Investigating the Impacts of Selfie Tourism on Place Attachment in Marsa Alam City

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Abstract

Selfie tourism is a rapidly growing trend among tourists due to the convenience of taking photos and sharing them on various social media platforms. This undoubtedly impacts tourists' behavior, particularly in terms of how it may influence their place attachment and memorable travel experiences. Thus, the study aims to examine the relationship between selfie tourism, memorable tourism experience, hedonic and eudaimonic well-being as well as visitor place attachment through distributing a self-administered questionnaire to respondents who have visited Marsa Alam, Egypt. The findings indicate a significant correlation between selfie tourism and hedonic and eudaimonic well-being as well as memorable travel experiences, which consequently impacts place attachment. The study enables tourism service providers to better understand the importance of selfie tourism and how it could be used to increase tourists' place attachment. Furthermore, the study recommends that tourism service providers set up selfie facilities and consider selfie tourism marketing in their strategy to benefit from its meaningful impact in terms of building place attachment.

Keywords: Place attachment, Memorable Tourism Experience, Hedonic well-being, Eudaimonic well-being, Selfie tourism.

Introduction

The dramatic development of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) has profoundly influenced the travel and tourism industry (Chien-Chiang et al., 2021). It has allowed new trends to emerge and also has undoubtedly altered tourists' behavior, especially in terms of how they share their tourism experience, geotagging, and sharing their location using new ICT tools (Berbeka and Borodako, 2018).

Selfies, for instance, have emerged and become a global phenomenon due to the immense advances in technology and smartphones. Meanwhile, the

internet and social media platforms have facilitated sharing selfies with others, which increased their popularity and eventually led to the emergence of selfie tourism. They are taken to document our special moments. (God'spresence and God'spresence, 2020; Arpaci et al, 2018).

While traveling, selfies allow tourists to easily document and share pleasurable memories of their tourism experience, thus, making that tourism experience memorable (Nguyen et al., 2018).

Memorable Tourism Experience (MTE) refers to the positive experiences that the tourist recalls after finishing his trip (Stavrianea and Kamenidou, 2022; Coudounaris and Sthapit, 2017). It is all about the satisfaction and pleasure of tourists during their trip. Thus, MTE is deeply associated with well-being, whether hedonic or eudaimonic (Monika et al., 2021). However, eudaimonic well-being is rarely investigated in tourism literature. Moreover, MTE is one of the most fundamental elements that profoundly impact place attachment (Trinada et al., 2022; Lengieza et al., 2019).
Place attachment refers to the emotional connection between people and places (Majeed and Ramkissoon, 2020).

Tourist destinations can highly benefit from place attachment as it plays an integral role in tourism marketing. A tourist who feels attached to a certain destination would not only keep revisiting it, but would also play an influential role in the destination's traditional or electronic Word of Mouth (WOM) marketing by spreading his positive experience and recommending the destination to others (Trinada et al., 2022; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2021). Meanwhile, selfie tourism has become a global phenomenon to the extent that some destinations have turned their unique attractions into selfie hotspots, which is not yet applied to Egypt.

Hence, this study aims at examining the correlation between selfie tourism, MTE, hedonic and eudaimonic well-being, as well as place attachment, in addition to investigating the direct relationship between selfie tourism and destination place attachment.

Literature view
Selfie Tourism
Tourism and photography are deeply interconnected as photography plays a fundamental role in shaping the destination image. Besides, tourism photography is essential to document the tourist's travel experience. Nowadays tourism photography is not limited to professionals only, it is practiced by tourists as well (Nguyen et al., 2018).

Meanwhile, the technological advancement of smartphones and cameras has allowed tourists to take a limitless number of self-portraits, known as 'selfies', and share them with others via different social media platforms (God'spresence and God'spresence, 2020).

According to the Oxford dictionary (2020), a selfie is a "photograph taken of oneself, and uploaded to a social media website". Additionally, Sigala (2018) explained that it is an activity that occurs when anyone takes their own photos with a significant background for keeping them as remarkable memorable experiences.

Selfies play a significant role in tourism photography (Nguyen et al., 2018). Moreover, it has become a new motive for tourism and has changed the tourists' way to document and share their Memorable Tourism Experiences (MTE) during and after their trips (Trinanda and Sari, 2019). Thus, this phenomenon requires a more detailed examination and research. It is a combination of social, emotional, mobile, and technological actions that results from the constant conjunctions among travel, digital culture, and communication techniques (Sahoo, 2019). Becoming a regular activity in all tourist experiences, the selfie phenomenon led to the emergence of the new "Selfie Tourism" concept (Arpaci et al, 2018).

Selfie tourism is a tourist activity that turns into communication with others. It involves visiting a destination, taking photos individually or in groups, then sharing them with others via social networks, in order to capture themselves in relation to where they are and show how happy they feel in the form of Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM) (Trinanda and Sari, 2019).

Some destinations have turned their exceptional location into selfie hotspots with special measures to ensure tourists' security (Bhatt and Bedekar, 2021), such as the 'IamAmsterdam' as well as the Dubai Beach Mall selfie stations (Nguyen et al., 2018).

Therefore, selfie tourism has become a tourism product, a motivation for traveling, a means of MTE documentation, and a tourism marketing strategy (Sari et al, 2019).

H1. Selfie tourism has a significant and positive effect on memorable tourist experience.
H2. Selfie tourism has a significant and positive effect on hedonic well-being.
H3. Selfie tourism has a significant and positive effect on eudaimonic well-being.

Memorable Tourism Experience (MTE)

MTE means all the memories and photographs of tourists in relation to their emotions and feelings during various tourism activities (Coelho and Gosling, 2018). It is naturally personal, involves the senses, makes a connection on an emotional, physical, spiritual, and social level, and creates a lifelong memory (Tsai, 2016; Lee, 2015).

MTE is selectively assembled from the entire tourism experience of tourists (Kim et al., 2012), specifically, when they visit a destination with a special interest and participate in related activities that satisfy their needs (Kim, 2018).

However, not all experiences are pleasurable or memorable, and MTE does not necessarily mean a positive experience. Besides, the intensity of the memory differs depending on the individual's previous encounters, even with the same service providers (Björk et al, 2022).

MTE plays a fundamental role in impacting the tourist's future destination choices and the WOM he shares with others (Moliner-Tena et al., 2021). Moreover, positive MTE prompts place attachment and destination loyalty as it makes tourists nostalgic and willing to revisit the destination (Rasoolimanesh et al., 2021; Coudounaris and Sthapit, 2017).

Trinanda et al. (2022) stated that MTE not only depends on entire feelings and emotions, but it also can be in learning and documenting experiences form by taking (Selfie or Live Stories) at tourist attractions during the trip and sharing them with friends or followers.

In addition, pleasurable MTE is essential for tourism marketers as it adds a competitive advantage to tourism destinations (Kim, 2014), especially since it is more cost-effective to attract repeat tourists than first-time ones (Al-okaily et al., 2022; Rasoolimanesh et al., 2021).

Furthermore, positive MTE results in well-being enhancement, as it is profoundly linked to the tourist satisfaction level during the trip (Luo et al., 2021; Vada et al., 2019).

H4. Memorable tourism experience has a significant and positive effect on hedonic well-being.
H5. Memorable tourism experience has a significant and positive effect on eudaimonic well-being.
H6. Memorable tourism experience has a significant and positive effect on the place Attachment.

Well-being

Travel and tourism generally have a great effect on tourists' well-being, and people nowadays are increasingly seeking to improve their well-being via MTEs (Medeiros et al., 2020; Su et al., 2020).

The well-being concept encompasses two perspectives namely hedonic well-being and eudaimonic well-being (Ryff et al., 2021).

The hedonic approach, on one hand, explores short-term well-being in terms of joy, satisfaction, and contentment. On the other hand, the eudaimonic approach explores a deeper and broader long-term well-being including self-development, life purpose, meaningful relationships, and personal growth (Joshanloo et al., 2020; Zuo et al., 2017).

Despite the belief that tourism mainly relates to hedonic well-being where tourists desire pleasure, relaxation, and satisfaction (Hosany et al., 2016), Su et al. (2020) state that some tourism experiences tackle hedonic well-being whilst other experiences tackle eudaimonic well-being. Moreover, researchers have recently validated a considerable correlation between both well-being approaches. Besides, eudaimonic well-being tourism activities normally generate happiness and convenience, i.e. hedonic well-being. Nonetheless, well-being tourism activities do not necessarily provoke eudaimonic well-being (Lee and Jeong, 2019). In other words, hedonic well-being is a natural consequence of eudaimonic well-being (Rahmani et al., 2018).

Hedonic tourism activities that create feelings of relaxation, comfort, happiness, and escaping problems include enjoying the beautiful scenery, relaxing by the beach, or having culinary experiences for instance. Meanwhile, tourism activities that are linked to adventure, making new friends, or volunteering for example are considered eudaimonic activities, which provoke challenge and self-actualization emotions (Su et al., 2021; Su et al., 2020).

H7. Hedonic well-being has a significant and positive effect on place attachment.
H8. Eudaimonic well-being has a significant and positive effect on place attachment.

Place attachment

Places become meaningful through when emotions, significance, or beliefs are associated with them (Hosany et al., 2016), and place attachment refers to the impactful connection between individuals and places (Jorgenson and Nickerson, 2016; Cheng et al., 2013).

In tourism contexts, place attachment aims at studying the human-destination rapport, and setting marketing strategies accordingly (Dwyer et al., 2019). It plays an integral part in tourism marketing for its crucial impact in terms of tourists' behavior, destination loyalty, WOM as well as destination competitiveness (Stylidis, 2018; Tsai, 2011).

Studies have revealed that feeling nostalgic and deeply attached to a certain place or destination would profoundly influence people's behavior regarding the place and motivate them to spread positive WOM. Additionally, it would result in loyalty which refers to the state of being emotionally and psychologically committed and willing to keep revisiting a certain destination (Wang et al., 2022; Lee and Jeong, 2021).

Place attachment develops through all trip stages; before the trip by assigning a certain image and significance to the destination, during the trip through positive emotions and experiences, and after the trip through remembering special moments and experiences (Kastenholz et al., 2020). Therefore, place attachment is highly affected by MTE and well-being, whether hedonic or eudaimonic (Lee and Jeong, 2021).

Nevertheless, having a hedonic experience only in a certain place does not necessarily create place attachment, but a eudaimonic experience most probably does (Lee and Jeong, 2021).

H9. Selfie tourism has a significant and positive effect on Place attachment.

Research methodology
Population, sample, and data collection procedures
The respondent of this study are tourists that have visited Marsa Alam city in Egypt. There were 305 respondents, who met the specified sample size criteria and filled out the questionnaire. The questionnaire was distributed online via Google forms, with mandatory questions, so 100% of responses were valid for analysis. Respondents were contacted via email, and different social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram, and Facebook direct messages. The number of respondents has met Weston and Gore's (2006) recommendation to have a minimum sample size of 200 for any Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) analysis. SEM is mostly used for research that is designed to confirm a research study design rather than to explore or explain a phenomenon (Fan et al., 2016).

Construct Measurement and questionnaire

This study used 5 variables including "selfie tourism, MTE, hedonic and eudemonic well-being and place attachment" with 31 measurement items which were all based on several prior studies (Al-okaily et al., 2022; Trinanda et al., 2022; Majeed and Ramkisson, 2020; Vada et al., 2019; Cheng et al., 2013). A five-point Likert scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5) was used as the measurement scale. All measurement items are shown in Table 1.

Table 1	Constructs Mean and Standard Deviation		
Construct	**Items**	**Mean**	**SD**
Place attachment	I feel as part of this place.	3.82	1.02
	Emotionally, I can't get away from this place.	3.64	1.20
	This is the best place for me to visit.	4.08	.89
	This is a special place for me personally.	3.97	.89
	I like to engage in tourism activities in this place better than other destinations.	3.90	.94
	There is no substitute for the tourist attractions of this place.	3.36	1.18
	If I stop visiting this place I would lose contact with many friends.	3.13	1.37
Memorable tourism experience	I found meaningful experiences in this place.	4.26	.79
	I always remember my experience in this place.	4.23	1.06
	I had a unique experience in this place.	4.10	1.13
	I did not find the same experience elsewhere.	3.56	1.22
	The feeling of visiting this place is different from other places.	4.34	.72
	I found new experiences at this place.	4.23	.95
Hedonic well-being	This is an ideal trip for me.	4.15	.81
	It is a fun trip for me.	4.25	.82
	I got what I hoped for on this trip.	4.07	.974
	I feel satisfied with this trip.	4.25	.99

Eudaimonic well-being	I feel like living life one day at a time.	**3.98**	**.97**
	I feel like I have a sense of direction and purpose in life.	**4.02**	**.90**
	This experience helped me feel there is meaning to present and past life.	**4.20**	**.94**
	This experience helped me have warm and trusting relationships.	**4.05**	**1.00**
	This experience helped me possess a positive attitude toward myself.	**4.28**	**.79**
Selfie tourism	I like to take selfies when I travel.	**4.08**	**1.06**
	I take a selfie to indicate that I have been to a certain location.	**3.98**	**1.21**
	A good selfie gives me pleasure.	**4.20**	**1.10**
	I take selfies to encourage my friends to visit the destination.	**3.77**	**1.18**
	Selfies can shape my perceptions and pre-visit feelings and experience.	**3.93**	**1.12**
	Selfies inspired me to visit the destination.	**3.90**	**1.14**
	Destination inspired me to take selfies and share them on social media.	**3.98**	**1.17**
	Receiving feedback from friends makes me feel satisfied.	**4.03**	**1.15**
	When I see my selfies in a destination I visited, I wish to revisit it.	**4.43**	**.92**

Data Analyses

The SPSS program was used for the collected data analysis and hypotheses testing. The validity and reliability of the data were examined by Cronbach's alpha test (.894), which indicated that collected data have a high validity and reliability value (Hair et al., 2010).

Results and discussion

Demographic Profile

The results revealed that most of the respondents were females (72.1%). Most of them (93.5%) were 15 to 37 years old. Besides, 37.7% of them had traveled with family, while 32.8% had traveled with friends. Meanwhile, most of them were college graduates (70.5%)

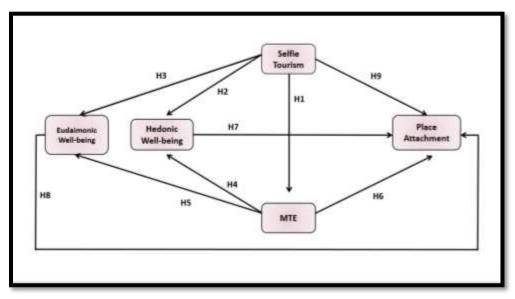| Table 2	Demographic Profile		
Demographics of respondents		**F**	**%**
Gender	Male	85	27.9
	Female	220	72.1
Age Category	18-27	185	60.7
	28-37	100	32.8
	38-47	15	4.9
	Over 58	5	1.6
Level of Education	Secondary Education School	90	29.5
	Bachelor's degree	105	34.4
	Post grade degree	110	36.1
Current Employment Status	Household.	5	1.6
	Unemployed.	5	1.6
	Student.	135	44.3
	Part-time paid work.	10	3.3
	Retired.	10	3.3
	Full-time paid work.	140	45.9
Mode of Travel	Alone	65	21.3
	With Family	115	37.7
	With work fellows	25	8.2
	With Friends	100	32.8

 Hypotheses Testing

As shown in Table 3, the hypotheses testing revealed that all the relationships are significant with a value of 0,000. This means that the entire hypotheses shown in Figure 1 are supported.

Table 3	Hypotheses testing	
Hypotheses		**Asymptotic Significance**
H1. Selfie tourism has a significant and positive effect on memorable tourist experience.		.000
H2. Selfie tourism has a significant and positive effect on hedonic well-being		.000
H3. Selfie tourism has a significant and positive effect on eudaimonic well-being.		.000
H4. Memorable tourism experience has a significant and positive effect on hedonic well being		.000
H5. Memorable tourism experience has a significant and positive effect on eudaimonic well being		.000
H6. Memorable tourism experience has a significant and positive effect on the place Attachment		.000
H7. Hedonic well-being has a significant and positive effect on place attachment.		.000
H8. Eudaimonic well-being has a significant and positive effect on place attachment		.000
H9. Selfie tourism has a significant and positive effect on Place attachment		.000

Note: Asymptotic Significance < 0.001 = high sig.

The collected data of this study revealed that selfie tourism has a positive and highly significant impact on MTE as well as hedonic and eudaimonic well-being (H1, H2, and H3). Furthermore, MTE has a significant positive effect on both hedonic and eudaimonic well-being (H4 and H5). This means that the pleasure, satisfaction, and self-development felt by travelers are determined by the extent to which their experience was meaningful (Aroeira et al., 2016). The study also proposes a positive effect and highly significant relationship between memorable tourism experience, hedonic and eudaimonic well-being on place attachment (H6, H7, and H8). These findings confirm and reinforce the results of recent studies, which suggest emotional feelings toward a tourist destination are determined by those variables (Trinanda et al., 2022; Tsai, 2016)

Findings also approved that there is a direct positive effect and high significance between selfie tourism and place attachment (H9) and also an indirect positive effect between these two variables through MTE and both types of well-being.

Figure 1: Research Model

Based on hypothesis testing, all of the research's aims have been achieved. Thus, the research has clarified that place attachment has many different aspects, however, the vital factors affecting place attachment are creating meaningful experiences and travelers' well-being in tourism activities. Meanwhile, taking selfies is one of the many activities that result in unforgettable memorable experiences and affects well-being.

Conclusions and Recommendations
The tourism sector, like any other business, requires innovation and creativity. Meanwhile, Marsa Alam is a promising tourist destination that is located on the Red Sea, in Egypt. It provides unique natural features and tourism requirements that accommodate selfie tourism interests.
The study concludes that selfie tourism has a positive direct impact on place attachment, and has a positive indirect impact on place attachment, as it impacts MTE, hedonic and eudaimonic well-being, which in turn positively influence place attachment. Besides, selfie tourism, MTE, and well-being can support tourism sustainability, especially in creating place attachments.

Accordingly, this study suggests that Tourist destination managers who wish to make their tourists' visits satisfying and memorable might consider improving the selfie tourism facilities and creating selfie hotspots to

encourage selfie-taking. Selfie backdrops don't always have to be stunning natural surroundings; they can also be man-made, "eye catchy," items. Besides, they would also consider selfie tourism as a marketing tool in their strategies to benefit from its significant impacts on the electronic WOM, and on building strong place attachments, especially for promising tourist destinations such as Marsa Alam.

دراسة تأثير سياحة السيلفي على الارتباط بالمكان في مدينة مرسى علم

المستخلص

سياحة السيلفي هي اتجاه سريع النمو بين السياح بسبب سهولة التقاط الصور ومشاركتها على منصات التواصل الاجتماعي المختلفة. يؤثر هذا بلا شك على سلوك السائحين، لا سيما فيما يتعلق بالمكان وتجارب السياحة التي لا تُنسى. وبالتالي، تهدف الدراسة إلى بحث العلاقة بين سياحة السيلفي، تجربة السياحة التي لا تُنسى، رفاهية المتعة والسعادة، والارتباط بالمكان من خلال توزيع استبيان على زوار مدينة مرسى علم بمصر. تشير النتائج إلى وجود علاقة كبيرة بين سياحة السيلفي ورفاهية المتعة والسعادة بالإضافة إلى تجارب السياحة التي لا تُنسى، والتي تؤثر بالتالي على التعلق بالمكان. تتيح الدراسة لمقدمي خدمات السياحة فهمًا أفضل لأهمية سياحة السيلفي وكيف يمكن استخدامها لزيادة ارتباط السياح بالمكان. علاوة على ذلك، توصي الدراسة بأن يقوم مقدمو الخدمات السياحية بإنشاء مرافق لسياحة السيلفي إدراج تسويق سياحة السيلفي في استراتيجيتهم للاستفادة من تأثيرها على الارتباط بالمكان.

الكلمات الدالة: الارتباط بالمكان، تجربة سياحية لا تنسى، رفاهية المتعة والسعادة، سياحة السيلفي.

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