



# The influence of tourism experience and well-being on place attachment

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## ABSTRACT

Place attachment is significant in tourism marketing as it influences revisit intentions and destination loyalty. Drawing upon the Place Attachment theory, this study examines how memorable tourism experiences and well-being influences destination attachment in tourism. Well-being is operationalized as hedonic and eudaimonic well-being. Data was collected from 430 recent travellers to investigate the relationship between memorable tourism experiences, hedonic and eudaimonic well-being, and place attachment. The frequency of visits was included in the investigation as a moderating variable. The results show that memorable tourism experiences significantly influences place attachment, and that hedonic and eudaimonic well-being fully mediates this relationship. The frequency of visits do not influence these relationships. Tourists develop an attachment to a destination when their experience is memorable, satisfying and enhances their purpose and meaning in life. This study contributes to the literature on destination attachment and positive psychology. Discussion of the study findings and implications for academics and practitioners conclude the paper.

## 1. Introduction

Place attachment plays a significant role in tourism marketing. When tourists experience high levels of satisfaction at a destination, they become attached and are more likely to revisit in the future (George and George, 2012). Place attachment is suggested to be influenced by factors such as destination image, destination attractiveness, personal involvement and visitors' satisfaction (Hou et al., 2005; Lemelin et al., 2015; Prayag and Ryan, 2012; Xu and Zhang, 2016). However, these existing studies have assumed that the construction of the tourist experience is based on the interaction between the individual tourist and the destination or its components. When tourists are asked about their holidays, they often refer to experiences which are memories that are created in a constructive or reconstructive process within the individual. A critical outcome of a tourist experience is memorability, which has been found to affect behavioural intention (Sthapit and Coudounaris, 2018). Recent studies have examined the concept of a Memorable Tourism Experience (MTE) as an experience which involves positive memories that tourists acquire after personally experiencing meaningful activities and events (Kim et al., 2012). The memories of positive tourist experiences have been found to play a role in influencing place attachment (Jorgensen and Stedman, 2006). The relationship between an MTE and place attachment has yet to be

examined.

Prior studies have also shown that psychological factors such as well-being are stronger predictors of place attachment than geographical and demographic factors (Mandal, 2016). Recently, tourism and travel trends suggest that the market for holidays that focuses on well-being is growing exponentially (Voigt et al., 2011). As consumers seek a more healthy life-style, they may be more inclined to travel to destinations that promote positive well-being outcomes (Pyke et al., 2016). As a result, well-being and restorative benefits from a holiday may influence tourists' choice and subsequent attachment to a destination. There are very few studies which examine whether well-being (both hedonic and eudaimonic) influences place attachment. Whilst hedonic views of subjective well-being are common in the tourism literature with happiness and pleasure being seen as the ultimate goal, there is only a few tourism studies which include the aspects of eudaimonic well-being whereby tourist experiences provide meaning that involves deep satisfaction as well as learning, personal growth and skill development (Pearce and Packer, 2013).

Repeat visitation has also been suggested as a determinant of place attachment by implying that tourists who feel highly familiar with their tourism experience through multiple visits tend to develop stronger feelings towards the place which then intensifies their attachment (Lewicka, 2011). In an increasingly urbanised and fast-paced world,

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tourism destinations that cater to the need for restorative experiences may expect repeat visitors (Packer and Bond, 2010). More generally, people tend to participate repeatedly in an activity or visit a destination when they feel that participation is valuable to their well-being (Alegre and Cladera, 2006). Frequent visitors to particular types of sites are more likely than infrequent visitors to consider these sites restorative (Packer and Bond, 2010). There are no studies which examine whether the frequency of visits influences the memorability of tourism experiences, well-being outcomes and attachment to a destination.

In order to bridge the above existing gaps in the tourism literature, this present study examines the relationship between memorable tourism experiences, well-being and place attachment. It also examines whether repeat visitation influences these relationships. More specifically, this study seeks to answer four research questions:

1. Does an MTE have a significant influence on hedonic and eudaimonic well-being?
2. Does an MTE have a significant influence on place attachment?
3. Does hedonic and eudaimonic well-being have mediating effects on the relationship between an MTE and place attachment?
4. Does repeat visitation have a significant influence on the relationship between an MTE, well-being and place attachment?

This research employs a quantitative approach and contributes to the literature on destination attachment by examining its association with memorable tourism experiences and well-being. The following section presents a literature review of MTE, well-being and place attachment. A conceptual framework with research hypotheses that specify the direction of the relationships among constructs are proposed on the basis of the review.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1. Memorable tourism experiences and well-being

Tourism, as a deliberate activity, is an important context for experiencing well-being (Filep and Higham, 2014). Memories of holidays, in particular, have been shown to contribute to individual's happiness and well-being through reminiscent memories (Sthapit and Coudounaris, 2018) which affects well-being (Sirgy et al., 2010). Well-being is the fundamental concept of positive psychology and centred on hedonic and eudaimonic philosophical traditions (Lambert et al., 2015).

Beginning with Pearce (2009), tourism academics have used the lens of positive psychology to understand how tourism and travel contribute to well-being (Coghlan, 2015; Doyle et al., 2016; Filep, 2009; Filep and Deery, 2010; Filep et al., 2017; Filo and Coghlan, 2016; Matteucci and Filep, 2017). Positive psychology distinguishes between hedonic and eudaimonic well-being. Hedonic well-being involves positive emotions, happiness and pleasure (feeling good while engaging in an activity) whilst eudaimonic well-being focuses on personal growth and functioning. Eudaimonia can result from activities that are not particularly pleasant at the time they are experienced but which result in positive effects that may occur well after the activity is completed.

Empirical research support the relationship between MTE and hedonic and eudaimonic well-being. For example, Sthapit and Coudounaris (2018) found that the dimensions of hedonism in an MTE had a positive and significant impact on subjective well-being. It is suggested that positive and memorable tourism experiences can contribute to both hedonic and eudaimonic well-being (Sirgy et al., 2010). Gilbert and Abdullah (2004) also found that holiday-taking has the potential to enhance the level of happiness of those enjoying it thus leading to hedonic well-being. Novelty-seeking in an MTE also has a significant effect on hedonic well-being or life satisfaction (Chen and Yoon, 2018). In addition, Li and Chan (2017) found that engagement in home return travel for the Chinese diaspora helped to create meaning

and purpose in life, thus leading to eudaimonic well-being. A study by Matteucci and Filep (2017) also found that engagement in flamenco music and dance workshops in Spain strongly contributed to eudaimonic well-being through self-realisation and self-discovery. Consistent with the foregoing discussion, the following hypotheses are offered:

**H1.** An MTE is significantly related to hedonic well-being

**H2.** An MTE is significantly related to eudaimonic well-being.

### 2.2. Memorable tourism experiences and place attachment

A Memorable Tourism Experience (MTE) is defined as a “tourism experience remembered and recalled after the event has occurred” (Kim et al., 2012, p. 13). An MTE is constructed based on a tourist's assessment of their experience and serves to consolidate and reinforce the recollection of pleasurable memories of the destination experience (Kim et al., 2012). Tourists may enjoy themselves during an experience but not experience or recall the same memorable experiences (Ooi, 2005). Therefore, it is necessary to understand tourists' subjective interpretation of the meanings of an experience (Uriely et al., 2003). An MTE comprises of seven dimensions: hedonism, refreshment, social interaction and local culture, meaningfulness, knowledge, involvement and novelty (Sthapit and Coudounaris, 2018). These dimensions have a close association to place attachment. For example, empirical studies show that tourists with a high level of involvement are likely to immerse themselves in the local environment thus facilitating the formation of place attachment (Mamoon, 2016). Likewise, Kyle et al. (2003) found that activity involvement predicted place attachment amongst four groups of hikers along the Appalachian Trail.

Place attachment was first developed in environmental psychology and regarded as an affective bond or link between people and specific places (Hidalgo and Hernandez, 2001). The place attachment construct initially consisted of two dimensions: (1) place dependence which refers to a functional attachment to a place and (2) place identity which refers to a symbolic or affective attachment to a place (Williams and Vaske, 2003). Researchers have also explored other dimensions of place attachment such as place affect which is the emotive dimension of place attachment where individuals build their sentiments about a place and give meaning to it (Hosany and Gilbert, 2010). Place social bonding is another dimension of place attachment which focuses on people's experiences derived from social interactions at a particular place (Scannell and Gifford, 2010). It is suggested that positive bonds connecting humans can be stronger than attachments with the physical attributes of a place (Hidalgo and Hernandez, 2001).

Within the recreation research, the place attachment concept has received a great deal of attention (Backlund and Williams, 2003). In tourism research, studies have indicated that place attachment also plays an important role in tourist experiences (Io and Wan, 2018) as the intensity of place attachment enhances loyalty and revisit behaviour (George and George, 2012). Positive tourism experiences can determine tourists satisfaction and emotional attachment to a destination (Io and Wan, 2018). More specifically, the memories of tourist experiences have been found to play a role in influencing place attachment (Jorgensen and Stedman, 2006). Novelty-seeking was also found to mediate the relationship between past visits and place attachment (George and George, 2012). Ujang et al. (2018) found that place attachment was formed through the development of meaningful spaces for people to interact in public spaces in the city. In the context of cultural tourism destinations, Hou et al. (2005) found that enduring involvement in different cultures has a direct effect on place attachment. Consistent with this foregoing discussion, the following hypotheses is offered:

**H3.** An MTE is significantly related to place attachment

### 2.3. The mediating role of well-being

Well-being is a multidimensional concept and related to physical, mental, social, and environmental aspects of living (Pinto et al., 2016). It has been suggested that the relationship that people have with their own living environment can provide a better understanding of their well-being and quality of life (Moser, 2009). However, Uzzell and Moser (2006) emphasizes that it is not the physical environment that is crucial, but how people perceive and experience it that may provide a better understanding of their well-being and quality of life. Prior studies suggest that place attachment is strongly linked to geographical, demographic and psychological factors (Hidalgo and Hernandez, 2001; Mandal, 2016). However, psychological factors such as life satisfaction and well-being are stronger predictors of place attachment. Mandal (2016) found a positive correlation between life satisfaction and two dimensions of the place attachment construct – place identity and place dependence. The feeling of living in a place with which you identify as part of yourself (place identity) and the feeling of living in a place where you can actively pursue life activities (place dependence) has a positive impact on one's subjective sense of life satisfaction. Numerous studies also suggest that the relationship that people have with certain places influences their well-being (Moser, 2009). People develop an attachment to favourite places and frequently visit for relaxation (Korpela and Ylén, 2007; Korpela et al., 2010). Scannell and Gifford (2017) also found that visualizing a place of attachment (compared to visualizing a non-attached familiar place) increased participants' levels of self-esteem, meaning and belonging. The harmonious attachment and identity to a specific place provides the individual with a sense of belonging, purpose and meaning in life (Aitken and Campelo, 2011). Studies have also shown that place attachment influences well-being and restoration in older adults (Afshar et al., 2017), children (Jack, 2010) and migrants (Lager et al., 2012).

In the tourism context, experiences in rural tourism (Sharpley and Jepson, 2011) and wildlife tourism (Curtin, 2009) have been linked to well-being. Museums (Packer, 2013), urban parks (Chiesura, 2004), zoos and aquariums (Falk et al., 2007) have also been found to be restorative environments. A study by Wolf et al. (2015) also found that participants at thematically connected guided walking, biking and 4WD tours in Australian national parks developed strong ties with community members and experienced significant improvements in health, well-being and competence. Consistent with this suggestion and foregoing discussion, the following hypothesis are offered:

**H4.** Hedonic well-being mediates the relationship between MTE and place attachment.

**H5.** Eudaimonic well-being mediates the relationship between MTE and place attachment.

**H6.** Hedonic and eudaimonic well-being jointly mediates the relationship between MTE and place attachment.

### 2.4. The role of repeat visitation

Existing studies have shown that repeat and first-time visitors are two distinct groups with differing wants and needs (Gitelson and Crompton, 1984). For example, Beckmann et al. (1998) found that first-time visitors were more receptive to exploration and learning whereas repeat visitors were more interested in recreational pursuits rather than exploration and learning. First-time visitors may also seek a novel experience whereas repeat visitors are commonly motivated by relaxation (Fakeye and Crompton, 1991). Lau and Mc Kercher (2004) also found that first-time visitors to Hong Kong intended to participate in a wide range of geographically dispersed activities while repeat visitors intended to shop, dine and spend time with family and friends. Therefore, it is commonly accepted that repeat and first-time visitors exhibit different behaviour whilst at a destination.

Prior studies have also found differences in how first-time and repeat visitors develop an attachment to a destination. For example, Morais and Lin (2010) found that first-time visitors' intentions to patronize the destination were mainly affected by destination image whereas repeat visitors' intentions to patronize the destination were primarily affected by destination or place attachment. The Place Attachment theory claims that close bonds to specific places are formed after interaction and become stronger as more time is spent in the same place (Lewicka, 2011). It is also reported that tourists who feel highly familiar with their tourism experiences at a place develop strong feelings towards the place which then intensifies their attachment to the place (Williams and Vaske, 2003). A study by Abou-Shouk et al. (2018) found that repeat tourists were place attached and that this attachment positively influenced tourist satisfaction and intentional repeat visit. Likewise, Williams et al. (1992) found that stronger place and wilderness attachment was associated with previous visits.

Repeat visitation is mainly viewed within the theoretical context of destination loyalty (Rittichainuwat et al., 2003) and considered a desirable phenomenon in the marketing and tourism literature because the marketing costs to attract repeat visitors are lower than those required for first-timers. As repeat visitors promote positive word-of-mouth of the destination to friends and family, they are most likely to revisit the destination (Oppermann, 1998). Repeat visits also suggest high levels of satisfaction and high satisfaction increases positive emotions among visitors thus leading to high levels of place attachment (Ramkissoon and Mavondo, 2015). Consistent with this suggestion and foregoing discussion, the following hypothesis is offered:

**H7.** Frequency of visits moderates the relationship between MTE and hedonic well-being, in that repeat visits has a more significant effect than first-time visits.

**H8.** Frequency of visits moderates the relationship between MTE and eudaimonic well-being, in that repeat visits has a more significant effect than first-time visits.

**H9.** Frequency of visits moderates the relationship between MTE and place attachment, in that repeat visits has a more significant effect than first-time visits.

**H10.** Frequency of visits moderates the relationship between hedonic well-being and place attachment, in that repeat visits has a more significant effect than first-time visits.

**H11.** Frequency of visits moderates the relationship between eudaimonic well-being and place attachment, in that repeat visits has a more significant effect than first-time visits.

The proposed relationships are presented in Fig. 1.

## 3. Methods

### 3.1. Sample

This study employed purposive random sampling which is the process of identifying a population of interest and developing a systematic way of selecting cases that is not based on advanced knowledge of how the outcomes would appear (Tongco, 2007). The sample in this study were individuals aged 18 years or older who had taken a recent trip in the past three months. It has been suggested that valuable insights can be gained by addressing a single tourist experience as close as possible to when they happen, rather than assessing them from more delayed recollections of holidays (Filep, 2012; Nawijn, 2011). This study did not focus on any specific tourism context as existing literature suggests that research concerned with individual experiences and consumption activities largely depend on the consumption context itself which has been predefined as extraordinary or memorable by the researchers. This is problematic because experiences do not result in predetermined effects for everyone, but will depend on an individual's

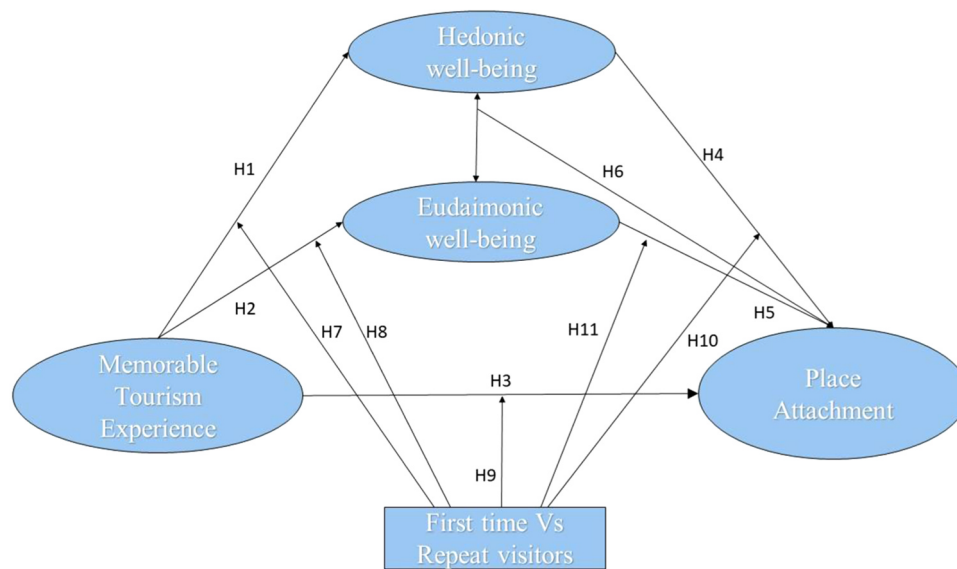


Fig. 1. The study model.

interaction with the event (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). A total of 430 responses was received and of the total sample, 65% of respondents were female and 35% were male. The majority of respondents fell in the age group of 18 – 35 (45%) followed by the 36 – 55 group (37%). At least 50% of respondents had acquired a diploma/certificate or bachelor's degree. The majority of respondents were employed full-time (39%) and earned an annual income of \$20,000 - \$60,000 (37%). For marital status, 60% of respondents were married, 29% were single (never married), and 11% were divorced or separated. In terms of visit frequency, 33% of respondents were on their first-visit whilst 67% had previously visited the destination.

### 3.2. Measures

All measurement items were adopted from existing scales in previous studies and were anchored on a 7-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree).

Memorable Tourism Experience was measured by adapting the Memorable Tourism Experience Scale in Kim et al. (2012). The MTE scale has been applied in previous studies (Sthapit and Coudounaris, 2018; Tung and Ritchie, 2011) and utilized in cross-cultural settings (Kim and Ritchie, 2014). The Cronbach alpha value for this scale is 0.87.

Hedonic well-being was measured by adapting the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) developed by Diener (1984). The SWLS has been heavily used as a measure of life satisfaction component of subjective well-being (Brunner-Sperdin et al., 2012; Cohn et al., 2009; Nawijn and Mitas, 2012). The SWLS was also specifically tested in two studies which showed that the scale was a valid and reliable measure of life satisfaction and suited for use with a wide range of age groups and applications (Pavot et al., 1991). This scale was adapted to suit a tourism context in this study, for example, adapting the statement *I am satisfied with my life* to *I am satisfied with my trip*. The Cronbach alpha value for this scale is 0.83.

Eudaimonic well-being was adapted from the Psychological Well-being Scale (PWS) developed by Ryff (1989). The PWS assesses a range of psychological factors which influence psychological well-being and has been applied in tourism research (Milman, 1998; Neal et al., 2007). Three items reflecting purpose after a tourist experience were included in this study. The Cronbach alpha for this scale is 0.80.

Place Attachment was measured by adapting the Place Attachment Inventory (PAI) in Williams and Vaske (2003). The PAI measures an individual's attachment to specific or general places by means of two

dimensions: self-identification with a place, and the capacity of the place to support a person's activities or goals. The PAI has also been applied in previous tourism research (Gross and Brown, 2008; Mamoon, 2016). The Cronbach alpha value for this scale is 0.85.

### 3.3. Procedures

The main instrument for data collection was an online survey. An online survey was suitable for this study as it allowed researchers to obtain information that cannot be observed directly, such as attitudes and emotions (Creswell et al., 2007). It also provided extensive flexibility in data analysis and enabled the researchers to ask numerous questions about a subject (Tracy, 2012). The survey was administered for two weeks in June 2018 to an online panel provided by Qualtrics™, a global market research firm. Online panels are becoming increasingly common in tourism and marketing research with researchers finding such data to be reliable with no bias in responses (Brandon, Long, Loraas, Mueller-Phillips, & Vansant, 2013; Dolnicar, Yanamandram, & Cliff, 2012). Qualtrics™ was selected for this study based on its research experience, reputation and ability to reach the target market.

The data collection process began with Qualtrics™ sending an email to their Australian panel with two screening questions to ensure that only Australian residents above the age of 18 years participated and that they had recently taken a trip in the past three months. This ensured that only qualified participants were invited to participate in the survey. To ensure that all responses were completed without missing data, all questions on the survey had a forced response. Additionally, Qualtrics™ ensured a variety of participants in terms of demographics by distributing the surveys across the country and to different age groups. The online questionnaire was distributed to 1000 Qualtrics™ panel members and 430 completed questionnaires were received. Previously validated scales were used and was pilot-tested to ensure face validity and clarity. To minimise response bias, similar questions were dispersed throughout different sections in the survey to refresh respondents' memories and ensure identical responses.

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Measurement model

As the study variables were measured using existing scales, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) with maximum likelihood estimation was performed to assess reliability and validity (Hu and Bentler,

**Table 1**  
Results for correlations, means and SD among study variables.

Variables	Mean	SD	HWB	MTE	EWB	PA
HWB	5.48	0.96	<b>0.711</b>			
MTE	4.99	1.37	0.450**	<b>0.800</b>		
EWB	4.50	1.25	0.403**	0.316**	<b>0.712</b>	
PA	4.79	1.28	0.425**	0.310**	0.549**	<b>0.776</b>

Note: \*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). The values in bold are square root of average variance extracted.

MTE: Memorable Tourist Experience; HWB: Hedonic well-being; EWB: Eudaimonic well-being; PA: Place Attachment.

Note: \*  $p \leq .01$ .

1999). The results of model fit indices are acceptable: ( $\chi^2$  (98) = 313.919,  $p < .0005$ , GFI = 0.910; TLI = 0.916; RMSEA = 0.072). The results of standardized residual co-variances and modification index values indicate no conspicuously significant changes to the model. The average variance extracted for each variable was over 0.50, indicative of adequate convergence (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). The composite reliability was acceptable for each of the factors. Factor loadings were positive and statistically significant (See Table 2). All items have significant loadings on their corresponding constructs, demonstrating adequate convergent validity. The square root of average variance extracted of each construct exceeds the correlation between constructs, indicating discriminant validity. The results for correlations, means, and SD among study variables are provided in Table 1.

#### 4.2. Hypothesis testing

Structural equation modelling (SEM) was deployed to examine the proposed relationships in the current study. The model appears to fit the data reasonably well ( $\chi^2$  (98) = 307.732,  $p = .000$ , GFI = 0.917, RMSEA = 0.071, TLI = 0.919). H1 and H2 propose that an MTE is significantly related to hedonic and eudaimonic well-being. The results show a significant effect ( $\beta = 0.45$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and ( $\beta = 0.34$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and therefore H1 and H2 are supported. H3 proposes that an MTE is significantly related to place attachment. The results show a significant effect ( $\beta = 0.31$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and therefore H3 is supported.

H4, H5 and H6 involve mediation testing with well-being (hedonic and eudaimonic) as the mediator between MTE and place attachment. In this testing, the bias-corrected bootstrapping  $p$  values were assessed to generate the mediating effects. The results from testing H1 – H3 show that the paths between each pair of variables involved are significant. The bias-corrected bootstrapping testing shows that the relationship between MTE and place attachment became insignificant when hedonic

**Table 2**  
Results for confirmatory factor analyses.

	Item	FL	$\alpha$	CR	AVE
Memorable Tourist Experience	I had a once-in-a-lifetime experience	0.76	0.87	0.88	0.64
	I had a unique experience	0.89			
	My trip was different from previous trips	0.77			
	I experienced something new	0.76			
Hedonic well-being	In most ways, this recent trip was close to ideal	0.64	0.83	0.84	0.51
	The conditions on this trip were excellent	0.70			
	I was satisfied with this recent trip	0.88			
	I achieved the most important things on this trip	0.70			
Eudaimonic well-being	I would not change the plans I made for this recent trip	0.88	0.80	0.75	0.51
	I feel like living life one day at a time	0.75			
	I feel like I have a sense of direction and purpose in life	0.87			
	I enjoy making plans for the future and working to make them a reality	0.80			
Place Attachment	I feel that this place is a part of me	0.85	0.85	0.86	0.60
	This place is the best place for what I like to do	0.86			
	This place is very special to me	0.89			
	No other place can compare to this place	0.74			

Note:  $\alpha$  = Cronbach's alpha, FL = factor loadings, CR = composite reliability, AVE = average variance extracted.

and eudaimonic well-being was included. On this basis, H4 supports a partial mediation of hedonic well-being between MTE and place attachment. H5 supports a partial mediation of eudaimonic well-being between MTE and place attachment. H6 supports a full mediation of hedonic and eudaimonic well-being between MTE and place attachment. The mediation results are shown in Table 3. The results of the proposed relationships are presented in Table 4.

A multigroup analysis was conducted for H7 - H11 to assess whether the proposed relationships differed by visiting frequency. The respondents were divided into first-time and repeat visitors. Chi-squared difference between the constrained and unconstrained models was not significant for visiting frequency at the model level ( $\chi^2$  (35) = 41.509,  $p > .01$ ), thus indicating first-time and repeat visitors are not different in their perceptions of their recent memorable tourism experience, well-being and place attachment. However, the relationships between two paths among the study variables were different for first-time and repeat visitors (see Table 5). In the case of first-time visitors, MTE has a significant effect on hedonic well-being ( $\beta = 0.58$ ,  $p < .001$ ) but not eudaimonic well-being ( $\beta = 0.19$ ,  $p > .001$ ). Hedonic well-being does not have a significant effect on place attachment ( $\beta = 0.16$ ,  $p > .001$ ) but eudaimonic well-being is important in determining place attachment ( $\beta = 0.77$ ,  $p < .001$ ). In the case of repeat visitors, MTE has a significant effect on hedonic well-being ( $\beta = 0.41$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and eudaimonic well-being ( $\beta = 0.38$ ,  $p < .001$ ) which subsequently has a significant effect on place attachment.

#### 5. Discussion

Research on place attachment has found that close bonds to specific places are formed after interaction and become stronger as more time is spent in the same place (Lewicka, 2011). This study addresses four research questions concerning the effects of MTE, hedonic and eudaimonic well-being, and repeat visitation on place attachment. The major findings of this study show that: (1) an MTE has a significant effect on hedonic and eudaimonic well-being; (2) an MTE significantly influences place attachment; (3) hedonic well-being partially mediates the relationship between an MTE and place attachment; (4) eudaimonic well-being partially mediates the relationship between an MTE and place attachment; (5) hedonic and eudaimonic jointly fully mediates the relationship between an MTE and place attachment; and (6) first-time and repeat travellers do not significantly moderate the relationship between MTE, well-being and place attachment. A detailed discussion of the findings follows.

**Table 3**  
Results for mediation testing.

Relationship	Direct effect without mediator	Direct effect with mediator	Indirect effect
MTE HWB PA	0.156***	0.159**	Partial mediation
MTE EWB PA	0.159**	0.156***	Partial mediation
MTE HWB EWB PA	0.313***	0.072	Full mediation

Note: .  
MTE: Memorable Tourist Experience; HWB: Hedonic well-being; EWB: Eudaimonic well-being; PA: Place Attachment.  
\*\*\*  $p \leq .0005$ .  
\*\*  $p > .05$ .

**Table 4**  
Regression weights between the proposed relationships.

Endogenous variables	Exogenous variables	Estimates
Hedonic well-being < —	MTE	0.450***
Eudaimonic well-being < —	MTE	0.336***
Place attachment < —	MTE	0.313***
Place attachment < —	Hedonic well-being	0.246***
Place attachment < —	Eudaimonic well-being	0.442***

Full model: ( $\chi^2(98) = 307.732, p = .000, RMSEA = 0.071, GFI = 0.917, TLI = 0.919$ ).  
Note: \*\*  $p \geq .01$ .  
\*\*\*  $p \leq .0005$ .

**Table 5**  
Moderation effects between the proposed relationships.

Path analysis	First-time visitors	Repeat visitors
MTE→ HWB	0.580***	0.412***
MTE→ EWB	0.199*	0.386***
MTE → PA	0.127*	0.149**
HWB→ PA	0.168*	0.247***
EWB →PA	0.771***	0.266***

Note: .  
\*\*\*  $p \leq .0005$ .  
\*\*  $p \leq .01$ .  
\*  $p > .05$ .

5.1. MTE and well-being

This study proposed that an MTE has a significant effect on well-being. Well-being was operationalized as hedonic and eudaimonic well-being. The results support all proposed relationships which suggest that an MTE allows tourists to experience happiness and pleasure within a short-term (hedonic well-being) as well as personal development and growth in the long-term (eudaimonic well-being). This finding is therefore aligned to existing empirical studies which have shown that people are happier during their holiday than at home (Filep, 2008b) and holidays are often described as a time of relaxation and an escape from the work and stress at home (Pearce, 2009). Holiday experiences can also have deeply meaningful and transformative elements (Filep, 2008a). For example, it was found that a flamenco tourist experience in Spain contributed to self-realisation and fulfilment (Matteucci and Filep, 2017). This study supports recent literature, which suggest that the supply side of tourist experiences per se cannot be classified as hedonic, or eudaimonic. People have different experiences even if they are doing the same thing at the same place and time (Volo, 2009). Therefore, whether a holiday leads to hedonic and eudaimonic well-being depends on how meaningful the tourist experience was.

5.2. MTE and place attachment

The study proposed that an MTE has a significant influence on place attachment. The results support this relationship. Tourists can have

diverse interpretations of a single tourist product due to their different interests and backgrounds. An MTE was chosen as a suitable determinant of place attachment as it includes elements of hedonia and eudaimonia (Kim et al., 2012) which have been found to influence place attachment. Place attachment is also multi-dimensional and cannot be explained through a cause and effect relationship (Lewicka, 2011). A limitation with previous studies was that destination image, destination attractiveness, personal involvement and visitor satisfaction were identified as the determinants of place attachment (Hou et al., 2005; Lemelin et al., 2015; Prayag and Ryan, 2012; Xu and Zhang, 2016). Larsen (2007) suggests that the tourist experience should not be considered to be any or all of the various events taking place during a tourist trip, although such events do contribute to the construction of the tourist experience. The tourist experience, when examined from a psychological perspective is based in and originates from the individual tourist. Therefore, perceptual processes are influenced by motivational and emotional states and is conditioned by personal values, opinions, and worldviews (Prebensen and Foss, 2011). It is suggested that tourist destinations are not at all that important in creating tourist experiences, whereas the individual tourist is. This study therefore supports the argument that the degree to which a tourist becomes attached to a destination is dependent upon how memorable a tourist experience is.

5.3. Mediation relationship

This study proposed that well-being mediates the relationship between MTE and place attachment. The results support the proposed relationships and showed that both hedonic well-being and eudaimonic well-being fully mediates the relationship between MTE and place attachment. Most studies on place attachment and well-being identifies place attachment as a cause of well-being (Hornsey and Gallois, 1998; Maries and Watkins, 2003; Rollero and De Piccoli, 2010; Scannell and Gifford, 2017). This study shows that both hedonic and eudaimonic well-being causes place attachment. This is aligned to Huta (2013) who found that hedonia and eudaimonia occupy both overlapping and distinct niches within a complete picture of well-being and that their combination may be associated with the greatest well-being. This study shows that the same activity could result in hedonic or eudaimonic effects and is dependent upon the individual engaging in the activity (Knobloch et al., 2017). Well-being is largely derived from the satisfaction of core psychological needs such as belonging, control, self-esteem and meaning (Deci and Ryan, 2011). The benefits of experiencing constructs of well-being within tourism, such as the presence of silence (Dillette et al., 2018), acts of kindness (Filep et al., 2017), meaning from vacation experiences such as wellness tourism and yoga tourism (Voigt et al., 2011) has resulted in individual health and well-being benefits and behavioural consequences. The behavioural consequences relate to revisit intentions, positive word of mouth and destination attachment.

5.4. Moderation relationship

This study included first-time and repeat visitors as moderators between the proposed relationships. The path coefficients were

different and indicates that first-time and repeat visitors are not different in their perceptions of their recent memorable tourism experience, well-being and place attachment. Although existing studies suggest that it is generally accepted that repeat and first-time visitors exhibit different behaviour whilst at a destination, this study reports otherwise whereby first-time and repeat visitors both experience hedonic and eudaimonic well-being from a tourism experience which influences place attachment. First-time visitors have been reported to be a volatile and expensive market to pursue whereas repeat visitors represent a stabilizing influence for most destinations (Oppermann, 1998). As a result, repeat visitation is viewed as an attractive and cost-effective segment for most destinations. Lau and McKercher (2004) suggest that first-time and repeat visitors are motivated to visit for fundamentally different reasons and, consequently, intend to participate in very different activities. However, the outcomes and in particular, the well-being outcomes from these activities for first-time and repeat visitors have yet to be examined. Existing studies suggest that repeat and first-time visitors are two distinct groups with differing wants and needs (Gitelson and Crompton, 1984). For example, the study by Ramkissoon and Mavondo (2015) found that repeat visits suggest high levels of satisfaction which increases positive emotions among visitors thus leading to place attachment. Abou-Shouk et al. (2018) also found that repeat tourists were more likely to develop place attachment than first-time visitors. However, due to the subjective and personal nature of tourist experiences, two individuals with appraisals of the same activity can have different emotional experiences. This study found that both first-time and repeat visits can experience place attachment. There is also no difference in terms of their well-being outcomes. For both first-time and repeat visitors, tourist experiences are not only about pleasure but also has the potential to influence their lives beyond the actual holiday (Knobloch et al., 2017). A study by Huang et al. (2016) found that first-time visitors with immigrant origins to the destination often feel connected to the people, culture and heritage of the destination before actually visiting the place. Therefore, experiences cannot be classified as memorable, hedonic or eudaimonic but are defined as such by the individuals engaging in them (Knobloch et al., 2017). This study has shown that visitors on their first trip to a destination can also become attached to the destination as it depends on the significance and meaning that has been attached to their experience.

## 6. Implications

### 6.1. Theoretical contributions

This study discusses the influence of MTE as a determinant of place attachment and the mediating role of hedonic and eudaimonic well-being on this relationship. It also examines whether the frequency of visits influenced this relationship. This study therefore makes two theoretical contributions. Firstly, this study contributes to the place attachment literature by examining the determinants of place attachment beyond destination image and tourist satisfaction. Previous studies have examined place attachment as the cause of well-being. This study has shown that place attachment is a consequence of well-being following an MTE. This study has also shown that visiting frequency does not significantly moderate the relationship between MTE, well-being and place attachment. First-time and repeat visitors both experience well-being from an MTE which triggers place attachment. Therefore, the findings contradicts the Place Attachment theory as multiple visits to a destination does not necessarily lead to place attachment. This study has shown that first-time visits to a destination can influence place attachment as it depends on how significant and memorable a tourist experience is. Therefore, although existing studies suggest that first-time and repeat visitors exhibit different behaviour whilst at a destination, this study reports otherwise. This therefore emphasizes the subjective nature of tourist experiences and that a one-

size-fits-all approach should not be applied to first-time or repeat visitors as place attachment is significantly influenced by the meaning associated with the tourist experience.

Secondly, this study contributes to the positive psychology literature by emphasizing the importance of hedonic and eudaimonic well-being in determining place attachment. Most importantly, this study suggests that an MTE contributes to both hedonic and eudaimonic well-being. As such, this study reinforces existing research which emphasize that while hedonia and eudaimonia may seem disparate, they are in fact not mutually exclusive. This study has shown that hedonic and eudaimonic well-being overlap and the combination of both well-being constructs is significant and jointly influences place attachment.

### 6.2. Managerial implications

This study also has managerial implications. Firstly, by providing industry practitioners with an understanding and appreciation that tourist experiences can extend beyond hedonic enjoyment by contributing to an individual's well-being and general quality of life. This understanding can enhance the motivation of tourism providers to further increase engagement and interaction with their customers. This study has shown that the well-being outcomes for first-time and repeat travellers are the same and therefore segmenting the market based on first-time and repeat visitors is not significant. The positive well-being benefits from a holiday experience can provide opportunities for the visitor economy. Well-being as a tourism product resource has the potential to be applied as a marketing tool to influence consumer's choice of a holiday destination. By implementing a well-being philosophy for tourist destinations may encourage more individuals to engage in tourism, which will increase economic benefits.

Secondly, managers and front-line staff should be cautioned against generalizing a memorable tourism experience, recognising that a memorable experience is not context specific and is dependent on the individual tourist perceptions. As suggested by Knobloch et al. (2017), this would allow tourism providers to understand the differences in customer experiences, particularly regarding the importance of hedonia and eudaimonia.

### 6.3. Conclusion

Drawing upon the Place Attachment theory, this study examines how memorable tourism experiences and well-being influences destination attachment in tourism. Through undertaking a survey on 430 travellers, the study shows that memorable tourism experiences significantly influences place attachment, and that well-being fully mediates this relationship. The finding of this study has shown that the benefits of experiencing both well-being from tourism contributes to place attachment. Regardless of whether tourists are first-time visitors or repeat visitors to a destination, well-being is a desired feature that consumers search for while engaging in tourism. Therefore, well-being, as a tourism product resource can support the sustainability of the tourism industry through the development of destination attachment and loyalty to tourism destinations.

#### 6.3.1. Limitations and future research

This study employed self-report measures through an on-line survey and common-method bias could have inflated the relationship between variables. The measures are also unlikely to capture the richness and resonance of the recent tourism experience. Therefore, a qualitative study would provide an in-depth understanding and insights into why a tourist experience was memorable and how well-being is experienced. Knobloch et al. (2017) further suggest that a longitudinal study by interviewing tourists upon their return and at a later point in time might provide insights into how experiences contribute to an enhanced sense of well-being and personal fulfilment.

The research sample of this study were recent travellers and did not

focus on any specific tourism context. Future studies could examine recent travellers to one specific destination or attraction to gain further insight and a deeper understanding on the different well-being benefits and levels of place attachment. A further limitation of this study relates to the socio-demographics of the research sample whereby 65% were females. There are conflicting studies which suggest that there is no significant difference between gender and place attachment (Mandal, 2016) whilst others suggest that females exhibit stronger ties to places (Hidalgo and Hernandez, 2001; Mesch and Manor, 1998). Therefore, future studies could examine the role of gender and place attachment within a tourism context.

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