

Author: Dr. Faye Taylor

Position: Lecturer in Marketing at Nottingham Trent University, England

Title of paper: "Journey of the pleasure seekers: A comparative analysis of hedonistic travel motivations in night-life resorts"

The academic discourse on hedonism as a feature of travel motivation has largely focussed upon deviance and hedonistic egoism (Wickens, 2002; Currie, 1997 and Bellis and Hale, 2000) where hedonism is equated with overindulgence and moral decay (Veenhoven, 2003). The notion of ethical hedonism, however, which is less widely supported, takes a less critical view and views hedonism as natural and healthy (Veenhoven, 2003) whereby people have the right to pursue pleasure as a way of life without harming themselves or others (Onfray, 2007).

Hedonic travel motives have been more widely documented within the youth market (Swarbrooke and Horner, 2007; Tutenges, 2012), however Goulding's research on lived nightlife experiences (2004) notes a rise in 'cognitively young thirty-something's' as an under-researched, hidden sector, where attitudes to leisure are changing, disposable incomes are high and the quest to maximise net pleasure is strong. Whilst the impact of cognitive age and travel experiences receives some attention in respect of seniors (Iyer *et al*, 2008; Sellick and Cleaver, 2004; Le Serre *et al*, 2013; Gonzalez *et al*, 2009), sparse attention is paid to the impact of cognitive age in the 30 – 40 years of age travel market.

This working paper aims to evaluate the extent and nature of hedonism as a motivating influence on youth travel behaviour. Embracing the benefits of technology and social media to connect with these subcultures (Poynter, 2010; Chau, 2012), the research seeks to uncover the extent to which the desire to encounter pleasure, of various forms, bears influence over the travel decisions and behaviours of young consumers. Comparative research will be undertaken with their predecessors, the 'cognitively young thirty-something's' (Goulding, 2004) to create a narrative of their experiences to comprehend the nature of hedonism and moral philosophy within youth tourism and the implications thereof.

It is anticipated that the research will offer greater understanding of the nature of hedonism as a feature of travel motivation and how this compares between age segments engaging in similar nightlife pursuits whilst on holiday. This will have implications for the supply and design of the night-life economy within tourism destinations as well as destination branding implications. With the night-life economy representing a significant element of destination appeal (Tutenges, 2013), and little still known about the meanings attached to nightlife experiences and travel, research potential arises.