



Solo Travel and Well-Being Amongst Women: An Exploratory Study

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ABSTRACT

Solo travel is no longer a niche market. It alone contributes a massive amount of the total travel market and has shown an enormous growth in recent years. But the existing body of literature on solo women travelling and its outcomes is quite negligible. Consequent upon the fact, this study significantly contributes in the increment of existing literature. A conceptual model is proposed based on the secondary data sources and presents a discussion on the impact of solo travel experiences on women's well-being. For this purpose, a range of research papers, articles, blogs and other relevant social media contents have been reviewed to draw conclusive results for the study. In the findings, self-transformation and positive changes in well-being came out as resultant factors of solo travelling in many cases. Major reasons for solo travelling found during the study were—to overcome stress and depression, to bring positive change in present state of life, escape, happiness, empowerment, self-growth and self-realisation. This paper significantly adds to further researches on women solo travelling trends by providing insights into independent form of travel and draws attention towards its importance for women's health.

Keywords: Solo Travelling; Women's Health; Hedonic & Eudaimonic well-Being; Vacation

1. Introduction

Travelling has a different meaning for different people. Some travel for pleasure or relaxation while some travel for adventure and new experiences. Either way, it is an important part which

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can transform lives in many ways. The term 'tourist' has been continuously changing and has passed through progressive deconstruction over the last few decades. It was previously based on a homogeneous mass community of individuals travelling either for business or leisure purposes (Wilson & Harris, 2006; Yiannakis & Gibson, 1992). Academicians are continuously working from a progressively knowledge-based platform have raised questions on the similarity assumption among tourists. Now the tourists are being claimed to be a more fragmented, complex and diverse group of people, who may be segmented into numerous markets (Yiannakis and Gibson, 1992; Weaver and Oppermann, 2000; Leiper, 2003; Wilson and Harris, 2006). And one of the trending market segments nowadays comprises people who want to travel alone, especially women, who wish to manage their travel aspects by themselves. It is a unique opportunity to find out exactly who one is in a new surrounding with no one from past to influence. According to McNamara and Prideaux (2010) Solo women travellers are confident, bold and gutsy adventurers and are not loners. They choose to go alone in the quest of independence, personal fulfilment, to seek adventure, individuality and sometimes escape. They are driven by conscious and specific motivations and not because of the misconception that they are alone. Many tourism researches claim that women are considered as essential key decision-makers for a family vacation, but now their role is not only restricted to plan for others, they can now plan independently for themselves too. This new shift in the mind-set has increased scope in overall market consumption by solo women travellers. Women are now seen prominently taking part in other types of travel activities also (Malik, 2018) to develop their overall personality and maintain good health.

As per new researches proposed by scholars in the travel sector, the meaning of tourism has drastically changed in this 21st century, gaining meaningful life longing experiences through tourism is a current need of tourists today. A new quest of travellers is finding a sense of mental, physical and spiritual satisfaction through travel, rather than just escaping in the futile search for 'authenticity' (Bruner, 1991; Digance, 2003; Callanan & Thomas, 2005; Wilson and Harris, 2006). It can offer opportunities for emotional healing, personal reflection and appreciates the natural beauty of a region too where one can experience enlightenment and could find true meaning of life, and can feel more in touch with oneself (Bruner, 1991). A number of tourism studies have specifically explored how independent travel can lead to self-conversion and improved well-being (Wilson & Harris, 2006). Everyone is exposed to some kind of transformation to some extent during travel, with the condition that transformation may occur despite the tourist not explicitly labelling it as such an experience, but indicated by any personal development or change. A continually rising body of literature in this field has changed its emphasis to the emancipating nature of woman's independent travel (Elsrud, 1998; Wilson & Little, 2008; Jordan & Gibson, 2005) which either results in hedonic (gain happiness, pain avoidance and pleasure) wellbeing (Kahneman et al., 1999) or eudaimonic (self-realisation, personal growth and self-actualisation) wellbeing. In this paper, solo independent travel is referred for those women who arrive at the destination alone (McNamara, K.E., & Prideaux, B. 2010) and conduct the whole trip without any companionship from family, friends or anyone from their past.

This research paper is thus well placed to fill the research gap in existing literature by adding important discussions on women solo travel and its association with well-being factors. As earlier researches were focused mainly on the motivations behind solo travel and constraints faced by women before and during solo travel, but there are negligible studies which emphasised specifically over the impact of solo travelling on the well-being of women. This study embraces the notion that how independent travel could transform women's lives and drives the attention towards the importance of solo trips for women. Crucially, the focus is on the individual transformation and wellbeing, and how these moments and experiences may result in a change of personality and attitude towards life.

1.1. Past and Present Scenario of Solo Women Travelling

Travelling has a long back history but travelling alone was not encouraged or acceptable for women. Today's women motivations have been inherited from many women in history, starting in the 18th century and onwards. Many of them have proved that gender disparity could no longer stop them from travelling and have shown how travelling has improved their lives. As per researches, the concept of solo-travelling started from Egeria. She was a lady, broadly regarded to be the creator of a point-by-point record of a journey to the Holy Land. The letter, named *Itinerarium Egeriae* or *Peregrinatio*, is being addressed to a circle of females at home. It includes sets of the excursion in the mid-80s, making it the earliest of its kind. It gets by in fragmentary structure in the latest copy without a date, attribution and title. In the period of 18th and 19th century, many autobiographies of solo female travellers became publicly known, such as *Around the World in Seventy-Two Days*, *Wonderful Adventures of Mrs. Seacole in Many Lands* and many more.

Travelling must first surmount the personal limitations and restrictions that impede the desired preferences for travelling and engage the available space. Dearth of restrictions during the life stage of a woman may be a reason for travelling. The concern of safety and security are negative social obstacles on travel for women solo travellers and once they conquer this feeling, it becomes a reward for the journey (Jordan & Gibson, 2005). It is a different feeling altogether to do things on solo expeditions. Conceptualising travel as significant and appropriate to every day's life shows the intricate, fluid and constantly changing character of the traveller experience and asks for an attempt to transgress basic and one-dimensional analysis of tourism, holidays and business travel. Obviously, women traveller will feel an immense sense of achievement.

Women leisure studies has gradually evolved through many dimensions that goes parallel with other related work in different areas of women studies (Henderson, Hodges & Kivel, 2002). A study shows that female's enthusiasm for self-govern tourism relate to the wish to challenge themselves, find out a sense of self governance and their will to interact with new people and stretch themselves beyond their zone of comfort (Butler 1995; Wilson and Little, 2005; Jordan and Gibson 2005). According to Deem (1996) use of photography during holiday will encourage more women to share their travel experiences and may create better avenues for future research. As compared to past women have started making their journeys more socially visible which truly has increased number of solo women travellers around the world. Feminism trend has also changed perspective towards women leisure by recreating the importance of their lives and making them feel more valued in the society (Henderson, 1991). Compared to men, women are more active in solo travel activity in many countries, and prefer to travel various destinations repeatedly alone if provided with valuable experiences (Bond, 1997). And their success stories are constantly motivating other women to travel independently without waiting for a perfect travel partner (Collins, 2018).

1.2. Worldwide Overview on Solo Women Travel (2015-2019)

An increasing segment of the international travel market is women travelling alone, and in recent years, this niche market segment has become more and more popular (Heimtun & Abelsen, 2013).

"Google searches for 'solo women travel' increased by 32% in 2017 and 59% in 2018". The search grew to 230% in 2019. This increased search is relevant for tour operators as it points the shift of interest in the travel industry (Kow, 2018).

"Pinterest has also reported a 350% increase in women pinning articles in 'solo female travel. Making up around 18% of global bookings, solo travel is becoming ever more popular and has

increased by 7% in the last year alone. Solo travellers typically take longer trips than the other traveller personas at approximately 19 days on average".

"Agoda's 'Solo Travel Trends 2018' survey, conducted by YouGov (global public opinion and data company, UK) found that 'relaxation' and 'time to unwind' is the number one motivator for solo leisure travel globally (61%), which compares to 48% when traveling with friends". (Solo Travel Statistics and Data 2019 – 2020)

According to Cynthia Dunbar, General Manager at REI Adventures (registered seller of travel in the Washington, Iowa and California) "women traveling with us have grown by 60 percent since 2010 and we continue to see this figure grow steadily each year". (Courtesy Intrepid Travel, cntraveler.com). REI is not the only tour company that has seen a hike in female travellers, Walking Vacations and VBT Bicycling, which is famous for its long-distance bike rides at the French countryside, says that 68% of their women travellers in the year 2016 conducted their trip with no companion or friend. On the other side, Country Walkers mentioned that 87% of its female participants were solo, that makes it about 3.3 female to every male traveller (Lippe, 2017; Solo Travel Statistics and Data 2019 – 2020)

Scrolling through Facebook group of "Solo Female Travellers" one finds more than 27,000 members with faces of mothers, sisters, aunts, business class women and also students exploring quaint villages, big cities, mountains, massive deserts, long beaches, forests etc. (Kow, 2018)

According to a recent report published by the Indian Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, the state of Punjab ranks first when it comes to single women travellers, followed by Telangana. Despite the lack of safety and the prevalent notion that women are more vulnerable on their own, 40 per cent of all single member overnight trips in India were by women. The percentage was actually higher in rural India (41 per cent) and marginally lower in cities (37 per cent). Punjab has the distinction of having the maximum single woman travellers in all of India – 66 per cent of single member trips were by women from Punjab, followed by Telangana, where about 60 per cent of all single member trips were by women. The report suggests that only 17 percent of the trips completed in the last 365 days by solo women travellers were for shopping. Most trips were made for reasons of health or leisure.

Many reasons are observed for driving this trend. One of them is their independence and economic empowerment. They want to travel according to their will, do whatever they want to do and not make any compromises with their choices. Earlier it was women safety issues which were holding them back from travelling alone. It is still a valid issue in many countries. But in an interconnected world, the risks are comparatively lesser. There are many nations which are relatively safe for women, among them many East European countries are in the list. Most offer safe trips aimed solely for female travellers (Panicker, 2018).

2. Review of Literature

Travel Industry Association of America says that leisure travel constitutes 82 percent of total domestic person-trips in the United States, out of which, almost one third (31 per cent) is made by solo travellers and amongst them, 47 per cent are female (Travel Industry Association of America). While most of the people intend to travel for pleasure, female solo traveller represents a significant portion of this sub-market (Chiang & Jogaratnam, 2006), and it is a fast-growing international tourism market. Association of British Travel Agents exhibits that travelling solo for leisure activities comprise two-thirds of women. Female solo travellers are very distinct in their preferences than other travellers (Chiang & Jogaratnam, 2006).

Jordan and Aitchison (2008) noted significant growth in solo women traveller. Solo female travellers have emerged on a new phenomenon in tourism studies (Wilson & Little, 2005, 2008; Chiang & Jogaratnam, 2006; McNamara & Prideaux, 2010). Many recent researches have shown that female solo travellers are very excited about a life-changing experience when they travel independently and are concerned about their self-identity and empowerment (Wilson & Harris, 2006). All-women travel groups are a growing phenomenon and also it has been studied to interpret travel intentions and actions (Berdychevsky & Bell, 2012; Berdychevsky, Gibson & Bell, 2016; Khoo-Lattimore & Prayag, 2015).

One of the various reasons of travelling solo is escape which is a prevalent, driven force for independent female tourist's (Butler, 1995; Stone & Nichol, 1999; Chiang & Jogaratnam, 2006; Wilson & Harris, 2006, Berdychevsky, Gibson, & Bell, 2013). Benefits founded by Junek, Binney & Winn (2006) of an all-women travel group includes a calm surrounding atmosphere, intemperateness and intensive feelings of protectiveness. Wilson and Harris (2006) also found other benefits such as self-identity, gaining self-confidence, feeling of self-empowerment, and self-esteem, while McNamara and Prideaux (2010) unveiled that women travelling solo intend to challenge themselves and broaden their zone of comfort.

Travel experiences have a significant impact on well-being which results in health and wellness benefits (Mokhtarian & Pendyala, 2018). Butler, 1995; Wilson & Little, 2005; Jordan & Gibson, 2005, in their study, discovered that the intention of women to travel alone was related to their desire to push themselves, to find a sense of independence and determination and to cope with new people.

Many studies have exhibited, in recent past, the endowing and meaningful aspect of solo women travel where controlling one's discretion is of utmost importance (Wilson & Harris, 2006). It was found that women solo travellers admitted the feelings of independence and self-control. Jordan & Gibson (2005) also showed that female solo traveller exhibited a general conscience of independence, empowerment and confidence.

Wilson & Harris, 2006 noted that one of the many reasons to travel alone was the desire for recognition, search for self-identity and ways for grooming. It was also admitted that though solo travelling is an outer journey but somewhere it is an inner one for many women. It is a combination of exploring self and abandoning oneself and seeking to blend the two. Solo travelling is not only a physical thing but a psychological experience with a spiritual touch.

Seow & Brown (2018) exhibited that freedom and flexibility are the two main reasons for travelling alone. It was found that freedom, the root cause behind the solo female travellers' intention. Another very important reason, found by Seow & Brown (2018) is escapism from the state of unhappiness.

Chiang & Jogaratnam in 2006 attempted to find out various reasons for a female who travels alone. Five determinants were extracted in this regard which is getting experience with new people, understanding new cultures, relaxation, self-esteem and escape from all the responsibilities.

With many other welfares, solo travel defines well-being related to pleasure attainment and obviating of pain. At the same time, it focuses on the meaning of self-realization. These are the two general perspective of well-being: Hedonic approach and Eudaimonic approach (Ryan & Deci, 2001). Ryan & Deci (2001) says that *"The goal of life is to experience the maximum amount of pleasure, and that happiness is the totality of one's hedonic moments"*. Waterman (1993) stated that *"whereas happiness is hedonically defined, the eudaimonic conception of well-being calls upon people to live in accordance with their daimon, or true self"*. Solo travelling encompasses these two psychological approcases at the same time. It fulfills the need of pleasure,happines and self relaization which are the basic component of wellbeing.

Smith & Diekmann (2017) believes the words of Aristotle and states that *"only eudaimonic happiness can provide the path to true and lasting wellbeing. Hedonism and pleasure are short-*

lived, even for the tourists themselves, whatever their subjective list or desire fulfilment tells them. Although eudaimonic and existentially authentic experiences may also only provide temporary wellbeing on holiday, the take-home effects that are created through these experiences may help to develop 'optimum' wellbeing being in everyday life" (Smith & Diekmann, 2017).

Besides research papers, there are many articles on various social media sites where authors found many women who have travelled independently and are frequent travellers for years. These gutsy women share their stories either through interview or with their own Vlog or Blog as to why they chose to travel alone and how independent travel has transformed their thoughts and improved their overall development of mind and body. Such women are an inspiration.

When it comes to the idea of solo women travelling, it is beyond just women demanding for their personal rights of being liberated as men. Women do not just travel to prove the world that they can have all odds. Be it anyone men or women, everyone travels to seek something. And when it comes to Indian metro cities, the idea of solo trips is gradually sinking in. At last, it is all about mentality of a person, and the tourist's ability to take that leap of faith, which makes him/her a solo traveller.

Table 1. Related Studies to Solo Women Travel and Well-Being

Author(s)	Article	Major Finding
Chiang & Jogaratnam (2006)	"Why do women travel solo for purposes of leisure?"	Experience, relax, escape, social and self-esteem were found the major motivational factors of women solo travelling.
Wilson & Harris (2006)	"Meaningful travel: Women, independent travel and the search for self and meaning"	The conceptual findings of this study unwrapped the truth that meaningful travel involves women looking for an increased sense of self and reconsidering their view towards life, society and their relationships with others.
Junek, Binney & Winn (2006)	"All-female travel: What do women really want?"	This study identified following benefits in all female travel: relaxation, congenial and intimate atmosphere in the group, sharing the same kind of interests and absence of competition and tensions.
Wilson & Little (2008)	"The solo female travel experience: Exploring the geography of women's fear"	Results of this empirical study revealed that women perceived travel fears relating to others' perceptions, a susceptibility to vulnerability, a sense of restricted access, and a feeling of conspicuousness.
McNamara & Prideaux (2010)	"A Typology of Solo Independent Women Travellers"	The findings demonstrated that solo independent women traveller felt safe in the destination and participated in a wide variety of activities including those with some degree of risk.
Berdychevsky, Gibson, & Bell (2013)	"Girlfriend getaways and women's well-being"	The evidences of this exploratory study showcased that solo women traveller felt a sense of freedom from social structure and gendered expectations.
Mokhtarian & Pendyala (2018)	"Travel Satisfaction and Well-Being"	The results of this study demonstrated a significant relationship between travel and wellbeing.
Smith & Diekmann (2017)	"Tourism and wellbeing"	This study exhibited the relationship between wellbeing and tourism by defining eudaimonic and hedonic factors.

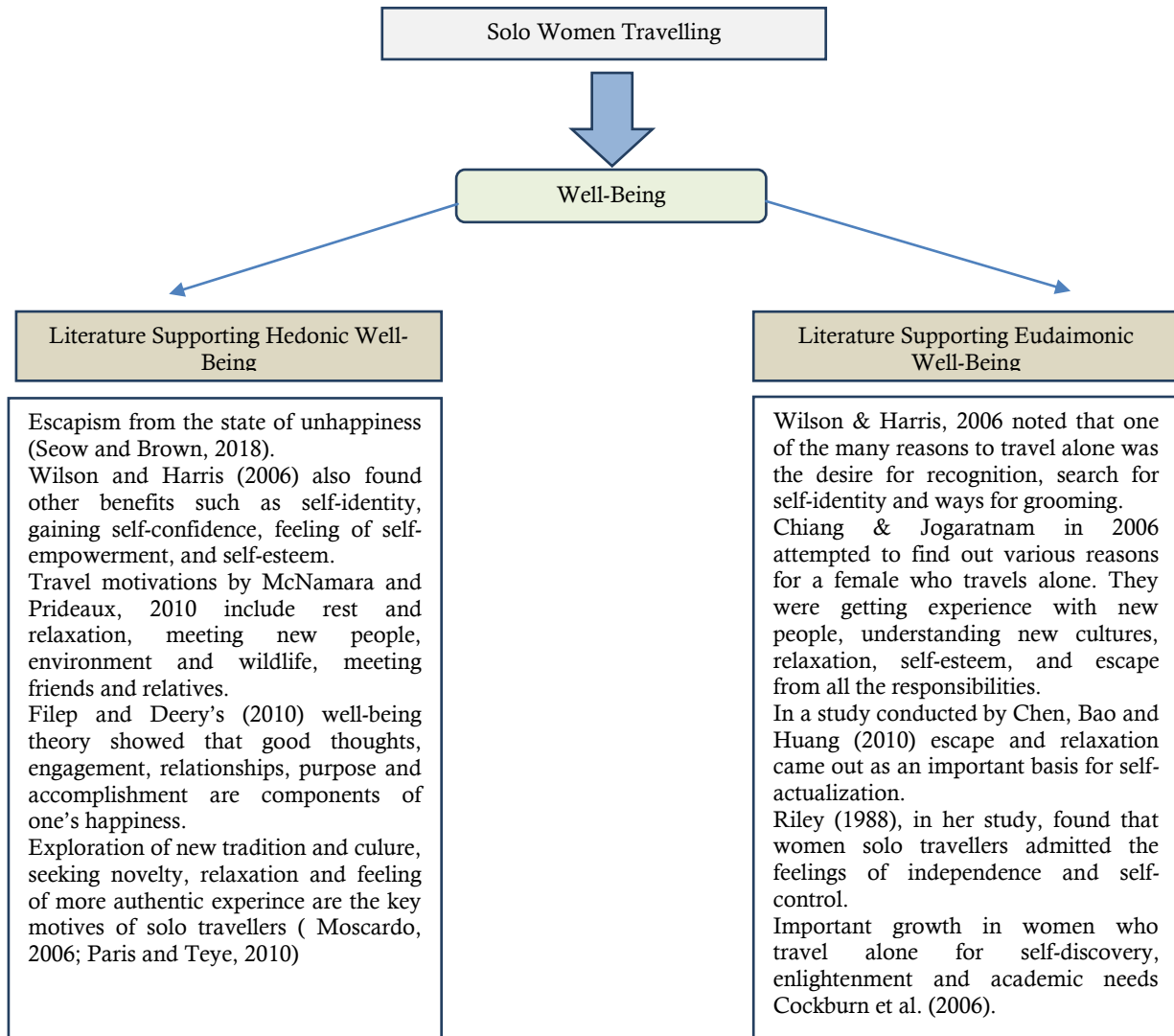
Source: Author's

3. Metode

A conceptual model is proposed, based on the literature review and secondary data sources, which additionally provided the grounds for defining dimensions on women solo travelling. For this purpose, a range of research papers, articles and other relevant social media contents have been deeply reviewed to list various motivational factors, components and reasons for solo women travelling and present a discussion on the impact of solo travel experiences on the wellbeing of

women. Real life stories of independent female solo travellers along with Hedonic and Eudaimonic dimensions of wellbeing have also been used to explore the relation between the two variables.

The conceptual framework of the study



Source: Author's

Above conceptual framework is formulated out of various literature reviews by the researchers to exhibit the relation between women solo travelling and its related outcomes on woman's and their well-being. Wellbeing is a dynamic construct involving optimum knowledge and functioning. The present study on women's solo travel and well-being was derived from two general perspectives: The first one is hedonic approach that focuses on satisfaction and explains well-being in the sense of experiencing pleasure, avoiding pain and happiness; and the second one is eudaimonic approach which emphasises on meaning of life, self-realisation (Ryan and Deci, 2001) and other aspects of self-discovery. In general well-being could be described in terms of the degree to which a person is fully functioning. Tourism is correlated with the development of feelings of happiness and wellbeing. Leisure and recreation play a vital role in cultivating good health, encourages happiness and life satisfaction (McCabe & Johnson, 2013). Jordan and Aitchison (2008) found that holidays have a statistically important effect on promoting happiness by comparing some of the leisure activities in their study. In an all-female leisure setting, women may guarantee their subjectivity and could find their true self. Informal conversations are an important part of the

friendship of women and a source of liberation and empowerment for women as emotional and social friendship support helps them to tackle adverse events in their life (Henderson and Gibson, 2013). Therefore, as an essential way of leisure and recreational activities, solo travel plays a significant role in bringing wellbeing in their life. Fullagar (2011) in his study says that social activities such as crafting, sports and travel lead to the wellbeing of women and promote their recovery from depression by enabling them to transcend conventional gender roles and ethics of treatment, as well as to build new connections with themselves and others. Women are now giving time and space to themselves and becoming more prominent in the travel world. Many solo women travellers publicly share their personal experiences by blogging over social media platforms, motivating thousands of women around the globe for sole exploration. Researchers in tourism believe that blogs can be an important resource in studying the psychology and behaviour of travellers, as they can provide different tourists' experiences and insights related to the same form of travel (Mack et al., 2008; Bosangit et al., 2009; Volo, 2010).

Table 2. Solo women travel experiences and their outcomes

Solo Travel Experiences	Changes un Well Being
<i>Mariellen Ward</i> "Well, it certainly changed my life! I arrived in December 2005 for a six-month trip, not knowing what would happen... and everything happened. I recovered from depression and found a new man, a new family, a new home, a new career, and a new life" (as cited by Collins, 2018).	<i>Recovery from depression</i> <i>Growth in career and life</i>
<i>Jassi Sangha</i> "Travelling is the best teacher one can have it has always been a way to empower myself It's a journey within the self".	<i>Empowerment</i> <i>Self growth</i>
<i>"I've earned a few relationships which I couldn't have found while traveling with others" (Collins, 2018)</i>	<i>Developing special relationship</i>
<i>Helen Suk</i> "And I needed to go alone. India had already on my travel list so, of course, I visited Taj Mahal, a glorious structure. Goa, Dharamsala, Haridwar and Rishikesh also left me spellbound. But it was the holy city of Varanasi where I found the strength to finally pull myself from the tidal waves of grief" (Coliins, 2018)	<i>Recovered from stress</i> <i>Came out of grief.</i>
<i>Ellen Jaworski</i> "This trip started by accepting a challenge: hiking the Inca trail to Machu Picchu. ,My experience hiking the Inca trail certainly can't be compared to surviving something as horrific as having to cut your own arm off like the sobering film, 127 hours, but I learned some empowering lessons about how I rise to a challenge, my ability to confront my fears and discomforts, and what I'm capable of surviving" (Jaworski, 2020).	<i>Feeling of self-actualisation</i> <i>Discovering inner strength</i> <i>Meeting challenges</i> <i>Minimizing fears.</i>
<i>Ellen Jworski</i> "I'm proud to say I successfully completed my first solo trip , and in the process, learned a lot about those intangible qualities that contribute to optimal health and wellness. Since returning home, I've noticed a subtle, yet powerful shift in my own wellbeing" (Jaworski, 2020).	<i>Self Growth</i> <i>Improved Well-Being</i>
<i>Sophie</i> "I booked to go alone to prove to myself that I could do it, that I would be okay. Solo travel for me was liberating, it created moments for me to learn more about who I am as a person and rise above the challenges in my life at that time." (as cited by Whitaker, 2020)	<i>Discovering new satiating feelings</i> <i>New world of contentment.</i>
<i>Marina</i> "I took my first solo trip because I craved the freedom and flexibility that accompanies it. I was at a point in my life where I wanted to experience something that was totally about me. That may sound selfish — but I was caught up in a whirlwind of external things and solo travel seemed like the self-care I needed at the time" (as cited by Whitaker, 2020).	<i>Discovering new ways of self love and self-care.</i> <i>Freedom</i> <i>Flexibility</i>

Source: Author's

These travel experiences are taken from articles specially published on solo women travellers around the world, where direct quotes of solo women travellers were mentioned. From those mentioned quotes, most probable outcome is mentioned as a change in wellbeing.

Travel blogs have now become an integral part of the modern travel experience, as the understanding of self-identity by travellers can be connected through their narrative tales and how

they connect to different elements of self-conceptualisation, including beliefs, desires, and social interactions (Volo, 2010). The focus of mentioning real life stories is to show how solo travelling have given life changing experiences to women and it represents the personal feelings in relation with independent travel, adding to the effects of women's involvement in solo trips. As explored in these stories of solo female travellers in this study, the inner desire for travel helped 'drive' them around the globe to travel. Moreover, women consider that travelling is a good way for the exploration of outside world and endeavour to seek the 'life of travel'. This also echoes the "approach" (seeking) theory by Filep and Deery (2010), in which they included happiness approach in the context of one's wellbeing and escape from pain to show up the travel motivations. Women socially share their solo journey experiences, which are connected to elements of hedonism, relating to simple pleasure and happiness while travelling (McCabe & Johnson, 2013). While many of them also mentioned self-realisation, feeling of contentment and personal growth outcomes of solo travelling which are related to eudaimonic aspects of wellbeing in humans.

4. Finding and Discussion

As per the literature review and real-life success stories it was found that solo travelling has major positive changes in women viz., feeling of freedom, creativity, happiness, self-development, special relationships in the outside world, feeling of contentment, self-realisation and many more, which are either categorised under hedonic or eudemonic parameters of wellbeing in the conceptual framework of the study. Conclusive results are also drawn out of travel blogs and solo travelling articles to show the positive effects of solo travel experiences on the wellbeing of women. Solo travel gives a productive view of all aspects of determining the life's meaning and transforming one's life, because this form of travel provides people, especially women, their personal space and time for reflection and self-development away from family and friends. This represents that solo travelling gives meaning to the life. This kind of experience of travel is that sees people finding or discovering growth in their self-confidence and empowerment, taking into account their life decisions and perspectives (Wilson & Harris, 2006; Caruana et al., 2008; Seow & Brown, 2018). Although women show interest in the "self-development", they also value their connections with the society and the people they visit. The required need for social connections and interaction is also echoed in previous literature (Wilson & Little, 2008; Yang et al., 2018). As such, communication with the outside world which brings the feeling of contentment is another benefit that independent travel brings to women.

Apart from personal fears and challenges, it was found that women face a lot of constraints while opting for solo travelling but these constraints for women in solo travelling vary in different parts of the world. Constraints faced by women in India and other Asian countries are quite different as compared to western women (Xie, 2019) who are comparatively bolder in taking solo trips as compared to other regions. Solo travelling is sometimes a passion which could instinct you to travel at any age, but during the literature review, it was mostly found that young women between the ages 25 to 45 years conducted solo trips and are mostly financially independent and well educated. In many cases, they even left their job to go on a long solo trip to escape their unhappy and monotonous life. This shows that women now are more concerned towards their health and they understand very well that when they need to take a break from their job, family and daily routine life to keep themselves stress free. Many women around the globe have overcome these constraints and have developed a feeling of self-care and self-love for the sake of their own wellbeing.

A major chunk of solo travellers come from women which represent a considerable submarket (Chiang & Jogaratnam, 2006). Solo travelling has a significant impact on the wellness of women and transforms them into independent, confident and experienced individuals. (Wilson & Harris, 2006). Independent women travel as addressed by Junek, Binney, and Winn (2006) brings space and time for self-indulgence, feeling of safety and relaxed atmosphere, which

ultimately transforms their lives and improves their mental and physical state. Self-identity recognition, increase in self-esteem, self-empowerment and self-confidence are some more benefits identified by Wilson and Harris (2006). According to Forbes travel guide (2018), vacationing improves mood and reduces stress and also decreases their chances of being stressed, depressed, tensed and tired and are much happier in their married life. It broadens the horizon of their self-identity, increases self-confidence and make their decisions feel more valued. But at the same time, it is also found that every woman is not fortunate enough to go on a solo trip, main reasons for this were; family restrictions, job restrictions, lack of finance, insecurity, and fear of harassment. But in spite of all it is found that American women are leading the way globally in experiencing solo trips as compared to the women of other countries (Whitaker, 2020). Travelling alone challenges them and extends their comfort zone (McNamara and Prideaux, 2010). It results in health and wellness benefits and releases stress (Mokhtarian & Pendyala, 2018).

5. Conclusions & Future Directions

This study highlights useful insights for women travellers who choose to travel independently. Women travelling alone represent an increasing segment of the travel market internationally (Heimtun & Abelsen, 2013). Understanding consumer experience and finding new ways to build value for consumers are vital (Sotriadis, 2017). Travel providers will also be able to concentrate their marketing efforts on delivering a more comprehensive service to this market segment through recognising the travel motivations of women. Destination managers should encourage a safer travel space and atmosphere as security is considered one of the key concerns of Asian solo female travellers, which when embarking on a solo adventure could facilitate a feeling of safety and comfort. Women belonging from emerging developing economies are also important participants in social processes. Tourism providers who wish to appeal to the female and non-western tourism markets should take these travellers' priority needs thoroughly and adequately into account to ensure that everyone has equal and sufficient space (Xie, 2019). The results suggest an implication of the management of the travel experience of young independent female travellers. As this is a conceptual and descriptive study, future researches based on primary data would be of great importance and this study may support empirical studies to a great extent. Also, in future research, there is a need to enhance the understanding of country wise preferences and needs of solo women travellers so as to provide information that will help the industry cater more to this rising segment of the market and more importantly spreading this knowledge beyond the wider academic community to raise awareness on women travel and create real change.

6. Conflicts of Interest

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interests with respect to the authorship and/or publication of this article.

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