

# Digital Tourism Consumption: The Role of Virtual Reality (VR) Vacations on Consumers' Psychological Wellbeing: An Abstract



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**Abstract** An important motivational driver for a vacation experience is to escape the stress and strains of routine day-to-day life (Su et al., 2020). Individuals increasingly partake in vacations with the aim of enhancing their wellbeing (Wang et al., 2021). Recently, scholars have drawn on the lens of *positive psychology* to understand how tourism experiences contribute to individuals' hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing. However, despite this growing body of literature, it remains unclear how tourists' wellbeing adapts over the duration of a vacation (Su et al., 2020). More specifically, we have a limited understanding on the lasting wellbeing effects post-vacation (Li & Chan, 2020).

Scholars have outlined that the positive outcomes of a vacation often have a limited lasting effect of up to 1 month (Etzion, 2003; de Bloom et al., 2010, 2011). Chen et al. (2013) found that tourists' hedonic wellbeing was boosted immediately following a vacation but quickly faded after 2 months. In further support, Kwon and Lee (2020) outlined that individuals wellbeing rose 15 days prior to travel and lasted for 1 month following travel.

Accordingly, given the advancements in technology and the inherent social presence and immersion of Virtual Reality (VR hereafter), this research uncovers that a related VR tourism experience post-vacation can play a role in positively prolonging the wellbeing effects of an individual's vacation experience. In effect, a vacation transports one's self to an alternative world, physically. Similarly, VR transports one's self to an alternative world, virtually. Thus, in both circumstances individuals leave behind their day-to-day life in pursuit of an alternative way of life for a short duration. VR technology has the unique capability to make individuals feel like they

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have transported to and become 'present' within an alternative virtual world (McLean & Barhorst, 2021).

Through a longitudinal experimental research design over a 3-month period, this research affirms the positive effect of a vacation experience on both the hedonic and eudaimonic dimensions of wellbeing, the rise tendency and fall tendency of wellbeing over the course of a vacation and the role of VR in boosting the positive wellbeing effects of a vacation.

**Keywords** Vacation wellbeing · Hedonic wellbeing · Eudaimonic wellbeing · Virtual reality · Boosting wellbeing

References Available Upon Request