Are Tourism Practitioners Happy? The Role of Explanatory Style Played on Tourism Practitioners’ Psychological Well-Being

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Abstract: Research on tourism has gradually focused on the study of well-being, but relatively little attention has been paid to the psychological well-being of tourism practitioners. This study adopted the theoretical lens of explanatory style and the PERMA model (P = positive emotion, E = engagement, R = relationships, M = meaning, A = accomplishment) to investigate the influence of tourism practitioners’ explanatory style on their psychological well-being (PWB). The survey study demonstrated that explanatory style was significantly related to PWB; whilst an optimistic explanatory style was positively related to PWB, a pessimistic explanatory style was negatively related to it. Additionally, in the context of Chinese culture, tourism practitioners were inclined to attribute PWB to internal, stable, and specific causes. This study falls within the extensive field of occupational health psychology and theoretically contributes to the literature by connecting positive psychology and its effects on practitioners in the tourism context. Meanwhile, there are similarities and differences between the PWB and explanatory style in the Chinese cultural context and in the Western context. This finding has practical implications for generalizing the PWB of tourism practitioners in different cultural backgrounds, especially in countries with Eastern cultural backgrounds, further improving the sustainable development of tourism destinations.

Keywords: explanatory style; tourism practitioners; psychological well-being; PERMA model

1. Introduction

As a leisure activity, tourism is an important way to achieve happiness; it has been integrated into more people’s lives and has become a lifestyle. It is, therefore, not surprising that well-being has become a topic of increasing relevance to the study, practice, and promotion of tourism [1]. In recent years, tourism-related research on well-being has flourished as tourism scholars have begun to integrate the study of well-being into their work [2].

As the number of studies on well-being in the field of tourism has gradually increased, most studies have mainly focused on subjective well-being (SWB) in tourism, confirming the positive contribution of tourism to subjective well-being [1,3]. Subjective well-being (SWB) is people’s cognitive and affective evaluations of their lives [4]. With the gradual improvement of the research on subjective well-being, some recent studies have been skeptical as to whether subjective well-being (SWB) should continue to be the dominant way of conceptualizing tourist happiness [1] because SWB is limited in its ability to explain the meaning and value that tourists find in tourism, well-being must include more than happiness or positive emotions, and psychological well-being (PWB) can fill this gap perfectly [5]. PWB is an ideal in the sense of excellence, a perfection toward which one strives, and it gives meaning and direction to one’s life [6]. Compared to subjective well-being, which focuses on the subjective feelings of individuals, psychological well-being focuses on the objective experience of individuals’ interaction and development in a group [7]. Although a shift from the subjective perspective to the realizationist perspective has become necessary, only a few tourism studies included the topic of PWB [8]. According
to the World Health Organization (WHO), mental health is a state of well-being in which an individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively, it is more than just the absence of mental disorders or disabilities, and mental health promotion involves actions that improve psychological well-being. If an industry fails to promote the PWB of its employees, there may be a lack of motivated and committed workers, which affects the growth of the industry [9].

From the point of view of research subjects, most studies on tourism and well-being focused on tourists and local residents. Yet, although tourism practitioners are one of tourism’s major stakeholder groups, there is a lack of research on their well-being [10]. Previous studies highlighted the precarious working conditions, limited public recognition, low social prestige, and low competitiveness of the tourism industry, which led to low work-related psychological states among tourism workers [11,12], and today, the COVID-19 pandemic set the stage for global change, tourism has undergone a dramatic shift from normalcy to chaos to stagnation. All of this has fostered a timely reassessment of tourism and travel-induced well-being. In such a situation, tourism practitioners are under increasing pressure, inclining to higher exposure to declining well-being. However, research in the field of tourism neglects the study of the well-being of tourism practitioners.

Tourism practitioners’ well-being could be linked to their explanatory styles [13]. Research on explanatory style and well-being has been widely applied in fields such as pedagogy, psychology, and sociology, focusing primarily on adolescents and student groups [13,14]. Although previous studies confirmed the research on the influence of explanatory style is more mature, to date, few studies have explored the association between explanatory style and psychological well-being. In addition, there is a lack of research on explanatory style in tourism, especially for specific groups (practitioners) in tourism. From a human resources perspective, explanatory style not only affects feelings of stress and depression but also correlates with job satisfaction, performance, and turnover rates. Therefore, this study aims to examine the tourism practitioners’ PWB from the perspective of positive psychology and test the effect of their explanatory styles on PWB through an empirical study in a travel scenario. In order to provide a context for this study, a review of the literature on PWB, explanatory style, and well-being in tourism is conducted in the next section.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Well-Being and Psychological Well-Being

Traditionally, the concept of well-being has evolved from two philosophies: hedonism and eudemonism [15]. These terms have very different connotations, with the former emphasizing the pleasure derived from certain activities and the latter referring to meaning in life [16]. Hedonia is a more immediate, affective experience, whilst eudemonia is focused on meaning and purpose [17]. As a counterpart to these two dimensions of human flourishing, there are also two main approaches to modern well-being research, which are distinguished by the terms ‘SWB’ and ‘PWB’. SWB refers to an individual’s overall evaluation of the quality of his or her life according to his or her own internal standards; it has been defined as ‘a person’s cognitive and affective evaluations of his or her life [18].

As for PWB, there is currently no unified definition, but the important aspects of the concept appear in three main definitions. Waterman [15] defined PWB as the state of an individual’s self-potential realization; Ryff and Keyes [19] supported the idea that PWB is not only an individual’s emotional pleasure but also, and more importantly, a process in which an individual tries to achieve self-realization by exercising his or her own potential. Ryan and Deci [16] proposed using self-determination theory, which posits that people’s inner resources are of great importance to achieve lasting well-being. As for the dimensions of PWB, Ryff [6] refined the six dimensions of PWB, namely self-acceptance, positive relations with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, and personal growth. Self-determination theory developed by Ryan and Deci [20] outlined three basic needs, namely competence, relatedness, and autonomy, and recently,
Seligman [21] proposed the PERMA model of PWB, whose facets were positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment. As a major positive psychology scheme, this model contains elements of both hedonic (purposeful life) and eudemonic (joy and pleasure) traditions, providing a more balanced and comprehensive perspective to measure well-being. Therefore, this study mainly explored the PWB of research subjects. In the following section, we review the applications of well-being in tourism.

2.2. Well-Being in Tourism Studies

Since Pearce [22], tourism academics have used the lens of positive psychology to understand how tourism contributes to well-being [23–25]. Many scholars believe that positive psychology has the power to essentially reshape the forms of travel behavior; there have been an increasing number of tourism studies on the SWB, focusing on short-term well-being in tourist activities [3,22]. However, Filep [23] argued that we do not know yet whether diverse tourism activities lead to higher well-being in the long term, if well-being is not interpreted in strictly hedonic terms.

With the deepening of this research trend, scholars have also concerned with the residents’ SWB in tourism destinations. Tourism development positively affected the SWB of residents through its combined effects on the social, environmental, economic, and cultural dimensions of their lives [26,27]. However, overdeveloped tourism tends to have the opposite effect. Therefore, destination residents have been shown to perceive tourism as a double-edged sword [28]. Other factors that mainly affect residents’ SWB include aspects such as perceived community benefits, favorable social relations and participation in value co-creation with tourists [28,29].

However, some scholars questioned the use of SWB in tourism research, observing that studying tourism through SWB may constrain the research focus to the emotional elements of tourist activity, making it difficult to explain meaningful experiences [5,30,31]. It may therefore be problematic to put too much emphasis on the distinction between pleasure and meaning when conceptualizing tourist well-being. Therefore, some researches called for the adoption of more comprehensive theories that incorporate both hedonic and eudaimonic aspects of well-being. Some scholars believe that the problems with SWB in tourism may be remedied by supplementing research with a PWB perspective, which is more helpful for accurately grasping the meaning of tourism experiences, and thus opens a research avenue from the subjective perspective to the psychological perspective [1,5,32].

2.3. Tourism Practitioners’ Well-Being

Most current research on the well-being of tourism practitioners has touched upon the topic of negative emotions, especially among front-line tourism workers. Because tourism practitioners have considerable work time demands, atypical working times, long and intensive interactions with tourists, they have extremely limited ‘offstage’ space and time to process their emotions. Tourism practitioners suffer from strain and stress, have high rates of job burnout or depression, and are less satisfied with their work and life in general than practitioners in other fields [33–35].

The main factors that affect the well-being of tourism practitioners are professional identity, interpersonal communication, and engagement in the work environment, work-to-leisure ratio, and working conditions. Studies have shown that work-to-leisure conflict positively affects job burnout and is negatively associated with PWB [33,36]. However, perceived social support—from such sources as supervisors, friends, and family—may generally alleviate the influence of negative emotions [37]. Perceived organizational justice is positively associated with employee well-being, and workplace friendships have a significantly positive effect on employee well-being [38,39]. Moreover, career prospects and identity have a positive influence on well-being [40].

Although scholars are now beginning to pay attention to the well-being of tourism practitioners, compared with tourists and community residents, studies on tourism practitioners are still scarce, and research drawing from positive psychology is largely ab-
sent [24,41]. Today, positive psychology opens another window for the study of tourism, promising not only to improve the ‘flow’ experience of tourists but also to improve the well-being of tourism practitioners [42]. Therefore, this study examined the well-being of tourism practitioners from the perspective of positive psychology.

3. Theoretical Grounding and Hypotheses

Explanatory Style and Well-Being

Explanatory style (attributional style) is a cognitive personality variable and refers to an individual’s habitual way of explaining the causes of positive and negative events in his or her life. The notion of explanatory style originated in Seligman’s research on the theory of ‘learned helplessness’ [43]. Explanatory style describes individual differences in the causal attribution of events that a person experiences along three dimensions: (1) personalization (internal vs. external cause); (2) permanence (stable vs. unstable cause); and (3) pervasiveness (global vs. specific cause) [44,45]. In accordance with these three dimensions, there are two types of explanatory style: optimistic explanatory style and pessimistic explanatory style.

Lazarus’ cognitive appraisal theory [46] states how a person evaluates his/her dealings with the environment, revealing the personal meaning and significance attributed to potentially stressful events, and that both personal and situational influences can affect the perception of threats and challenges. In addition, cognitive appraisals influence coping processes that shape the emotions aroused. A person’s attribution of different events can have an impact on the aspects of emotions, meaning, and self-efficacy.

Studies have demonstrated that individuals with optimistic explanatory styles can improve their health practices, self-esteem, and happiness. When they are facing adverse and stressful life events, they are more likely to use active coping strategies and are better able to prevent such problems, which are considered to be constructive as they lead a person to expect a better world [13,45]. Based on the foregoing analysis, explanatory style can affect PWB, and people with an optimistic explanatory style tend to have higher PWB. Therefore, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

H1a–e. Tourism practitioners’ optimistic explanatory style is positively related to PWB (positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment).

A pessimistic explanatory style is clearly correlated with a wide range of negative social and emotional outcomes, such as anxiety, loneliness, low self-acceptance, and self-devaluation; people with a pessimistic explanatory style tend to have vague goals and behave in passive and fatalistic ways [47,48]. A pessimistic explanatory style can also affect PWB; therefore, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

H2a–e. Tourism practitioners’ pessimistic explanatory style is negatively related to PWB (positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment).

It is found that internal, stable, and global attributions are associated with well-being and further confirmed the validity of the scale in China [49]. Although the universality of explanatory style has been validated through extensive research, it is still influenced by cultural factors in some respects. Some studies have also paid attention to cross-cultural research. Studies have found that different cultures in the East and the West may produce different interpretations [50].

According to the results of the previous studies, the participants perceived feelings of happiness to be more personally controllable, stable, and internally caused than feelings of unhappiness; in addition, an optimistic explanatory style for explaining positive events was more important for daily life satisfaction and relationship well-being than an optimistic explanatory style for explaining negative events. It implied that this style has a stronger predictive power on well-being [14,51].

As outlined in the foregoing discussion, this study aimed to further extend this distinction: joint modeling of attributions for positive and negative events to examine the
correlated explanatory style factors of internality, stability, and globality. Therefore, this study proposes the following hypotheses:

**H3a-e.** Tourism practitioners’ internality is positively related to PWB (positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment).

**H4a-e.** Tourism practitioners’ instability is negatively related to PWB (positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment).

**H5a-e.** Tourism practitioners’ specificity is negatively related to PWB (positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment).

### 4. Methodology

#### 4.1. Research Sample

This study chose Hangzhou city in Zhejiang province and Wuyishan city in Fujian province as the research sites. Hangzhou, as one of China’s first-tier cities, has experienced relatively high economic development closely related to local tourism. The second site was Mount Wuyi city, whose area tourism has developed as a pillar industry. It is a World Heritage Mixed Property and a key national scenic spot, featuring beautiful landscapes and diverse cultures. As representative popular tourist destinations, they attract many tourists and practitioners every year, and these two places have different types of tourism practitioners. Therefore, conducting surveys in both places was helpful in better understanding the PWB of tourism practitioners.

#### 4.2. Measures

This study used a questionnaire as its main research tool. The main body of this questionnaire is composed of three parts. The first part described the respondent’s personal profile. It includes the basic information, such as gender, age, birthplace, educational background, monthly income, and occupation.

Second, the questionnaire has measured explanatory style using items adopted by Peterson’s ASQ (Attributional Style Questionnaire). The ASQ contains 12 hypothetical situations, half of which represent a positive event (e.g., ‘You become very rich’) and half of which represents a negative event (e.g., ‘You have been looking for a job unsuccessfully for some time’). After reading each event, the participants were asked to explain the reasons for each situation. The three items of each situation corresponded to the dimensions of internality, stability, and globality [44]. In this study, this questionnaire was also measured on a 7-point Likert scale, where a score of 1 represents internal, unstable, and specific attributions, and a score of 7 represents external, stable, and global attributions.

The third part measured the PWB of tourism practitioners through the five dimensions of the PERMA model (including positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment). This section adopted the PERMA model measurement scale compiled by Butler and Kern and included 15 questions (three items per PERMA domain) [52,53]. To increase the accuracy of the scale test, we distributed 31 questionnaires to tourism practitioners as a pilot survey using convenience sampling in Ningbo Dongqian Lake Scenic Area at the end of November 2020 and obtained 28 valid questionnaires. Based on the results of the analysis of the questionnaire data and interviews, we modified the questionnaire, and the questionnaire added one question in each of the five domains of the PERMA model. In addition, a new question for measuring general well-being was also added. Therefore, there were 21 items on this scale. A 7-point Likert scale was adopted for all questions in the questionnaire; the higher the score of an item, the higher the level of this dimension (1 = ‘strongly disagree’ and 7 = ‘strongly agree’).

IBM SPSS Statistics 26 and Amos Graphics 26 were used as analytical tools in this study. First, descriptive analyses of demographics were conducted on the sample using SPSS 26, and then reliability tests were performed to ensure the reliability of each dimension. Then, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted with Amos 26 to validate the combined reliability and convergent validity as well as the discriminant validity of the measurement.
model through the values of Standardized factor loadings, average variance extracted (AVE), and composite reliability (CR). Finally, the overall structural model was also tested to discriminate the model fit as well as to test each hypothesized path.

4.3. Data Collection

In the formal data collection procedure, the researchers distributed 334 questionnaires; 303 were deemed valid, for a valid response rate of 90.7%, with 31 deemed invalid because there are missing answers or all answers choose the same option in the questionnaire. All of the participants were workers in the field of tourism. Table 1 provides a demographic profile of the sample. The descriptive analysis showed that there were many more young participants than older participants. The majority of the participants had a high school (37.3%) or a college diploma (47.9%), and most of the participants’ personal monthly income was less than 10,000 yuan (80.6%). The profession in this study was a composite of many different fields, including hotel workers, catering staff, tourist destination staff, travel merchandise salesmen, tourist traffic staff, travel agents, and other tourism practitioners. The participants came from all provinces of China; however, the largest proportion came from Zhejiang and Fujian provinces.

Table 1. Demographic profile of the sample.

| Items         | Category                | Frequency | Percent (%) |
|---------------|-------------------------|-----------|-------------|
| Gender        | Male                    | 112       | 37          |
|               | Female                  | 191       | 63          |
| Age           | Younger than 18 years   | 6         | 2           |
|               | 19–28 years             | 130       | 42.9        |
|               | 29–38 years             | 89        | 29.4        |
|               | 39–48 years             | 54        | 17.8        |
|               | 49–58 years             | 17        | 5.6         |
|               | Older than 58 years     | 7         | 2.3         |
| Education     | Junior school and below | 40        | 13.2        |
|               | High school             | 113       | 37.3        |
|               | Bachelor                | 145       | 47.9        |
|               | Master or above         | 5         | 1.7         |
| Personal monthly income | Below than 5000 Yuan or 5000 Yuan | 109 | 36 |
|               | 5001–10,000 Yuan        | 135       | 44.6        |
|               | 10,001–20,000 Yuan      | 40        | 13.2        |
|               | Higher than 20,000 Yuan | 19        | 6.3         |
| Profession    | Accommodation service  | 91        | 30          |
|               | restaurant practitioner | 34        | 11.2        |
|               | Scenic spot staff       | 40        | 13.2        |
|               | Travel merchandise salesman | 45    | 14.9        |
|               | Tourist traffic officer | 5         | 1.7         |
|               | Travel agent            | 8         | 2.6         |
|               | other                   | 80        | 26.4        |

5. Results

5.1. The Psychological Well-Being and Explanatory Styles of Tourism Practitioners

The standard deviation of the PWB domains ranged between 0.95 and 1.36 (Table 2). Among them, positive emotions scored the highest (mean = 5.64), followed by meaning (mean = 5.52), relationships (mean = 5.42), and accomplishment (mean = 5.35); the score for engagement was relatively low (mean = 4.88).
Table 2. Psychological well-being and explanatory style domain scores.

| PWB domains          | Mean | SD  |
|----------------------|------|-----|
| Positive emotion     | 5.64 | 1.16|
| Engagement           | 4.88 | 1.36|
| Relationships        | 5.42 | 1.02|
| Meaning              | 5.52 | 1.13|
| Accomplishment       | 5.36 | 1.08|
| General PWB          | 5.38 | 0.95|

| Explanatory style I       | Mean | SD  |
|---------------------------|------|-----|
| Optimistic explanatory style | 5.23 | 0.76|
| Pessimistic explanatory style | 5.01 | 0.77|

| Explanatory style II      | Mean | SD  |
|---------------------------|------|-----|
| Internality               | 4.75 | 1.05|
| Instability               | 5.29 | 0.77|
| Specificity               | 5.31 | 0.78|

The three dimensions of positive and negative events were weighted separately when measuring explanatory style. There was little difference between optimistic explanatory style and pessimistic explanatory style, with mean values of 5.23 and 5.01, respectively, and standard deviations of 0.76 and 0.77.

Of the three dimensions of explanatory style, specificity scored the highest (mean = 5.31), and the score for internality was relatively low (mean = 4.75). Among them, the standard deviation for internality was relatively high (SD = 1.05).

5.2. The Influence of Optimistic and Pessimistic Styles on Tourism Practitioners’ PWB

Measurement model. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to verify the reliability, convergent, and discriminant validity of the proposed constructs [54]. The measurement model showed a relatively acceptable fit (CMIN/DF = 2.387; CFI = 0.92; GFI = 0.863; IFI = 0.921; TLI = 0.904; RMSEA = 0.126) [55–57].

SPSS 26.0 was then used for the reliability test, with Cronbach’s $\alpha$ (>0.7) as an indicator of reliability [58]. The reliability test results showed that Cronbach’s $\alpha$ for the full questionnaire was 0.95. Apart from the variables of optimistic explanatory style and pessimistic explanatory style, Cronbach’s $\alpha$ was greater than 0.7, indicating that the questionnaire had an acceptable internal consistency.

Last, the reliability and convergent validity of the questionnaire were verified using composite reliability (CR), and average variance explained (AVE). As shown in Table 3, all CR estimates ranged from 0.76 to 0.86 for each construct, were higher than 0.7, and the AVE values of all variables ranged from 0.49 to 0.64, were higher than the suggested 0.5 (except for relationships = 0.49) [59,60]. In addition, the square root of most latent variable AVE was higher than the correlation between that latent variable and the other latent variables (see Table 4), indicating the acceptable discriminant validity of the scale data.

Table 3. Scale item and confirmatory factor analysis results.

| Constructs and Indicators | FL   | SMC  | AVE  | CR   | $\alpha$ |
|---------------------------|------|------|------|------|----------|
| Positive Emotion          |      |      | 0.64 | 0.88 | 0.88     |
| P1: I am passionate about life | 0.82 | 0.81 |
| P2: I am joyful about life | 0.81 | 0.82 |
| P3: I am positive about life | 0.88 | 0.73 |
| P4: I am content with life | 0.69 | 0.48 |
Table 3. Cont.

| Constructs and Indicators                      | FL  | SMC | AVE | CR  | α   |
|------------------------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| **Engagement**                                 |     |     |     |     |     |
| E1: I often take part in some travelling activities | 0.64| 0.48|     |     |     |
| E2: I feel excited and interested in travelling activities | 0.81| 0.70|     |     |     |
| E3: I often lose track of time while doing travelling activities | 0.66| 0.50|     |     |     |
| E4: I often become absorbed in travelling activities | 0.72| 0.58|     |     |     |
| **Relationships**                              |     |     | 0.49| 0.79| 0.79|
| R1: Neighbours are willing to help me in life  | 0.69| 0.51|     |     |     |
| R2: Government workers are willing to help me in life | 0.64| 0.44|     |     |     |
| R3: I feel loved in my life                    | 0.73| 0.56|     |     |     |
| R4: I feel satisfied with my personal relationships | 0.75| 0.60|     |     |     |
| **Meaning**                                    |     |     | 0.60| 0.86| 0.86|
| M1: I have a sense of clear direction in my life | 0.80| 0.72|     |     |     |
| M2: I feel worthwhile in taking part in travelling activities | 0.73| 0.64|     |     |     |
| M3: I know how to live my life                 | 0.81| 0.67|     |     |     |
| M4: I feel that my life is valuable and worthwhile | 0.73| 0.64|     |     |     |
| **Accomplishment**                             |     |     | 0.57| 0.84| 0.84|
| A1: Travelling activities help me make progress | 0.84| 0.73|     |     |     |
| A2: I have achieved important goals            | 0.76| 0.64|     |     |     |
| A3: I have performed the duties of my job      | 0.69| 0.53|     |     |     |
| A4: I've done a good job in my travelling activities | 0.73| 0.57|     |     |     |
| **Optimistic explanatory style**               |     |     |     |     |     |
| **Pessimistic explanatory style**              |     |     |     |     |     |
| P                                              | 0.802|     |     |     |     |
| E                                              | 0.598| 0.706|     |     |     |
| R                                              | 0.733| 0.658| 0.701|     |     |
| M                                              | 0.796| 0.722| 0.855| 0.777|     |
| A                                              | 0.670| 0.758| 0.807| 0.912| 0.756|
| OE                                             | 0.379| 0.310| 0.484| 0.387| 0.459| 0.728|
| PE                                             | 0.374| 0.307| 0.487| 0.386| 0.485| 0.905| 0.753|

Note: FL = factor loading; SMC = squared multiple correlation; AVE = average variance extracted; CR = composite reliability; α = Cronbach’s α.

Table 4. Discriminant validity.

| Variable | P   | E   | R   | M   | A   | OE  | PE  |
|----------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| P        | 0.802|     |     |     |     |     |     |
| E        | 0.598| 0.706|     |     |     |     |     |
| R        | 0.733| 0.658| 0.701|     |     |     |     |
| M        | 0.796| 0.722| 0.855| 0.777|     |     |     |
| A        | 0.670| 0.758| 0.807| 0.912| 0.756|     |     |
| OE       | 0.379| 0.310| 0.484| 0.387| 0.459| 0.728|     |
| PE       | 0.374| 0.307| 0.487| 0.386| 0.485| 0.905| 0.753|

Note: Square roots of AVE are shown on the diagonal in bold.

Structural model. Structural equation modelling (SEM) was used to test how well the proposed model explained the collected data. The fit indices (CMIN/DF = 4.041; CFI = 0.817; GFI = 0.799; IFI = 0.819; TLI = 0.791; RMSEA = 0.100) suggested a relatively acceptable fit for the structural model. Therefore, the structural model and hypothesis can be tested.

Hypothesis testing. The hypotheses presented above were tested. In terms of the influence of attributions for positive and negative events on the PWB of tourism practitioners, the results (Figure 1) showed that optimistic attribution had a positive effect on PWB; thus, H1a, H1b, H1c, H1d, and H1e were supported; negative attribution had a negative effect on PWB, supporting H2a, H2b, H2c, H2d, and H2e.
5.3. The Influence of Internal, Instable, and Specific Attributions on Tourism Practitioners’ PWB

**Measurement model.** The overall model fit was satisfactory, with good index values (CMIN/DF = 1.745; CFI = 0.893; GFI = 0.788; IFI = 0.894; TLI = 0.883; RMSEA = 0.050).

In Model 2, Cronbach’s α values for all variables were between 0.79 and 0.92. It suggested that the questionnaire had good internal consistency. All CR estimates ranged from 0.79 to 0.91 for each construct and were higher than 0.6; the AVE values of all variables ranged from 0.39 to 0.64 (see Table 5). The square root of most latent variable AVE was higher than the correlation between that latent variable and the other latent variables (see Table 6), indicating the acceptable discriminant validity of the scale data.
Table 5. Scale items and confirmatory factor analysis result.

| Constructs and Indicators | Standardized Factor Loading | SMC | AVE | CR | Cronbach’s α |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|-----|-----|----|--------------|
| Positive Emotion          |                            |     |     |    |              |
| P1: I am passionate about life | 0.81                      | 0.90|     |    |              |
| P2: I am joyful about life   | 0.81                      | 0.90|     |    |              |
| P3: I am positive about life  | 0.89                      | 0.84|     |    |              |
| P4: I am content with life   | 0.69                      | 0.65|     |    |              |
| Engagement                 |                            |     |     |    |              |
| E1: I often take part in some travelling activities | 0.64  | 0.67|     |    |              |
| E2: I feel excited and interested in travelling activities | 0.81  | 0.84|     |    |              |
| E3: I often lose track of time while doing travelling activities | 0.66  | 0.69|     |    |              |
| E4: I often become absorbed in travelling activities | 0.72  | 0.75|     |    |              |
| Relationships              |                            |     |     |    |              |
| R1: Neighbors are willing to help me in life   | 0.69                      | 0.70|     |    |              |
| R2: Government workers are willing to help me in life | 0.63                      | 0.62|     |    |              |
| R3: I feel loved in my life    | 0.72                      | 0.74|     |    |              |
| R4: I feel satisfied with my personal relationships | 0.75                      | 0.78|     |    |              |
| Meaning                    |                            |     |     |    |              |
| M1: I have a sense of clear direction in my life | 0.80                      | 0.87|     |    |              |
| M2: I feel worthwhile in taking part in travelling activities | 0.73                      | 0.81|     |    |              |
| M3: I know how to live my life    | 0.76                      | 0.85|     |    |              |
| M4: I feel that my life is valuable and worthwhile | 0.81                      | 0.88|     |    |              |
| Accomplishment             |                            |     |     |    |              |
| A1: Travelling activities help me make progress | 0.84                      | 0.88|     |    |              |
| A2: I have achieved important goals    | 0.76                      | 0.83|     |    |              |
| A3: I have performed the duties of my job    | 0.69                      | 0.75|     |    |              |
| A4: I’ve done a good job in my travelling activities | 0.73                      | 0.78|     |    |              |
| Internality                |                            |     |     |    |              |
|                           | 0.39                      | 0.88|     |    |              |
| Stability                  |                            |     |     |    |              |
|                           | 0.45                      | 0.90|     |    |              |
| Globality                  |                            |     |     |    |              |
|                           | 0.47                      | 0.91|     |    |              |

Table 6. Discriminant validity.

| Variable | P  | E  | R  | M  | A  | I  | S  | G  |
|----------|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| P        | 0.802 |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| E        | 0.597 | 0.706 |    |    |    |    |    |    |
| R        | 0.734 | 0.659 | 0.7 |    |    |    |    |    |
| M        | 0.796 | 0.722 | 0.857 | 0.776 |    |    |    |    |
| A        | 0.671 | 0.758 | 0.81 | 0.912 | 0.756 |    |    |    |
| I        | 0.411 | 0.325 | 0.529 | 0.471 | 0.457 | 0.627 |    |    |
| S        | 0.372 | 0.286 | 0.485 | 0.368 | 0.464 | 0.5 | 0.669 |    |
| G        | 0.308 | 0.272 | 0.412 | 0.336 | 0.422 | 0.356 | 0.9 | 0.683 |

Note: Square roots of AVE are shown on the diagonal in bold.

Structural model. The fit indices (CMIN/DF = 2.231; CFI = 0.822; GFI = 0.754; IFI = 0.825; TLI = 0.808; RMSEA = 0.064), using the criteria specified earlier, suggested a relatively acceptable fit for the structural model.

Hypothesis testing. The results for Model 2 (Figure 2) showed that the participants’ internality, instability, and specificity were significantly correlated with PWB. However, as can be seen from Figure 2, the dimensions of internality and specificity in the explanatory style of tourism practitioners were positively correlated with the five dimensions of PWB, and instability was negatively correlated with PWB. Therefore, the results supported H3a–e and H4a–e and rejected H5a–e.
6. Discussion

The study shows that the participants’ scores for the five dimensions of PWB, positive emotions scored the highest and engagement the lowest. Empirical research has found that positive emotions help people to cope with adversity [25,61], and this result may be related to the rapid development of the research sites under study. The good prospects for the development of the tourism industry and the associated rise in income levels are beneficial to tourism workers’ PWB, which in turn leads them to have higher positive emotions. The participants’ low scores for engagement may have been due to the development of tourism having somewhat lengthened their working hours. Working for a long time may lead to conflicts between leisure and work, which will cause a certain level of burnout and may, in turn, affect the initiative with which such workers participate in travel activities [36,39].

Additionally, the optimistic attributional style was positively related to PWB, and the pessimistic attributional style was negatively related to PWB, which is consistent with previous studies [14]. The participants with an optimistic explanatory style had significantly positive results, which means that they have higher rates of participation in tourism, build harmonious interpersonal networks in tourism development, perceive greater meaningfulness in work, strive to create and realize their own life value, all of which result in positive emotions. In contrast, the participants with a pessimistic explanatory style had a low sense of achievement and meaningfulness in tourism work, which may be related to their lower self-evaluation and self-identification, and showed lower engagement and
less connection with others or might perceive less support from others [62]. In particular, attribution for positive events had a greater impact on meaning and achievement, possibly because the group of travel practitioners who participated in this study were mostly young and middle-aged workers and they had more control over their work; accomplishment and meaning are more closely related to PWB among young and middle-aged people who are just beginning to set career goals and work towards them [63].

The results have also shown that the positive predictive effect of optimistic explanatory style on PWB is greater than the negative predictive effect of pessimistic explanatory style on PWB. These results are generally in line with previous studies; attributions for positive outcomes seem to have a stronger effect on well-being than attributions for negative outcomes [14,47]. People’s attempts to explain the positive events that happen to them may ultimately be more important to their well-being and daily life satisfaction than how they explain the negative events. This situation can be explained by traditional Eastern thinking. Unlike people from individualistic cultures, which value open emotional expression and authenticity, Eastern cultures are characterized by collectivism. They tend to value emotional self-control and suppression, and individuals brought up in this type of culture are accustomed to adjusting their behavior [64]. For example, the Chinese Confucian tradition emphasizes the tendency to think in terms of ‘contentment and happiness’, and the ‘golden mean’ (which means people should avoid all excesses and extreme passions) may make Chinese employees less likely than others to show negative emotions; in this case, the explanatory power of negative events is relatively weak [65].

Unlike previous research, this study showed that the participants tended to attribute positive events to internal, unstable, and specific causes and to attribute negative events to external, stable, and global causes. Previous studies have mostly focused on the West, and cultural differences may lead to different outcomes in the Chinese context; cultural differences between East and West tend to lead to differences in Chinese and Western effects in relation to PWB [66,67]. In addition, for the specific group of tourism practitioners, there may be different interpretations. The tourism service industry is often related to instability, as working conditions in the tourism industry are more unstable (e.g., seasonality) than those in other service industries [68]. Furthermore, tourism practitioners have a higher turnover rate, so they are more likely to attribute positive events to unstable, specific causes.

Moreover, this study showed the impact on PWB of three specific dimensions, namely internal–external, stable–instable, and specific–global. Internal attribution was positively related to PWB, and the internal–external dimension had the greatest impact on PWB. Different from Western theories and paradigms, Chinese people who are inclined to internal attribution, whether in favorable or unfavorable situations, tend to have higher levels of well-being in the five dimensions of the PERMA model. Previous research confirms that the understanding of well-being is largely influenced by culture [69,70]. This may be related to China’s traditional culture; Chinese people mostly attribute events to internal factors, such as talent and effort. Chinese people also emphasize the importance of nurturing subjective initiative—that is, rather than avoiding facing their problems, they try to solve or evaluate them more positively. In Chinese culture, it is believed that effort can compensate for lack of ability [13,66].

Regarding the stable–instable dimension, the participants who tended to have stable attribution had higher PWB. Most people in China are more inclined than their Western counterparts to pursue a stable and peaceful life; the more stable people’s attributions are, the more comfortable these people are with the status quo, and this is associated with higher PWB. In addition, the tourism industry is a business model that is sensitive to disruption. The impact of any unforeseen event on the tourism industry can be immediate and severe, and the risks faced by the industry are high. This instability sustains precarious employment among tourism workers. As a result of their prolonged states of worry about their jobs and uncertainty about the future, employees’ physical and mental health is compromised, manifesting in reduced levels of physical health and mental well-being. Therefore, tourism practitioners are more inclined to associate PWB with stability [68,71].
Finally, in the specific–global dimension, attribution to specific causes showed higher levels of PWB. The tourism service industry is a profession that differs greatly from other traditional occupations, and it demands of its workers a great deal of emotional and physical energy, high levels of consistency, and that they regularly meet the high expectations of the people they serve. They are prone to role ambiguity, have a low sense of professional pride and industry identity, and perceive themselves as lacking career prospects. They perceive relatively low happiness in the course of their work, so overall, specific attributions are associated with PWB [72]. When considering the current state of the tourism industry, this attribution may also be related to the impact of COVID-19 on tourism. In the current situation, the pandemic has had a very negative impact on the tourism industry, resulting in large declines in tourists and income, and tourism practitioners feel anxious about job prospects. Therefore, tourism practitioners who are prone to specific attributions may be less affected by job woes in other ways, boosting PWB in other areas of their lives.

7. Conclusions and Implications

This study explored the relationship between explanatory style and the PWB of tourism practitioners. Overall, the PWB of tourism practitioners was relatively high. Their attribution for positive events had a significant positive influence on the five dimensions of PWB (positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment), whilst their attribution for negative events had a significant negative influence on these five dimensions. It is, however, worth noting that, unlike previous studies, the tourism practitioners in this study tended to attribute positive events to internal, unstable, and specific reasons and to attribute negative events to external, stable, and global factors. This study also tested the influence of three dimensions (internal–external, stable–instable, and specific–global) of explanatory style on PWB. It was found that, in general, tourism practitioners in China were inclined to attribute their PWB to internal, stable, and specific causes.

7.1. Theoretical Implications

This study contributes to existing knowledge on tourism practitioners, explanatory style and PWB in several ways. Specifically, the theoretical importance of this study is mainly reflected in the following aspects.

First, it broadens research on tourism practitioners in the field of tourism. Studies have mainly focused on tourists and residents of tourist sites, whilst tourism practitioners have received comparatively less attention. A small number of tourism practitioner-related studies have focused on a specific group of tourism practitioners (e.g., hospitality practitioners, tour guides). In this paper, tourism practitioners in different fields are studied as a whole. As important participants in tourism activity, tourism practitioners have a great influence on the development of tourism. Therefore, relevant research on tourism practitioners needs to be expanded.

Second, well-being has been a trending topic in recent years; tourism research built on psychological theories has proliferated in the past decade, and most studies have focused on SWB, whereas the applications in the area of PWB have been under-researched. In fact, not only hedonic well-being but also eudaimonic well-being are critical. Psychological well-being provides more insight into an individual’s stable, long-term well-being than subjective well-being. Therefore, it is also more conducive to sustainable development. Therefore, the results of this study provide a reference for future research on PWB in tourism. In addition, this study extends the application of the PERMA model in psychological well-being and in the field of tourism. In the PERMA model, psychological well-being is conceptualized as a multidimensional phenomenon that captures both eudemonic and hedonic elements of well-being. Therefore, this study confirms the applicability of the PERMA model in the field of tourism practitioners.

Third, this study is a supplement to the research object of explanatory style, and it enriches the research perspective in the field of explanatory style. Past research on explanatory styles has mostly been conducted in the educational and psychological fields,
with students, children, and teachers as research subjects; this study applies the explanatory style to a specific group in a travel context, exploring the explanatory styles of travel practitioners. Due to the characteristics of the work of tourism practitioners present different explanatory style attributions from other groups. In addition, there is a gap in past research regarding the study of the relationship between explanatory style and psychological well-being, so this study fills the current research gap between explanatory style and psychological well-being and confirms the link between explanatory style and psychological well-being.

Last, most importantly, this study extends the application of the PERMA model and explanatory style in Eastern contexts. Most past studies have been conducted in Western cultural contexts, and there are similarities and differences in PWB and explanatory style in different cultural backgrounds. The study found that, according to cultural differences, people prefer to attribute their PWB to internal, stable, and specific causes in the Chinese cultural context. Thus, the research is complementary to the study of explanatory style and PERMA and provides implications for future research in Eastern cultural contexts.

7.2. Practical Implications

This study also has some practical implications for sustainable tourism and maximizing well-being. First, the results of this study emphasize the importance of improving the PWB of tourism practitioners by minimizing their negative emotions at work and attending to their psychological needs, and focusing on more beneficial attribution among managers and employees in the tourism industry. It helps tourism management organizations and tourism managers to better understand the tourism practitioners’ mental health and the factors that affect their PWB and further find feasible strategies to improve their life quality. Specifically, analyzing influencing factors can develop relevant policies from five areas, namely positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, and accomplishment, in which tourism practitioners can benefit from more effective support to improve their well-being. Managers in the tourism sector can improve the rationalization of working hours by providing employees with frequent work-related activities in the workplace, training in more beneficial attributions, and encouraging the participation of tourism practitioners.

And in the Chinese context, people focus on collective well-being in interpersonal relationships and social harmony. Therefore, tourism-related managers should take initiatives to improve the relationship and cohesion among tourism practitioners, such as organizing group activities to strengthen the ties between practitioners. In addition, leisure-related benefit systems and work-related incentive systems (e.g., extended leave and performance awards) may also be effective measures to enhance the professional identity of tourism professionals, the realization of their own achievements, and thus improve their psychological well-being.

Second, this study has insightful implications for the sustainable development of tourism destinations. As important actors in tourism, tourism practitioners’ PWB has an effect on their behavior and attitudes at work, affecting their loyalty and identity to their job and their daily lives. The attitudes and services of tourism practitioners have a direct or indirect impact on their relationship with tourists, which will potentially affect tourists’ perceptions of the destinations and their on-site experiences. A positive interaction between tourism practitioners and tourists contributes to the formation of a good reputation of the destination, which further contributes to the popularity of the destination. In addition, it increases the likelihood of repeat visits, eventually influencing the sustainable development of the local tourism industry. Therefore, improving the PWB of tourism practitioners is helpful to prompt them to engage with their work environments and to partake in job activities which is conducive to the sustainable and prosperous development of tourism and improve social sustainability.

Third, in the current situation of the global COVID-19 pandemic, tourism practitioners are facing a difficult working environment; it makes more sense to focus on the psychological well-being of tourism practitioners. In particular, the COVID-19 pandemic
and its attendant psychosocial effects have brought PWB issues back into the limelight. In this context, there is a more urgent need for taking relevant measures to mollify the practitioners, reduce the impacts of the external environment on the tourism industry, and protect the sustainable development of tourism. This has management implications for the improvement of the psychological well-being of tourism practitioners under the COVID-19 pandemic and the sustainable development of tourist destinations.

7.3. Limitations and Future Research

The findings of this study have several limitations. First, the PWB scale and the explanatory style scale used in the study were compiled by Western researchers, and the cultural differences between Western and Eastern countries may have had an influence in this area. Second, this study was only conducted in Hangzhou and Wuyishan; therefore, it cannot be verified whether there are differences in the psychological feelings of tourism practitioners in cities with different levels of tourism development. Third, the ASQ questionnaire used in this paper has rarely been applied to the field of tourism practitioners. Therefore, the universality of the results in the field of tourism practitioners remains to be verified. Last, this study did not consider a possible covariate of the model, for example, the professional experience.

Despite these limitations, we believe that this research contributes to the study of the well-being of tourism practitioners. In future research, researchers could adopt more diversified methods, adding qualitative research methods, such as interviews, to supplement the data. In addition, this study only considered the influence of explanatory style on the PWB of tourism practitioners. Therefore, the influence of other variables such as cultural value, job satisfaction, and relative deprivation on the PWB of tourism practitioners could be incorporated into follow-up studies. Finally, we propose to develop the scales specific to tourism practitioners to more accurately reflect aspects of their explanatory style and PWB.

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