepts of tourism and migration. From a broader perspective, residential tourism can “transcend and encompass the usual umbrella concepts: second-home ownership, retirement migration, seasonal migration, international counter urbanization or leisure migration” (Huete & Mantecón, 2012, p.161). These definitions all suggest that residential tourism is the *permanent* or *semi-permanent migration* to a destination to seek a better quality of life, and consists of various *inter-connected* and *heterogeneous* types of mobility located between the two poles of tourism and migration along a mobility spectrum.

Residential tourism has features that are distinct from short-term travel experiences. First, it is not aimed at escaping the obligations of daily life (Huete & Mantecón, 2012). Residential tourists may reshape their attitudes, patterns of behavior, self-identification, place identity, and belongingness during a prolonged stay (Mantecón & Huete, 2008, p.360). Second, residential tourism has a greater and more enduring ecological, economic, cultural, and social impact on the local community. Residential tourists often form communities in the destination but remain outside or above the local community (O'Reilly, 2007b, p.3), and although they may demonstrate strong loyalty toward the destination and make a financial contribution to local government, they can also have negative social, economic, and ecological effects on the destination (Mazón, 2006). Third, residential tourism often involves significant consumptive behavior, such as lodging purchasing and the development of infrastructure (O'Reilly (2007a). Fourth, residential tourism is closely connected to migration. It involves the desire, knowledge, and capacity to relocate to an unfamiliar social-cultural environment, and thus can often propel the tourists into permanent migration (McWatters, 2008b).

In addition, residential tourism has the potential to develop deeper eudaimonic meanings. Residential tourists are often motivated by the potential to improve their quality of life, or may seek a more relaxed or slower pace of life, which are beneficial to individual well-being (O'Reilly, 2007a, p.6). They may seek freedom and happiness in an alternative residence (Janoschka & Haas, 2013b) and hope to develop a more reflective attitude toward life and society (Haas et al., 2013). Escher and Petermann (2013) suggested that the main purpose of residential tourism is to attain improved self-actualization and self-portrayal, and to satisfy basic needs. Most studies of residential tourism mainly focus on Western countries and on retired or older second-home owners (Huete & Mantecón, 2012; Mazón, 2006; Perles-Ribes et al., 2016; Perles-Ribes et al., 2018; Volo & Giambalvo, 2008; Williams

et al., 2000; Williams & Hall, 2000). In addition, the link between residential tourism and eudaimonic well-being has not been fully explored in previous research.

Tourism and eudaimonic well-being

Although the economic contributions of tourism have been acknowledged, the trend in this research area has shifted toward its non-economic significance, by considering factors such as well-being, quality of life, and sustainability (Lengieza et al., 2019; Sirgy & Uysal, 2016; Smith & Diekmann, 2017). Tourism plays a vital role in improving quality of life and well-being (Rahmani et al., 2018), and contributes to improved self-actualization (Matteucci & Filep, 2017). Sirgy and Uysal (2016, p.485) have therefore suggested that eudaimonia should be considered in tourism research.

The links between tourist experiences and eudaimonia have been notable in the published literature (Table 1). Research has focused on wellness (Voigt et al., 2010), diaspora (Li & Chan, 2017), cultural (Matteucci & Filep, 2017), adventure (Knobloch et al., 2017), all-female (Laing & Frost, 2017), integrated resorts (Ahn et al., 2019) and tourism in general (Lee & Jeong, 2019; Lengieza et al., 2019; Rahmani et al., 2018; Vada et al., 2019). Nonetheless, no study has explored the eudaimonic experience in the context of residential tourism.

Both quantitative and qualitative methods have been used. Qualitative analyses are typically conducted through various forms of coding and thematizing. However, as Mykhalovskiy et al. (2018, p.614) noted, this approach is insufficient for comprehensively analyzing and interpreting qualitative data. Thus, a more conceptually adventurous and theory-informed qualitative exploration is required (Eakin & Gladstone, 2020, p.2).

Such studies are based on theories such as self-determination (Ahn et al., 2019; Li & Chan, 2017; Rahmani et al., 2018), happiness and well-being (Laing & Frost, 2017; Lee & Jeong, 2019; Vada et al., 2019), and leisure experience frameworks (Voigt et al., 2010). As Sirgy and Uysal (2016) noted, other psychological theories can also be applied to eudaimonic experiences in tourism, such as theories of positive emotions, human flourishing, meaning and purpose in life, need hierarchy, and eudaimonic identity.

Ryff's (1989) eudaimonic well-being model from positive psychology is another potentially useful theory for tourism research, under which current well-being research can be categorized as follows. *Self-acceptance* includes studies of fulfilment and identity-building (Voigt et al., 2010), acceptance of ancestry (Li & Chan, 2017), self-discovery (Knobloch et al., 2017), affiliation (Laing & Frost, 2017), and self-connectedness (Lee & Jeong, 2019). *Positive relations with others* includes discussions of relatedness and connectedness (Li & Chan, 2017), affection (Rahmani et al., 2018), belonging to a specific social world (Voigt et al., 2010), social relationships, and contributions to the well-being of others (Ahn et al., 2019). *Autonomy* encompasses the notion of the true self (Laing & Frost, 2017; Matteucci & Filep, 2017). *Environmental mastery* refers to having a degree of control over one's environment (Knobloch et al., 2017; Laing & Frost, 2017). *Purpose in life* includes studies of meaning in life (Ahn et al., 2019; Laing & Frost, 2017; Lee & Jeong, 2019; Lengieza et al., 2019; Li & Chan, 2017), goals (Rahmani et al., 2018), and the "good life" (Ahn et al., 2019). Finally, *personal growth* (Knobloch et al., 2017; Li & Chan, 2017) includes investigations into career development, knowledge, effort and perseverance, training and skills (Voigt et al., 2010), exploration (Li & Chan, 2017), self-realization, self-fulfilment, stress-related growth (Matteucci & Filep, 2017), competence (Ahn et al., 2019; Knobloch et al., 2017), enlightenment (Rahmani et al., 2018), reflection (Lengieza et al., 2019), new knowledge, meeting challenges, cultivating personal strengths (Vada et al.,

Table 1
A review of eudaimonic paradigms in tourism studies.

Study	Context	Theory	Method	Elements of eudaimonic experience
Voigt et al. (2010)	Wellness tourism	Stebbins's leisure experience framework	Content analysis	Belongingness to the special social world, career development, effort and perseverance, knowledge, training and skills, fulfilling and identity-building, and long-living, etc.
Li and Chan (2017)	Diaspora tourism	Self-determination theory	Qualitative content analysis	Personal growth, self/ancestry acceptance, interested in further exploration, feel related and connected, capability to return, and meaning in life.
Matteucci and Filep (2017)	Flamenco	Grounded theory	Grounded theory	Self-realization, self-fulfilment, true self, stress-related growth, etc.
Knobloch et al. (2017)	Adventure tourism	N/A	Thematic analysis	Competence, mastery, feeling alive, self-discovery, and personal growth, etc.
Laing and Frost (2017)	Women's travel narratives	Theories of well-being	Thematic analysis, hermeneutic interpretation	Detachment-recovery, autonomy, mastery, meaning, and affiliation
Rahmani et al. (2018)	Tourism in general	Self-determination theory	Text mining, structural equation modelling	Power, respect, physical well-being, enlightenment, transaction, goals, virtue and vice, rectitude words, affection
Lengieza et al. (2019)	Tourism in general	N/A	Churchill approach scale development	Meaning, reflection
Vada et al. (2019)	Tourism in general	Theories of well-being	Structural equation modelling	Learning something new, cultivating personal strengths, meeting challenges, etc
Lee and Jeong (2019)	Tourism in general	Theories of happiness	Necessary condition analysis	Meaning, self-connectedness, accomplishment, and personal expressiveness
Ahn et al. (2019)	Integrated resorts	Self-determination theory	Partial least squares path modelling	A meaningful life, social relationships, engaged in daily activities, contribute to the well-being of others, competence, good life, others' respect

2019), accomplishment, personal expressiveness (Lee & Jeong, 2019), virtue and vice (Rahmani et al., 2018), ability to return to a location (Li & Chan, 2017), and engagement in activities (Ahn et al., 2019). Other research not fitting into Ryff's (1989) framework includes extending life (Voigt et al., 2010), which relates to physical rather than psychological well-being, and respect from others (Ahn et al., 2019), which is more focused on causes than on consequences. However, Ryff's (1989) framework enables us to combine the study of residential tourism with positive psychology, and represents an established positive psychological model.

The “value-adding” method

Developed by Eakin and Gladstone (2020), the “value-adding” method is an analytic interpretive practice that expands the reach and depth of researchers' insights, thus increasing the value of the knowledge produced. It has various advantages over other qualitative methods. First, a wider range of sources can be used to capture both data and non-data (the informal and subtle social and physical facts, circumstances, and meanings of a phenomenon). Second, data can be flexibly interpreted and the unique nature, logic, spatiality, and temporality of a phenomenon can be identified. Third, new knowledge can be produced either by exploring what is previously unknown or by re-conceptualizing and reconstructing already established knowledge (Eakin & Gladstone, 2020). Fourth, specific analytic devices can help broaden the analysis and its interpretations. Thus, by using the value-adding method we aim to obtain a deeper understanding of the complex relationships between residential tourism and eudaimonic well-being (Fig. 1).

Research contextualization

Contextualizing the research is essential in the value-adding method, as this enables researchers to make sense of the perceptions of a specific phenomenon in a specific socio-cultural framework, i.e., to establish “what it is like to be experiencing this, for this particular person, in this context” (Larkin et al., 2011, p.330). The meaning of data is embedded in both physical and psycho-social realms. To fully understand and interpret data, researchers must back up their interpretation by “grounding them in the material from which they are constructed” (Chadwick et al., 2005, p.531).

We contextualize our research in Dali, an economically underdeveloped town located in Dali Bai Autonomous Prefecture, Yunnan Province, China (Fig. 2). Dali was previously known as Jumie, capital of the Bai Kingdom Nanzhao (8th and 9th centuries) and the Kingdom of Dali (937–1253 CE). It was once the political, economic, and cultural center of the Yunnan area and was a prosperous traffic hub for the Southern Silk Road and the Ancient Tea Horse Road. The mild weather and beautiful landscape make Dali a pleasant place for residents and tourists. Since 1990s, Dali has become a popular destination for domestic and international tourists. Its attractions include Dali Ancient Town, Cangshan Mountain, Erhai Lake, Xizhou Town, and Shuanglang Town. Dali Prefecture received 38.59 million tourists in 2016, with a total tourism revenue of around USD 7.96 billion.

Dali is also one of the largest and growing residential tourist locations in China. Zhou (2013) noted that by 2010 approximately 12,400 non-local residents had obtained *Hukou* (an official document certifying legal residency in a specific area in the Chinese mainland) in West Town and Ancient Dali Town. However, most residential tourists in Dali have not applied for *Hukou*, and thus the actual number could be larger than the registered number.

Value-adding data collection

Two value-adding devices (considering reflexivity and treating everything as data) are applied when collecting data through ethnographic observations, in-depth interviews, and direct experience of the researchers.

Considering reflexivity in the research

This refers to the bearings a researcher's background, perceptions, and interests could have on a qualitative investigation (Krefting, 1991, p.218). Conventionally regarded as a potential bias or even as research noise, reflexivity in value-adding terms can be a source of creative insight. Thus, experience, knowledge, understanding, and imagination of the researcher can be a valuable (re-)source for a project. Notably, the first author lived in Dali as a residential tourist for seven months from December 2017 to June 2018. The author rented a room in a “home inn” together with six other residential tourists. The author visited street stalls, restaurants, coffee shops, other home inns, farms, and schools run by residential tourists and attended their artistic performances, community activities, and house parties. The residential tourist experience was thus captured heuristically through lived relationality, corporeality, spatiality, temporality, and materiality (Van Manen, 2016). The author thus engaged directly with residential tourists' experience through developing close bonds with them and obtaining details of their lives. The author's reflexive research diary then provided detailed and rich data that could be situated, described, and interpreted (Larkin et al., 2011, p.330).

Treating everything as data

In qualitative inquiries, researchers distinguish data (e.g., interviews) from non-data (e.g., contextual information) within their research context based on pre-defined criteria and traditional consensus. A clean-up procedure is typically conducted to eliminate or standardize the non-data and only the relevant data are analyzed. However, Eakin and Gladstone (2020) suggested that treating everything as data can represent a liberating and invigorating approach, as informal and subtle social and physical information, circumstances, and meanings of the research context can be extracted, and the “non-data” can complement the interpretation of formally structured data.

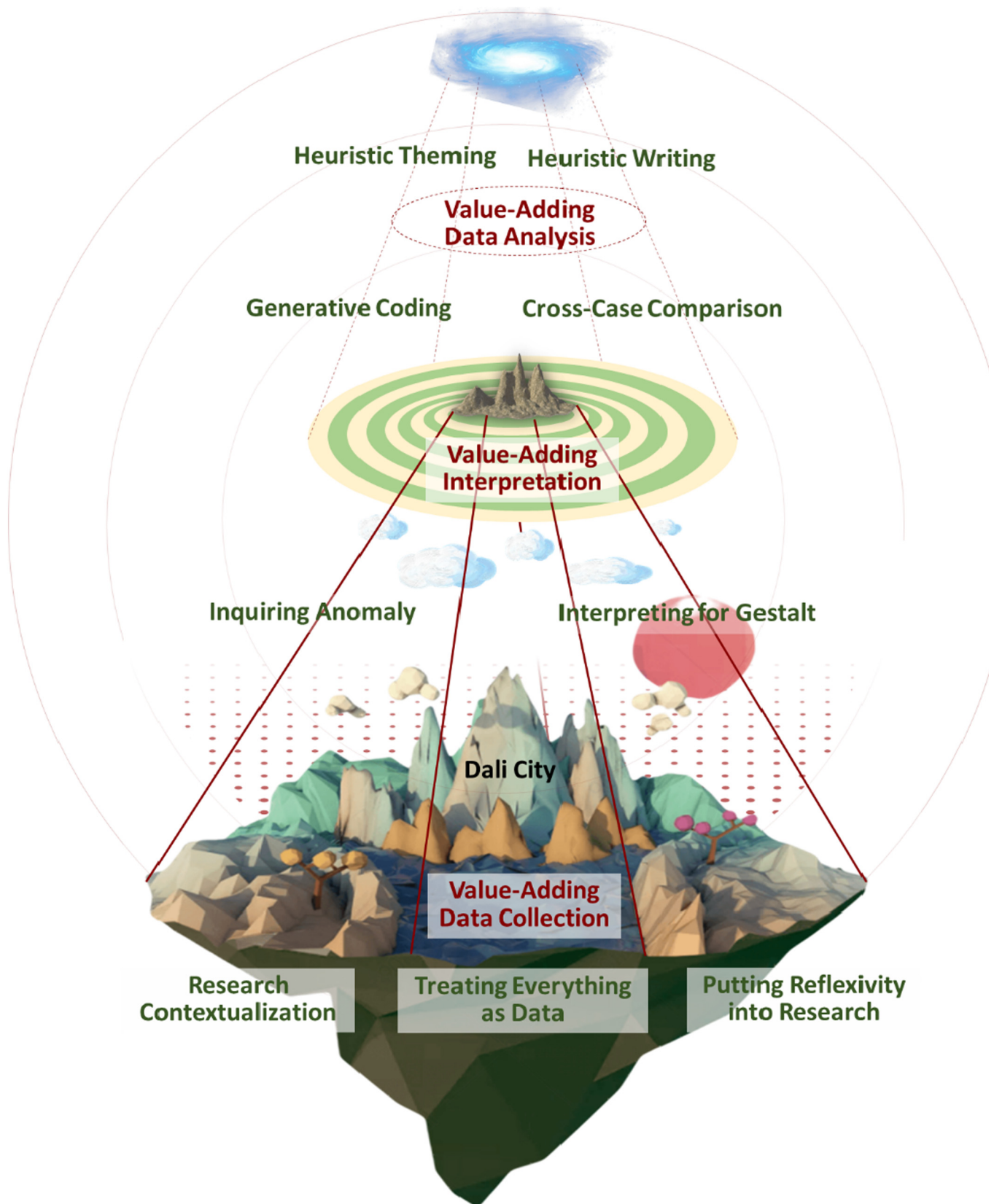


Fig. 1. "Value-adding" analysis

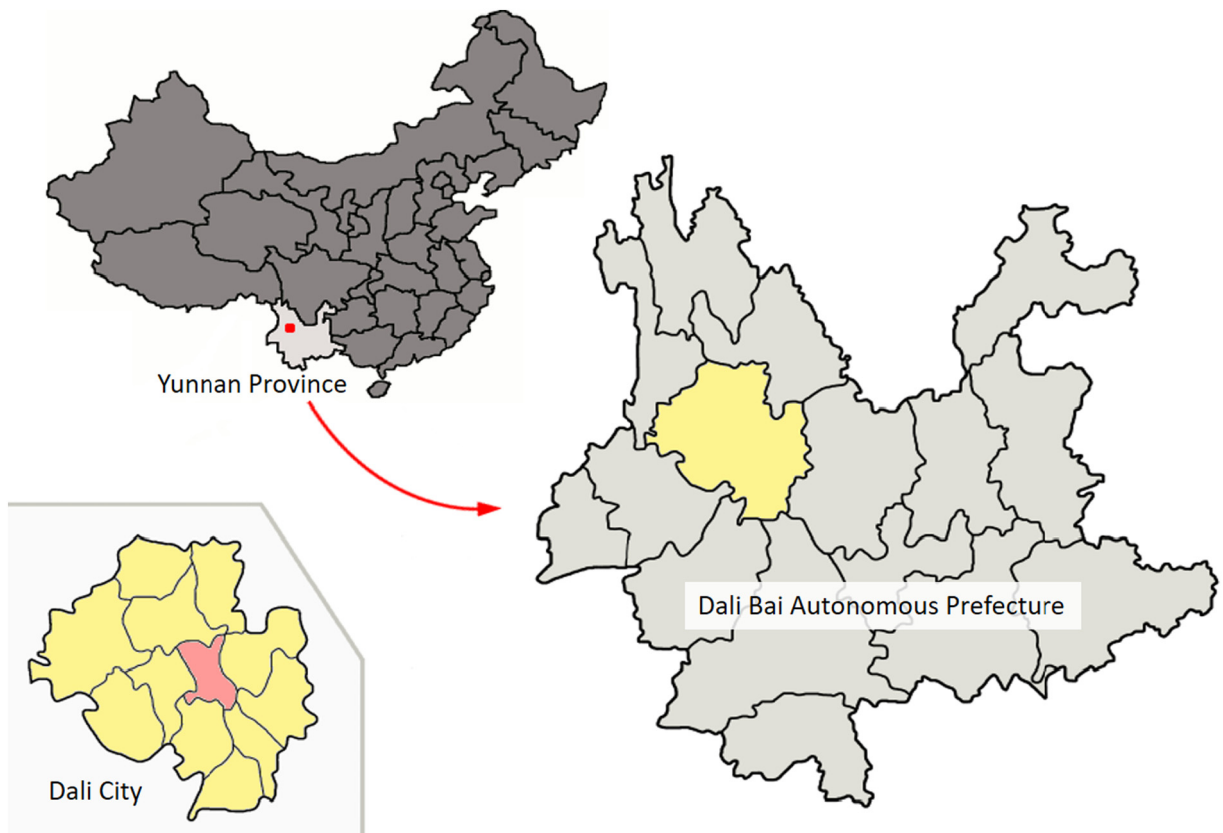


Fig. 2. Location of Dali City.

Data in this study consist of descriptions of the first author's residential tourist experience, observations of other residential tourists' experiences, social encounters and circumstances, and narratives provided by 40 residential tourists.

The study's participants were selected based on three criteria. First, for consistency of data collection, analysis and interpretation, they were Chinese from out of Dali. Second, they have stayed in Dali continuously for at least six months. This follows [Mantecón and Huete \(2008\)](#), who regarded both seasonal/recurring visitors with private accommodations and those who live permanently in a destination as residential tourists, and [Williams et al. \(2000, p.30\)](#) who defined residents as those who live in a location for at least four months. Third, the main purpose for their residential stay was in pursuit of quality of life rather than seeking business opportunities. This is consistent with [Huete and Mantecón \(2012\)](#), who considered residential tourists to be motivated by reasons more related to their search for a place where they can enjoy their leisure than a place to carry out an economic activity. [Janoschka and Haas \(2013a, p.1\)](#) also noted that residential tourism "does not occur primarily for economic reasons." Although most participants required funds to sustain their residential tourism experience, they perceived their economic activities as means rather than ends.

The sample (Appendix 1) comprised 21 male and 19 female participants aged between 24 and 46, with an average age of 31 (at the time of interview). The average duration of residential tourism was four years, ranging from six months to 11 years. All of the participants lived in first-tier (35) or second-tier (5) cities and were from various social strata before they moved to Dali. However, when residing in Dali, they were a highly homogeneous group, as most of them were (self-) employed in tourism- or art-related businesses. Interviews (or informal conversations) were conducted and recorded at their residences with their permission. The participants were encouraged to talk about their lives and residential tourism experiences freely, without any fixed structure or predefined questions, to encourage the natural flow of speech ([Knobloch et al., 2017](#)). Interviews were conducted in Chinese, tape-recorded, transcribed verbatim by the first author in Chinese, and later translated into English for reporting.

Value-adding interpretation

Inquiring about an anomaly

This indicates a heuristic-interpretive process in which the extraordinary is distinguished from the ordinary ([Giorgi & Giorgi, 2008](#)). Rather than becoming immersed in an environment and taking things for granted ([Finlay, 2009](#)), the first epistemological touchstone of heuristic interpretation is to get rid of the attitude of taken-for-grantedness ([Finlay, 2008](#)). [Heidegger \(1994\)](#)

described this process as “the beginning of genuine thinking” (p.143). Authors of this study developed an insider-outsider perspective to ensure nothing was taken for granted and to identify anomalies in their everyday lives (Finlay, 2008). The first author (the insider) had direct experience as a residential tourist in Dali; the second author (the outsider) had short visits to Dali and raised questions while reading through the interview transcripts and field research diaries; both authors interacted via emails, social media chats and formal meetings about researching residential tourists in the field. This inquiring process enabled the first author to identify the extraordinary in what was accepted as the ordinary, and thus helped generate critical interactions with the data and led to a more comprehensive underlying interpretation.

Interpreting for gestalt

Gestalt is a psychological term meaning that “the whole is greater than the sum of its parts” (Stott & Drury, 2004, p.11). Various data sources were combined and holistically interpreted by the authors. For example, to understand participant A's eudaimonic experience in Dali, the authors needed to consider A's lifestyle and psychological state prior to living in Dali; the reason for and consequences of A's changes of lifestyle and psychological state in Dali, and the underlying process; A's meaning-making of these changes; and other residential tourists' perceptions of the changes affecting A.

Value-adding data analysis

Generative coding

In a value-adding analysis, generative coding represents a creative analytic practice for engendering new concepts, which goes beyond solely cataloguing already known entities. In addition to consolidating, deducting, and simplifying, such coding expands, compounds, and enriches data (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). Generative coding is a deliberate and thoughtful procedure of generating concepts and linking them. In this study, the authors preliminarily coded the interpreted data based on Ryff's (1989) eudaimonia model, followed by the iterative and time-consuming procedure of re-conceptualization, aimed at developing new concepts beyond the model and combining them into a theoretically coherent whole. By continuously re-considering and re-conceptualizing the code-in-progress and its association to other codes, “continuous dialogue with empirical data” was achieved (Becker, 2008, p.109). Throughout the coding process, the codes were shaped and reshaped, merged, or discarded, and we therefore kept a dynamic list that recorded the evolution of the codes.

Heuristic theorizing

Hermeneutic thematic analysis was conducted to identify and report essential meaning and patterned responses within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This can help identify various dimensions of human experience, and any themes should be generalizable (Ayres et al., 2003, p.872). Thus, we attempted to identify the dimensions of eudaimonic experience that are common to all residential tourists beyond the sample. The first author initially conducted the generative coding and heuristic analysis, and then the second author checked the validity of the outcomes by examining the research diary. Themes represent the patterned meanings found in the data set, which reflect the residential tourism experience in Dali and capture the essential elements of eudaimonic well-being (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Elements of eudaimonic experience

The level of knowledge of the socio-cultural framework of Dali and China determines the extent to which the phenomenon can be understood. China has experienced profound and comprehensive social and economic transformation, with megacities like Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, and Shenzhen attracting huge numbers of white-collar migrants to work in technology, management, and commercial services. Most of the interviewed residential tourists noted that they had experienced a similar life trajectory: migrating from tier-three or lower cities or villages to megacities in their early twenties in pursuit of better education or housing. However, in the metropolis they undervalued their own status and suffered from “status panic.” As Song (2016, p.126) described, “Such migrants are typically young and skilled, or highly educated college graduates, searching for employment in cities, but have yet to secure their desired jobs or income levels. Migrants are referred to as a ‘marginal middle-class’”. The feeling of “living at the bottom” was common among the residential tourists, which echoes the observation of Chen & Williams (2018) that the Chinese middle-class often experienced a downwardly socio-psychological force. Hsiao noted that “Without doubt, the marginal middle-class has experienced the greatest degree of suffering and feelings of deprivation” (Hsiao, 2013, p.12). Consequently, the phenomenon of fleeing megacities such as Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou by the “marginal middle-class”, who leave for less developed regions in pursuit of a better quality of life, has become a trend in China since 2010.

Thus, many residential tourists have escaped Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou to relocate themselves in Dali. Their demographic features can be used to categorize their influx into four waves. The first wave started in the 1990s, and mainly consisted of artists. This laid the cultural foundation for the residential tourist communities. The second wave began in the early 2000s. Young backpackers brought hippie culture to Dali and it became something of an international youth culture laboratory [飞1] [飞1] Change into “international youth culture laboratory”. The third wave began in the early 2010s. Tourists from the Chinese Metropolises turned Dali into a middle-class residential location. The fourth wave began in 2015, and an increasing number of residential tourists with strong economic capital have since gravitated toward Dali. The rate of its commercialization has also accelerated.

As residential tourism has increased, the tourists have experienced changes in their environment, lifestyles, social networks, and in value. Dali's pleasant natural and social environment is its main attraction, and it is a scarcely populated rural area featuring magnificent scenery, pleasant weather, diverse culture, an inclusive social atmosphere, and a low cost of living. Most residential tourists left their previous jobs and transferred from an efficiency driven and high-energy lifestyle to one that is autonomic, flexible, and slower-paced. They had gradually come to feel more comfortable with the informal and simple social network of Dali. The diverse population, high mobility rate, anonymous social environment, and low interest exchange constitute the inclusive and tolerant society created in Dali by residential tourists. Their previous rigidity, social attribute orientation, and materialistic values change to heterogeneity, personal attribute orientation, and humanistic values.

The residential tourist experience thus contributes to eudaimonic well-being in terms of the eight aforementioned aspects of autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, purpose in life, extension of youth, positive relations with others, self-acceptance, and inner peace. It was found that those with improved eudaimonic well-being would then justify and reinforce any changes in the environment, lifestyle, social networks, and value for other subsequent residential tourists. Thus, a reciprocal and sustainable relationship between residential tourist experience and eudaimonic well-being has formed and developed (Fig. 3).

Autonomy

As a Confucian-based culture (Chon & Hao, 2020), Chinese mainstream society promotes unified values and standards of behavior, which are the criteria used to assess an individual's value and success. Family and clan are paramount, as is the concern over "Mianzi" (face) (Lin, 2013), and thus in China "self-driven identity is an exotic, alluring aspiration, but it is also dangerous" (Doctoroff, 2013, p.17). Unlike Chinese mainstream society, which is based on the "extrusion of alterity, to bask in the warm glow of self-confirming homogeneity", Dali is a "community-in-difference" (Morley, 2001, p.441), and embraces enduring differences and more open and porous forms of "publicness" as the foundation for a heterogeneous society. Thus, residential tourists enjoy the autonomy and strength to resist the social pressure to think and behave in a certain manner. As participant A2 explained, "in mainstream society, people strive to move from different starting points to reach the same destination. However, in Dali, people start from the same starting point but head to different destinations" (A2, male, 24, homestay manager).

Residential tourists are exposed to various alternative lifestyles and philosophies in Dali, and this experience gives them the strength and confidence to assess their own individuality and independently choose their own life paths. Participant A8 argued, "in the city, people feel safe if they live the same way as others, but in Dali, people are excited to try a different way of life and live up to their true selves" (A8, male, 30, homestay owner). The residential tourists often depicted themselves as a group of independent people with strong personalities and high levels of self-consciousness. Participant A21 had been referred to as a "leftover woman" (a derogatory term for women who remain unmarried in their late twenties and beyond), and came to Dali to escape the control of her family.

Our parents' generation constantly compare us with other kids throughout our life. They want us to go to the best university, get the highest score, find the most privileged job, live in the biggest city, however, regarding marriage, they think 'not too bad' is enough. I have many 'leftover' friends who live happily in Dali. Their stories encourage me not to be ashamed of my status and not to compromise our own standard (A21, female, 32, media editor).

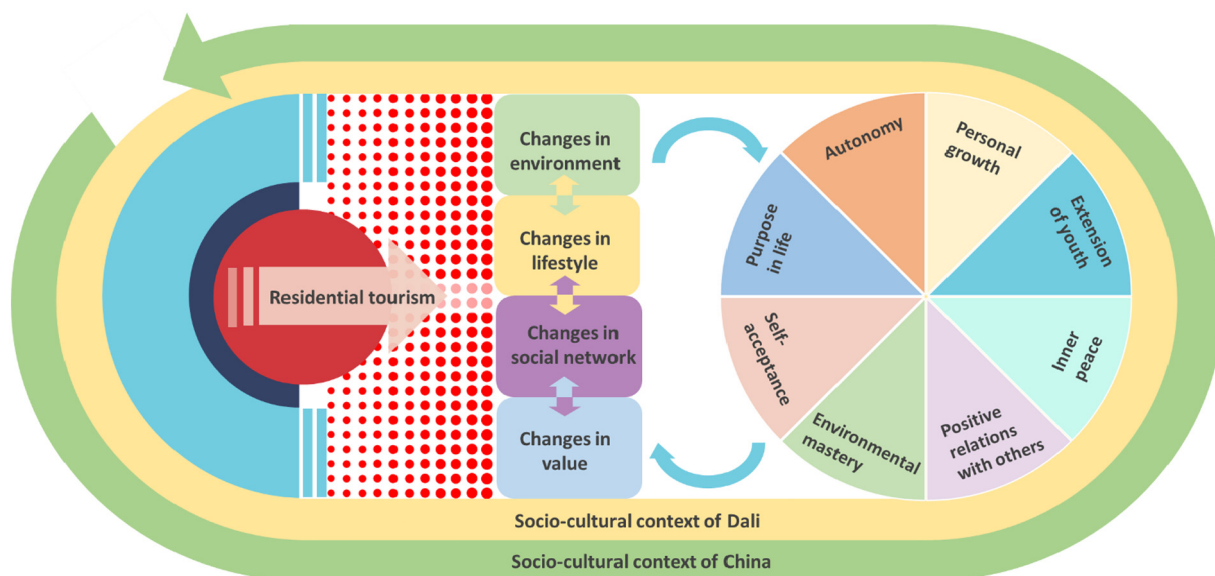


Fig. 3. Residential tourism and the eudaimonic well-being model.

Most residential tourists in Dali set up their own businesses to support themselves, thus attaining more autonomy through increased flexibility and control over their lives and career development. Participant A16 and her husband both quit their privileged jobs in Beijing and sold their condo to invest in a café in Dali.

The first step to creating a happy life is to get rid of things that made us unhappy. Our previous job 'in the system' was against human nature. There was no flexibility and autonomy. In Dali, we can decide our future and accomplish everything we want in our lives (A16, female, 35, café owner).

Environmental mastery

The residential tourists interviewed had not only gained more autonomy, but also developed control over the environment through various activities.

My present lifestyle is poetic and idealistic. In Dali, no one arranges life for me, and only I can arrange it myself. I will never go back to the city. I can't bear to live according to other people's will, and I can't tolerate others constantly watching me, commanding me, evaluating me, and blaming me (A6, female, 27, homestay owner).

Tourism is a central industry in Dali city and it is primarily viewed as an artistic destination. Many residential tourists have managed to effectively seize opportunities to develop tourism- or art-related careers. As A11 noted:

For most mass tourists, their real lives are boring and stressful, and their withered souls are as dry as the desert. Therefore, they long for 'poetry and faraway', adventure, madness, exotic romance, and even avalanches and mudslides. They would rather believe in absurdities that can never happen in their boring life. So, they want to buy stories from backpackers and support them to travel and experience (A11, male, 33, restaurant owner).

Residential tourists have developed the capabilities to select or construct contexts according to their values, and thus enjoy fame and fortune in Dali.

In the past, only writers could publish books and only musicians could issue albums. However, nowadays common people can also engage in art. Art is abstract and hard to evaluate, but Dali provides a platform for mediocre artists to perform to mediocre audiences. Dali gives residential tourists a chance to start their artist career and improve their skills through daily practice. Some singers who performed on Renmin Road have their bars now. (A17, male, 34, homestay owner).

Personal growth

Most of the residential tourists noted aspects of personal growth, such as enriched experiences, abilities, and skills, enhanced spirituality, aesthetic and emotional balance, and hobbies. Street stalls on Renmin Road (in ancient Dali Town) are commonly set up by newly arrived residential tourists to earn money. Craftspeople and backpackers from all over the world set up humble street stalls to sell handmade crafts, clothing, postcards, and paintings, and performed music, acrobatics, improvisational poetry. They also provide services such as braid weaving, tattooing, and even fortune-telling. Thus, the residential tourists display art in a living form and develop their hobbies into careers. The street stall also provides an opportunity for residential tourists to socialize with peers, learn from each other, and develop further. As participant A15 recalled, "Friends of all ages get together every day to share workmanship skills and help each other. The atmosphere is very passionate and pure. The street stall is not about money-making, it is about the joy of self-improvement" (A15, female, 25, Tie-dye craftsman).

Some of the residential tourists had to overcome difficulties and inner struggles in accepting their new lifestyles and experiences, but they also witnessed self-improvement over time. Participant A37 worked in a hostel that supported young musicians. The semi-charity nature of this business came with financial difficulties and frustrations. She perceived the experience as a way of fighting against human weakness for the greater good.

The job was a spiritual practice to me. I had to acknowledge and fight against my cowardice, greed, madness, and prejudice. It is like continuous heart surgery. But I became better and stronger, I knew it was the way to achieve great wisdom and great courage (A37, female, 36, single mother).

Purpose in life

The low cost of living, slow pace of life, artistic atmosphere, and prevailing non-materialistic ideology in Dali allow residential tourists to reflect upon the true purpose of life. Many of the residential tourists believed that they had obtained life goals and a sense of direction.

People are confused. They thought they possessed a lot of things, but it was the things that possessed their lives. If life does have a purpose, then the purpose should be experiencing, to experience love, happiness, madness, and pain. Experience is the only thing that cannot be taken away (A10, male, 39, musician).

Through continuous self-exploration and the exchange of ideas with peers, the residential tourists obtained a better understanding of the meaning of their current and past lives.

In the past two decades, my parents' dreams have been my only driving force. I was the puppet of their unfulfilled desires. Now I have woken up from a nightmare. I can't let others dominate my life anymore. I should pursue something really meaningful for myself (A2, male, 24, homestay manager).

The residential tourist community is mobile and anonymous in nature, and thus the social bonds between people are relaxed. Despite residential tourists living in the same place and having close daily interactions, they have little knowledge of each other's past lives, and no concerns about their future. Consequently, they care more about their personal rather than social attributes.

The longer I stay in Dali, the more I feel that money, fame, and status are meaningless. We encourage each other to think about more meaningful things. Everyone is naked without the disguise of masks or social labels. We don't care about whether someone is successful; we care more about their nature as a person (A1, female, 35, horse riding tour organizer).

Extension of youth

The "extension of youth" refers to a psychological state that comprises two aspects: a worry-free and burden-free joyful state of mind, and the openness to embrace new possibilities and uncertainties in life. The extension of youth has been considered important in increasing individuals' subjective well-being (Diener et al., 2010). Although the extension of youth (particularly the former aspect) appears to reflect hedonic well-being, we argue that this state of mind does not come naturally, but is a result of an altered life philosophy and value system. This process is endowed with eudaimonic meaning, in terms of the full development of the individual and the effective negotiation of the life challenges confronted (Ryff et al. (2003, p.277), and suggests a good life (Smith & Diekmann, 2017, p.3), being true to one's self (Ryan & Deci, 2001), and personal development (Erikson, 1959).

The low cost of living and relaxed atmosphere in Dali allow residential tourists to escape from urban pressure and others' expectations to be "mature adults". They are thus rejuvenated by the worry- and burden-free, youth-like experience of Dali.

When I was in the city, all I thought about was making money, getting married, raising children, and providing for older people. Life in Dali has kept me away from those pressures. One day when I walked my dog back, a guest from our hostel asked me, why am I so happy every day? How much money have I gotten? What is my five-year plan? I searched my pockets, found two dollars. Nevertheless, I asked him why should I be unhappy? I am grateful that I have many friends, a humble job, food to eat, and a place to live. There is nothing to worry about. We need to appreciate our life. As long as I'm alive, I am happy (A30, male, 31, homestay manager).

Youth represents a vigorous spirit, and a state in which everything is possible. In Dali, residential tourists can embrace new possibilities and prolong periods of uncertainty.

If you want to understand Dali, you must recall your early twenties. We were all passionate, rebellious, and unrealistic. We wanted to be young forever, but the burdens of life forced us to grow up. Dali is different. It is crazy, indulgent, absurd, and romantic. Nobody stops you from trying unrealistic things or asks you to calculate the return on investment for everything. Dali has everything that young people dream of. It is not the fantasy of Dali, but the fantasy of youth (A8, male, 30, homestay owner).

Positive relations with others

The residential tourist community in Dali is characterized by a high level of mobility, an anonymous social atmosphere, a diverse cultural composition, fragmented cultural power, and limited interest exchange. The countless small social circles fragment the residential tourist society and thus contribute to the non-hierarchical social structure and to social equity.

In Dali, everyone is de-identified and integrated. A person's identity is revealed through what he eats, wears, uses, and where he consumes. But there are no high-end French restaurants and wines in Dali. Everyone drinks *Fenghua Xueyue* (a cheap local

beer, whose name is literally translated as wind, flower, snow, and moon) and wears linen clothes. Everyone is the same (A25, male, 27, homestay owner).

Residential tourists can establish friendships based on authenticity once the interference of social factors is eliminated. “Interestingly, my criteria for choosing friends in Dali went back to my childhood – to find someone I am comfortable with” (A14, female, 33, cloth store owner). In their social framework, genuine and straightforward communication is preferred over hypocritical courtesy and manners.

People don't need to wear masks in Dali. I appreciate this way of communication. It is an expression based on truth. I don't need to dig out the real intention underlying the words. It makes communication more effective and brings people closer (A16, female, 35, café owner).

Residential tourists uphold sincere, satisfying, and trusting relationships and engender strong empathy, affection, and intimacy. They experience the long-lost childhood feeling of living in a community. Single mother A37 had to take her daughter to the street stall where she makes her living. Many residential tourists sympathized with her experience and offered to help.

They take turns to take care of my daughter. She grew up eating *Baijiafan* (meals from 100 families) on Renmin Road. I often tell her, never forget Renmin Road. Renmin Road is inclusive and full of love (A37, female, 36, single mother).

Self-acceptance

Most of the residential tourists had come to Dali because they were not happy with urban life. The charm of Dali is its inclusivity, and everyone is offered shelter.

No matter whether you are rich or poor, it embraces you, with Cangshan Mountains and Erhai Lake, with blue sky and fresh air. Although Dali is not an enclave that offers absolute fairness, it is like a big laboratory to break the existing structure and to offer new possibilities (A34, female, 29, craftswoman).

Residential tourists practice self-reflection as a therapeutic process to understand themselves, and thereby acknowledge and accept different traits in themselves, good or bad. “In Dali, you have a lot of time to understand yourself and communicate with yourself. When you are away from the crowd, you are closer to your heart” (A22, male, 31, homestay owner). Many young residential tourists are free of the feeling of “living at the bottom” and realize their value and potential.

Many of us young residential tourists felt we were useless in the big cities. I had a strong sense of inferiority my whole life. I always made others disappointed and I hated myself. In Dali, friends understand and encourage each other. Nobody cares that I'm from a small city and don't have connections. People appreciate my work and respect me. I also start to appreciate myself (A15, female, 25, Tie-dye craftsman).

Inner peace

Inner peace refers to a deliberate state of psychological or spiritual calm despite the potential presence of stressors. Dali provides residential tourists with an organic living environment that satisfies basic human needs. The extensive living and outdoor activity spaces, the comfortable climate, and the slow pace of life also increase the happiness felt by residential tourists.

“Many residential tourists came to Dali with emotional or health issues. We were not happy in big cities, because we made simple things complicated. If a person can't eat well during the daytime, and can't sleep well at night, how can he or she be happy? We focused only on career, success, money, house, and kids, but we forgot our most basic needs. In Dali, when you see people around you talking about art and philosophy, drinking tea, playing music, or just sunbathing, you feel naturally relaxed. The food and water quality is good in Dali and the farmers don't use pesticides and fertilizers. You can see the cattle and sheep eat grass and ramble in the fields; the chickens eat insects; the ducks eat small fish and shrimps. Everything is just natural and happy. You are what you eat. If you eat healthy and happy food, then of course, you are healthy and happy” (A10, female, 39, musician).

Dali has been a holy place for spiritual cultivation since ancient times. From the Nanzhao period (8th and 9th centuries) onward, Dali has been at the intersection of Theravada, Tibetan, Indian, and Chinese Central Plains Buddhism. The religions of Buddhism, Taoism, Islam, Christianity, Catholicism, Shamanism, and Bai Clan-Worship co-exist in harmony. International tourists have recently brought further diversity to Dali's religious culture. Many residential tourists have enthusiastically engaged in different forms of spiritual practice and built a connection with nature to pursue inner peace. Participant A20 lived in a wooden shelter

built in a tree on the Cangshan Mountain. Her possessions were a blanket, several handmade clothes, a few books, and an African drum.

“Dali is an ideal place to connect with nature. I fall fast asleep on the ground with the smell of soil in the dew; I ride a horse on the immense prairie to the end of the horizon; I witness the sunshine in the snow-covered plateau where time is frozen; I run in the desert where wind washes traces of its history; I cook in the tranquil forest where ancient trees blot out the sky and cover the sun. In the state of mind created by myself and nature, I thought I was searching the world, but in the end, I found myself” (A20, female, 28, designer and tailor).

Conclusion

A reflective journey

Lifestyle choice has become a significant factor in mobility and dwelling relocation (Williams & Hall, 2000). The phenomenon of residential tourism represents a combination of migration and tourism, as the complexity of mobility continues to increase (Huete & Mantecón, 2012). This study draws on Ryff's (1989) psychological well-being model of eudaimonia, and focuses on residential tourists' experiences. A value-adding analysis was applied to understand this phenomenon, based on the first author's direct residential tourist experience in Dali, ethnographic observations of other residential tourists' experiences and subtle social encounters and physical settings, and the life narratives of 40 residential tourists.

By experiencing Dali as a residential tourist, the first author was able to empathize with other residential tourists and provided an in-depth understanding of their experiences. Like most residential tourists and Chinese people in general, the first author's life was pre-programmed: get a decent degree at 22, find a good job at 23, buy a condo at 24, marry at 25, and have a child at 26. If she was late in achieving any one of the steps in this schedule, she would suffer from serious anxiety and guilt. Two steps late would bring shame to her family and attract derision from her community. Thus, living strictly according to the schedule was the only thing that brought her security. During her seven months in Dali, she spent much time reflecting on her life and witnessed various other lifestyles. For the first time in her life, she started to doubt the real meaning of her goals and questioned everything she had accepted. After she left Dali and once again endured the subway, she had experienced no dramatic change to her lifestyle or career path. However, she became more aware and relaxed, and had gained the ability to control her life and the strength to cope with the surrounding pressure from family and peers.

The psychological journeys of all individuals are complex. In our study, we do not intend to imply that residential tourism can only be positive, nor that the positive changes are solely the result of residential tourism. Some of the informants believed that they always had a “seed” in their hearts that had now blossomed into a more meaningful and happier life. The essence of residential tourism in Dali is that it provides people with *a life of tranquility and dignity, a society of equality and humanity, and the possibility of diversity*. These characteristics create a fertile ground in which positive changes toward eudaimonic wellbeing can grow.

Implications

This study contributes to the knowledge of and research into residential tourism. Most studies on this subject are Western-oriented and predominately focus on retired or older second-home owners (Huete & Mantecón, 2012; Mazón, 2006; Perles-Ribes et al., 2016; Perles-Ribes et al., 2018; Volo & Giambalvo, 2008; Williams et al., 2000; Williams & Hall, 2000). Our study contributes a new perspective on this new form of mobility. Residential tourism challenges the traditional conception of tourism, e.g., the official definition from UNWTO (Mazón, 2006), and epitomizes the tensions in a social system in which various forms of mobility and residency converge and interweave (O'Reilly 2007a). As Larsen, Urry, and Axhausen (2007) noted, “Much early theory defines the nature of tourism through some rather fixed dualisms: leisure as opposed to work, away as opposed to home, authenticity as opposed to inauthenticity, the extraordinary as opposed to the ordinary, and guest as opposed to host” (p.246). This emerging phenomenon of residential tourism may gradually blur the fixed boundaries between tourism and migration in some parts of the world. Thus, our study supports the work of Larsen et al. (2007) through empirical findings that “challenge the traditional distinctions between home and away, the ordinary and the extraordinary, work and leisure, and everyday life and holidays” (p.248).

Our study also challenges the traditional hedonic-oriented understanding of tourism and highlights the notion of eudaimonia in tourist well-being. Tourism plays a vital role in improving quality of life, psychological health, and personal growth. The significance of tourism is beyond individualistic and emotional experiences, as it can represent a journey toward well-being and attaining the best for one's self. This research spans tourism studies and positive psychology by extending Ryff's (1989) psychological well-being model through the two dimensions of the extension of youth and inner peace. The residential tourism experience contributes to self-actualization in the individual and the positive negotiation of the challenges confronted in life, such as obtaining autonomy, developing the capability to control the environment, full individual growth, finding meaning and purpose, prolonging youth, developing positive relations with others, being willing to accept oneself, and achieving inner peace.

The methodological contribution of this study lies in introducing and applying the value-adding approach to tourism studies. A value-adding analysis suggests that “data do not speak for themselves” (Eakin & Gladstone, 2020, p.3). The investigator adds value to a qualitative exploration by assigning meaning to data (interpretation), by identifying data as instances of more general concepts (conceptualization), and by linking and elucidating data and concepts (theorization). In this study, qualitative data is collected and analyzed through various value-adding devices, such as research contextualization, considering reflexivity, treating everything as data, considering inquiry anomalies and interpreting in terms of gestalt, generative coding, and heuristic theorizing. This analytical approach can be further explored in other tourism studies to enhance the depth of the research and engender new knowledge.

From a practical perspective, our study echoes one of the UN's (2020) sustainable development goals, which is “to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages”. The current COVID-19 pandemic represents a human tragedy that has shaken the global economy, upended the lives of billions of people worldwide, and threatens the well-being of humanity. The eudaimonic benefits of residential tourism can be developed to promote good living for tourists. The government can thus formulate policies to facilitate residential tourists' freedom of mobility and protect the safety of their businesses and property. From a managerial perspective, residential tourists should be considered as valuable assets, as they can add to the attractiveness of destinations and improve the image of a location.

Limitations and future research

Although we consider our study to be robust, we note some limitations. First, the value-adding analysis was extensive and thus the data collection and interpretation processes were time-consuming. The breadth and depth of inquiry were therefore restricted by the limited time and resources of the research team. Second, although all of the participants and most residential tourists reported improved eudaimonic well-being, some also mentioned difficulty in adjusting to the new lifestyle and emphasized their inner struggles and uncertainties. Future longitudinal studies could explore the non-linear relationship between hedonic and eudaimonic well-being in different phases of the residential tourist experience. Third, this research only focused on Chinese residential tourists. International tourists also reside in Dali, but they have formed different communities, have little interaction with Chinese residential tourists and locals, and demonstrate different socio-demographic features, motivations, lifestyles, and behavior patterns. Conducting a cross-cultural comparison of Chinese and international residential tourists would be of interest. Finally, this study only focused on providing a qualitative understanding of this phenomenon, and thus follow-up quantitative investigations over a broader geographical context would increase the generalizability of the research.

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Declaration of competing interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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