

Please describe the nature of the research you're submitting.

Delivering a healthy future: Hedonic or Eudemonic product development fit - can we co-locate a tourism and public health strategy?

Wellbeing is a complex construct that concerns optimal experience and functioning. Currently, debate anchors on two general perspectives: the hedonic approach, which focuses on happiness and defines well-being in terms of pleasure attainment; and the eudemonic approach, which focuses on meaning and self-realization. Pleasure is the hallmark of hedonism, and engagement serves as the core feeling of eudemonia. Clearly, engagement with a wellbeing agenda is central to a public health strategy but could also form the basis for a wellbeing concept of tourism. A hedonistic product development approach that, for example, highlights the night time economy, drinking and eating to excess would sit uncomfortably within a health paradigm, and arguably within local society. Alternatively a eudemonic product fit which emphasises human flourishing could be more contemporary and acceptable. Within the new reorganisation and location of Public Health in local authorities, this provides an excellent opportunity for other key strategic and synergistic directions to integrate, such as a tourism policy.

What problem does it seek to solve?

Central to co-locating a tourism and public health strategy is creating a community culture where the destination is seen to enhance and promote the advancement of physical and mental health for both local inhabitants and tourists. An emerging conceptualisation of public health is to reject the model of ourselves as mechanics that diagnose and fix what is wrong to organic metaphors where we understand ourselves as 'gardeners', enabling the growth of what nourishes human life and spirit. A community that supports health creation can be a re-branding opportunity within a destination management approach. The aim of this research is to critically analyse the positioning of seaside towns in Southern England towards the wellbeing concept of either a hedonic or eudemonic dimension and to explore the relationship of co-locating a tourism and public health strategy.

How will it make a difference in the future? Please include timescales and details of tangible impacts.

There is a clear public health need to promote a sustainable healthy lifestyle and achievable exercise habit; evidence on the physical health benefits of such a regime is compelling. Physical inactivity costs the NHS £1.8 billion a year, where only 35% of men and 24% of women reach the recommended physical activity target. The introduction of bike hire schemes in major cities across the world has prompted a new social norm and visual hint, encouraging more people to want to cycle. Running 'grids' have been developed using a GPS iPhone app which allows runners to track their run; all initiatives which could give the community a framework for increased activity but also act as a USP for the tourist destination, hence realigning a hedonistic tourism strategy towards a more societal acceptable eudemonic position. With much debate on aspects of wellbeing, social tourism and inclusion prevalent at both national and local levels, most notably in Bournemouth with the town's 2026 vision group, there is much momentum building in this area. The case study is already demonstrating an active dialogue between the Director of Public Health and Director of Tourism where the potential for strategic realignment is viewed as an exciting prospect.

Please include short details about the research leader or team.

Dr Heather Hartwell is part of the tourism and wellbeing team and Assoc Director of the Centre for Wellbeing and Quality of Life based at Bournemouth University. She is Editor of the peer reviewed journal Perspectives in Public Health, and trustee of the Royal Society for Public Health.

Professor Alan Fyall is Deputy Dean Research & Enterprise in the School of Tourism at Bournemouth University and is a former member of the Bournemouth Tourism Management Board. Alan sits on the editorial boards of five leading journals including Annals of Tourism Research.