

Solo Tourists' Experience-Sharing Tendency: Its Role on Well-Being

Yeliz GÜLER

Dokuz Eylül University, yelizglr@gmail.com

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9916-2629>

Abstract

This study aims to address a gap in the literature by examining how individuals with solo travel experience interpret their tendency to share experiences, the role of such sharing in others' decisions to travel solo, and its contribution to their well-being within the framework of modern well-being theories. Adopting a phenomenological qualitative research design, the study focuses on Turkish tourists with solo travel experience. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with 22 participants and analyzed using descriptive analysis. Findings indicate that experience-sharing behavior supports the positive relations dimension of Ryff's psychological well-being theory, as well as the social contribution, social integration, and social acceptance dimensions of Keyes's social well-being theory. The results demonstrate that sharing solo travel experiences holds deeper meaning for the sharer and positively contributes to both individual well-being and others' solo travel decisions, extending the solo travel experience beyond the journey itself.

Keywords: Solo Travel; Solo Holiday; Solo Tourist; Experience Sharing; Well-being.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the tourism sector, new travel behaviors have emerged as a result of digitalization and individualization. As an alternative to mass tourism, solo travel behavior has shown a significant increase in recent years. Individuals who have solo holiday experiences are classified into four categories based on their typological characteristics: leisure-oriented solo travelers, social solo travelers, exploration-oriented solo travelers, and escape-oriented solo travelers (Zhang et al., 2024).

Various factors such as changes in individuals' educational levels, demographic characteristics, relaxation preferences, the search for freedom and flexibility, increasing environmental awareness, and the desire for exploration influence the decision to travel alone. Studies on solo travel have primarily focused on motivations for traveling alone, communication during the trip, safety, risk, planning, food and beverage, accommodation, socialization, and entertainment experiences. These areas mainly explain the first two stages of the tourist experience: decision making/planning and on-site experiences. However, the third stage of the tourist experience posttravel experiences is a process that increases satisfaction, reinforces the experience, and influences repurchase decisions. Post-travel experiences constitute a phase in which the tourist experience gains meaning at cognitive, emotional, and social levels (Larsen, 2027).

Research indicates that the motivations of Turkish solo travelers for sharing their travel experiences are primarily related to identity, followed by intrinsic factors such as entertainment, relationships, and personal benefits (Arslan & Şimşek, 2022). Another key component of post-travel experience is the sharing of acquired experiences. Experience sharing after travel increases

the social value of the trip and strengthens social ties with others. According to Su et al. (2021), sharing positive tourism experiences contributes to well-being.

It has been observed that solo travel behavior has increased significantly in recent years. In parallel with this increase, solo travel and solo tourists have been examined in the literature from various perspectives. However, a review of the relevant literature reveals a lack of studies examining the tendency to share solo travel experiences, the role of experience sharing in others' decisions to travel alone, and the impact of such sharing behavior on the sharer's well-being. Within this framework, the aim of this study is to determine the role of solo travel experience-sharing behavior in the well-being of the individual who shares the experience. Accordingly, this study seeks to answer the following research question: How do individuals with solo travel experience perceive their tendency to share experiences, how do they interpret the role of experience sharing in others' decisions to travel alone, and what is the role of experience-sharing behavior in the sharer's well-being?

The researcher participated externally in the participant profile; however, the author has twenty years of professional experience in the tourism sector, specifically in travel agency operations, as well as formal education in tourism management. While this background facilitated effective communication with participants and contributed to conducting interviews within the framework of the research problem, the study findings were analyzed by two experts to maintain objectivity during the data analysis stage. The researcher's role, tendencies, and perspective in this study have been transparently presented above. The sections of the study shaped by this perspective are examined in detail below.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Solo Travel and Well-Being

Travel behavior has been present since ancient times, serving different purposes throughout history. In Antiquity, travel primarily served religious or military purposes, while in Ancient Greece it was preferred by philosophers for philosophical development (Seyhan, 2010: 94). During the Middle Ages, travel increased not only for trade but also to religious centers. In the Enlightenment period, with the growing importance of exploration and invention, new forms of social life and thought emerged, giving rise to the idea of "self-reconstruction." Advances during the Industrial Revolution increased transportation opportunities and enabled the emergence of tourism-oriented travel (Çallı, 2015).

As an alternative to mass tourism, solo travel has gained momentum and has attracted attention due to its rapid growth in the global tourism market (Otegui Carles et al., 2022). Rising educational levels, technological developments, environmental awareness, the desire to experience different cultures, and increasing individualization in social life have all contributed to the emergence of solo travel as a viable alternative to mass tourism (Kaba & Emekli, 2018).

Although there is no universally agreed-upon definition of "solo travel" in the literature, it is most commonly defined as "an individual setting out alone to experience a destination and arriving there independently" (Yang, 2021). Despite being described as "traveling alone," studies by Zhang et al. (2024) and Yang (2021) emphasize that solo travelers commonly interact with locals or other tourists at the destination, form temporary social connections, and participate in activities together, without these interactions altering their identity as solo travelers. Although solo travel has often been associated with backpacking and adventure tourism, it has evolved into a more inclusive experience characterized by meeting locals and other tourists, forming friendships, and participating in spontaneous activities. This evolution has led to the concept of being "alone but not lonely." Ultimately, solo travel refers to a process that begins with an

individual's intention to visit a destination alone and involves independently assuming responsibility for transportation, accommodation, and travel planning (Osman et al., 2019).

Solo travel, a significant component of the tourism sector, is experienced by individuals with diverse demographic characteristics, including age, gender, education, and economic status (Ejupi et al., 2022). Motivations for solo travel include personal development, relaxation, escape, self-discovery, environmental exploration, socialization, freedom, and the desire for new experiences (Nguyen & Hsu, 2023; Teng et al., 2023). These motivations are closely linked to expectations of personal growth and change and are considered intrinsic motivations. Since intrinsic motivations are associated with fulfilling personal needs, they are closely related to the concept of well-being (Somasiri et al., 2023).

The concept of well-being is rooted in the philosophies of Aristippus and Aristotle and is addressed through two main philosophical dimensions: hedonic well-being and eudaimonic well-being. While hedonic well-being focuses on short-term pleasure, eudaimonic well-being adopts a holistic perspective oriented toward living a meaningful life (Tekin, 2023).

Within this framework, well-being encompasses all aspects of life (Işık, 2023). Solo travel experiences are reported to create meaningful value in individuals' lives, indicating that solo travel extends beyond being merely a leisure activity and functions as a form of experience through which individuals realize and enhance their well-being. Research demonstrates that solo travel leads to positive changes in individuals' well-being (Hamid et al., 2021). According to modern approaches, well-being is explained through psychological, social, and subjective well-being theories.

Psychological well-being refers to an individual's ability to cope with life challenges, sustain personal development, and establish meaningful relationships. It comprises self-acceptance, positive relations with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, and personal growth (Bulut, 2018).

Social well-being relates to how individuals perceive their lives at a societal level. Conceptualized by Keyes, it emphasizes that well-being is connected to social context and consists of five dimensions: social contribution, social actualization, social coherence, social integration, and social acceptance (Keyes, 1998).

Subjective well-being refers to an individual's evaluation of their own life and the positive emotional state resulting from this evaluation (Gencer, 2018). It involves both cognitive evaluations (life satisfaction) and affective components, including high positive affect (e.g., happiness, peace, enjoyment) and low negative affect (e.g., fear, anxiety, guilt) (Doğan & Eryılmaz, 2013; Morales & Ramos, 2025).

2.2 Theoretical Approaches to the Concept of Well-Being

The concept of well-being has historically been a central topic of inquiry in philosophy and psychology. In the literature, well-being is primarily examined through two fundamental approaches: hedonic and eudaimonic well-being (McMahan & Estes, 2011). These approaches evaluate individuals' lives in relation to pleasure. While the hedonic approach focuses on immediate and short-term pleasure experiences, the eudaimonic approach emphasizes a holistic state of well-being that renders life meaningful (Deci & Ryan, 2008). The hedonic approach is rooted in the philosophy of Aristippus, whereas the eudaimonic approach is grounded in Aristotelian philosophy. Accordingly, the hedonic perspective conceptualizes happiness as the experience of pleasure, whereas the eudaimonic perspective argues that happiness is associated with leading a meaningful life. Hedonic well-being is linked to short-term pleasures, whereas

eudaimonic well-being focuses on self-realization throughout the life course (Thorsteinsen & Vitterso, 2018).

From a modern perspective, the concept of well-being plays a critical role in understanding individuals' welfare levels and life satisfaction. Accordingly, various approaches have been proposed to conceptualize and define well-being (Heshmati et al., 2023). These approaches examine well-being from different perspectives while emphasizing its association with leading a meaningful life (Samman, 2007; Camfield et al., 2008; Das et al., 2020). Within contemporary frameworks, well-being is addressed through three main theoretical approaches: psychological well-being, social well-being, and subjective well-being.

Psychological well-being was conceptualized by Carol Ryff as a modern interpretation of eudaimonic well-being and theorized across six core dimensions. These dimensions include autonomy, environmental mastery, self-acceptance, personal growth, positive relations with others, and purpose in life (Revelia, 2019). Autonomy refers to individuals' ability to regulate their lives independently in accordance with their own values, whereas environmental mastery denotes the capacity to manage environmental factors in line with personal needs. Self-acceptance involves embracing all aspects of oneself and being satisfied with one's life choices. Personal growth reflects a life oriented toward realizing one's potential through openness to change and development. Positive relations represent the presence of deep, satisfying social bonds, while purpose in life refers to sustaining life with beliefs and goals aligned with meaning and direction (Ryff, 2019).

Another dimension of well-being, social well-being, was theorized by Keyes and explained through five sub-dimensions: social contribution, social actualization, social coherence, social integration, and social acceptance. This framework argues that well-being is shaped not only by individuals' internal states but also by their relationship with the social environment. Social contribution refers to the belief that one's abilities add value to society. Social actualization reflects an optimistic perspective regarding society's capacity for growth and progress, while social coherence denotes perceiving the social environment as understandable, orderly, and predictable. Social integration involves feeling like a meaningful part of one's community and sharing common values with others, whereas social acceptance relates to perceiving society as trustworthy and accepting individuals with a positive outlook. Well-being is thus defined as the totality of cognitive judgments and emotional responses individuals form toward their lives (Keyes, 1998).

Subjective well-being is a theory introduced by Ed Diener in 1984. It focuses on individuals' evaluations of their quality of life from their own perspectives and the positive states they experience as a result of these evaluations. Subjective well-being comprises two dimensions: cognitive and affective components. The cognitive component, life satisfaction, relates to the alignment between individuals' current life conditions (e.g., work, economic status, health) and their desired standards of living (Diener & Oishi, 2018; Morrison et al., 2011). The affective component is classified into high positive affect and low negative affect. High positive affect encompasses emotional experiences such as joy, enthusiasm, happiness, peace, and pleasure, whereas low negative affect includes emotions such as fear, anger, anxiety, guilt, and sadness. In this context, minimizing negative experiences and maximizing positive affect are emphasized. It is also suggested that high positive affect and low negative affect may coexist simultaneously in individuals' lives (Chamberlain, 1988).

Within the theoretical framework, studies examining the role of experience sharing on individuals' well-being indicate that sharing experiences influences well-being for both the sharer and the recipient. Li et al. (2022) found that sharing positive experiences with others increased

individuals' positive emotions associated with those experiences. Similarly, Su et al. (2021: 10) demonstrated that the type of tourism activity experienced influences sharing decisions, with eudaimonic experiences exhibiting a higher tendency to be shared. Cerna et al. (2023) reported a positive relationship between experience sharing via social media and individuals' travel decision-making processes. Ghaderi et al. (2024) emphasized that experience sharing through social media plays a significant role in fostering a sense of community, memory accumulation, empathy development, and the strengthening of personal bonds. Furthermore, Munar and Jacobsen (2014) identified differences in motivations for content creation on social media, highlighting the importance of social and emotional support in sharing behaviors. Yu et al. (2021), likewise found that sharing travel experiences contributes positively to tourists' well-being.

In conclusion, experience sharing is closely associated with well-being, and existing research largely supports this relationship. However, previous studies have primarily focused on the experiential dimension of social media sharing, while research addressing experience sharing through alternative channels remains limited. Moreover, existing studies generally examine vacation experiences within the context of general tourism, with little attention given to the role of solo travel experience sharing in well-being. Considering that motivations for solo travel are shaped by expectations of psychological, social, and subjective experiences, it is essential to investigate both the tendency to share solo travel experiences and their role in well-being. Accordingly, this study examines the role of solo travel experience sharing in well-being within the framework of modern well-being theories.

3. METHOD

3.1 Research Design

This study aims to determine the tendency of tourists with solo travel experience to share their travel experiences with others, the role of experience sharing in well-being, and the influence of shared experiences on other individuals' decisions to engage in solo travel. To achieve this aim, the study was conducted using a qualitative research approach based on a phenomenological design. Phenomenology seeks to reveal the shared meanings of experiences related to a particular phenomenon among a specific group of individuals and to uncover how these experiences are perceived and interpreted (Groenewald, 2004).

3.2 Development and Validation of the Interview Questions

The interview form was developed through a comprehensive review of the relevant literature and a six-month preliminary observation of social media posts shared by individuals with solo travel experience. During this period, publicly available content related to solo travel experiences was systematically examined. The interview questions were designed to align with participants' tendencies to share their solo travel experiences and to address the theoretical gaps identified in the literature. As a pilot phase, a focus group discussion was conducted with seven individuals who had prior solo travel experience to assess the clarity, relevance, and comprehensiveness of the initial interview questions. Based on the feedback obtained from this focus group, the interview questions were revised and refined. Subsequently, the revised interview questions were tested through individual pilot interviews with three participants who had solo travel experience. This two-stage pilot process contributed to enhancing the validity, reliability, and overall quality of the interview form.

3.3 Population and Sample

The population of the study consists of Turkish tourists who have experience in solo travel. Due to the large size of the population, participants were selected using purposive sampling, and the selection process was carried out through criterion sampling.

In purposive sampling, it is assumed that participants meet the requirements relevant to the research topic, while criterion sampling requires participants to fulfill predetermined criteria (Palinkas et al., 2015). Accordingly, the sample comprises a total of 22 individuals (14 women and 8 men) who are aged 18 or older, are citizens of the Republic of Türkiye, have undertaken at least three solo trips within the past five years, and have stayed a minimum of four nights on each trip.

3.4 Data Collection

The data for this study were obtained from responses to a question included in in-depth interviews conducted for a doctoral dissertation titled “A Study on Solo Travel Experience and Well-Being.” The interviews were carried out between 21 June 2023 and 9 December 2024 via an online meeting platform. While the overall duration of the interviews ranged from 45 to 60 minutes, the response time for the specific question forming the dataset of this study averaged approximately 5–10 minutes.

Interviews were conducted with 25 participants; however, 22 participants provided responses to the interview question relevant to this study. An examination of the data obtained from these 22 participants with solo travel experience revealed that no new themes or concepts emerged. The interviews provided sufficiently rich and diverse information and reached data saturation.

Ethical approval for the study was obtained from the Dokuz Eylül University Social and Human Sciences Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee (Decision No. 10, dated 21/03/2023).

3.5 Data Analysis

Data analysis in this study was conducted within the framework of the phenomenological design using descriptive analysis and was carried out in four stages: bracketing, intuition, analysis, and description (Groenewald, 2004). During the bracketing stage, audio recordings obtained from the interviews were transcribed into written documents. In the intuition stage, the transcripts were read three times to gain an in-depth understanding and interpretation of the phenomena experienced by the participants, thereby completing the preparation phase for analysis. Subsequently, during the analysis stage, participants’ statements were extracted, coded, and organized into themes. In the description stage, the phenomena related to the study were identified based on the emerging themes. These phenomena were then categorized and explained in detail.

In addition, direct quotations from participants were included to present their views as objectively as possible. Participants were coded according to the order of the interviews as K1, K2, K3, ..., K22.

3.6 Validity and Reliability

Scientific research must meet criteria of validity and reliability. Accordingly, this study was guided by Guba’s model of trustworthiness, which includes credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability (Guba, 1981). To ensure credibility, participation was strictly based on voluntariness. Prior to the interviews, participants were informed about the purpose of the research, provided with the ethics committee approval document, and asked to sign informed consent forms. Participants were explicitly informed that the data obtained from the interviews would be used solely for scientific purposes and that their identities would remain confidential. Permission was obtained from participants to conduct interviews via video conferencing and to record audio using a recording device. All participants consented to audio recording.

Dependability was ensured by having the data analyzed independently by two researchers. To enhance transferability, detailed information regarding participants’ demographic

characteristics, the number of participants, and the data collection technique was provided. Confirmability was achieved by having the research findings coded, thematically analyzed, and categorized independently by two researchers.

3.7 Limitations of the Study

Participants were selected from among volunteers who responded to a call published on the social media platform X (formerly Twitter) on 19 November 2024 as part of the process of determining the sample group for a doctoral dissertation titled “A Study on Solo Travel Experience and Well-Being.” Although the aim was to reach individuals with diverse social characteristics, the participant group was limited to users of the X platform. Additionally, the assumption that participants had solo travel experience was based solely on their self-reported statements.

4. FINDINGS

In order to determine how individuals with solo travel experience perceive their tendency to share travel experiences with others, how they interpret their well-being, and how they understand their role in influencing others’ decisions, interviews were conducted with the participants. Initially, participants were asked the following question to determine their demographic characteristics: “Could you provide information about your age, gender, educational background, occupation, and the city you live in?”

After identifying participants’ demographic profiles, two research questions related to the study problem were posed. First, participants were asked: “Do you share your solo holiday experiences with other people?” Second, they were asked: “Do you think you have influenced another person’s decision to travel alone positively or negatively? If so, how many individuals’ decisions to travel alone do you think were influenced by your experiences, either positively or negatively?” The findings obtained from the interviews are presented in this section.

4.1 Demographic Characteristics of the Participants

The participants of the study consist of a total of 22 individuals, including 14 women and 8 men. The ages of the participants range between 27 and 62 years. In terms of educational background, 14 participants hold a bachelor’s degree, 6 hold a master’s degree, and 2 have a doctoral degree, indicating a relatively high level of education among the sample.

The participants reside in various cities across Türkiye, including Istanbul, Ankara, İzmir, Muğla, Bursa, Edirne, Eskişehir, Hatay, and Isparta. Their occupations vary, encompassing employment in both the public and private sectors. Detailed demographic characteristics of the participants are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic Profile of Respondents

Participant	Gender	Age	Education Level	Occupation	City
K1	Male	40	Master’s Degree	Engineer	İstanbul
K2	Male	27	Master’s Degree	Engineer	Ankara
K3	Female	47	Bachelor’s Degree	Manager	İzmir
K4	Female	62	Doctoral Degree	Academic	İzmir
K5	Female	41	Bachelor’s Degree	Assistant Director	Muğla
K6	Female	42	Bachelor’s Degree	Private Sector Employee	Bursa
K7	Female	36	Bachelor’s Degree	Birdwatcher	Edirne

K8	Female	39	Bachelor's Degree	Teacher	Eskişehir
K9	Male	31	Bachelor's Degree	Cybersecurity Specialist	İstanbul
K10	Female	44	Master's Degree	Nurse	Hatay
K11	Male	35	Bachelor's Degree	Content Creator	İstanbul
K12	Female	27	Bachelor's Degree	Unemployed	Ankara
K13	Male	48	Bachelor's Degree	Journalist	İstanbul
K14	Male	39	Bachelor's Degree	Migration Specialist	İstanbul
K15	Female	38	Bachelor's Degree	Sales Representative	İzmir
K16	Female	31	Master's Degree	Clinical Psychologist	İstanbul
K17	Female	27	Master's Degree	Theatre Production Supervisor	İstanbul
K18	Female	45	Doctoral Degree	Academic	Isparta
K19	Female	30	Bachelor's Degree	Art Historian	İstanbul
K20	Male	44	Bachelor's Degree	Computer Engineer	Antalya
K21	Male	32	Master's Degree	Lawyer	İstanbul
K22	Female	35	Bachelor's Degree	Digital Marketing Analyst	Bursa

4.2 Tendency to Share Solo Travel Experiences

Based on participants' responses to the question aimed at identifying their tendency to share solo travel experiences, it was found that all 22 participants shared their solo travel experiences to some extent. Eighteen participants stated that they shared their experiences only within their social circles, while two participants indicated that they shared their experiences both with their social circles and with others via social media. The remaining two participants reported that they shared their experiences only when specifically asked. Selected illustrative participant statements are presented below:

I often try to encourage people—especially younger individuals—by sharing my solo travel experiences. Sometimes I also share my experiences with friends in my own age group. In doing so, I try to motivate them as well. Since I have not had any negative experiences, I particularly emphasize my positive experiences, especially when talking to young people. (K18, Academic, Female)

Yes, I always share my solo holiday experiences and even emphasize them strongly. I can say that I have inspired many of my female friends to think differently about this issue and to travel alone. (K15, Sales Representative, Female)

A statement from a participant who shares solo travel experiences only upon request is presented below:

If someone asks me if they are considering such an experience and want advice, I gladly take a lot of time to explain everything, even down to how to find maps and information. But only if they ask. (K3, Manager, Female)

4.3 The Role of Experience Sharing in Others' Decisions to Travel Alone

In order to understand how participants interpret the role of their solo travel experiences in others' decisions to travel alone, as well as the impact of experience sharing on their own well-being, participants were asked the following question: "Do you think you have influenced

another person's decision to travel alone positively or negatively?" Responses were coded and categorized accordingly.

Based on the findings, eight participants described their experience-sharing behavior as inspirational, nine participants defined it as encouraging, and three participants characterized it as memory sharing. Two participants who shared experiences only when asked stated that they adopted a cautious approach due to concerns about being misunderstood. In line with the coded responses, four distinct phenomena were identified: encouragement, inspiration, memory sharing, and cautious approach.

The percentage distribution of these phenomena is as follows: Encouragement (40.91%), Inspiration (36.36%), Memory Sharing (13.64%), and Cautious Approach (9.09%). Selected illustrative quotations for each phenomenon are provided below.

4.3.1 Encouragement

According to the interview findings, nine participants stated that sharing solo travel experiences served as an encouraging factor in others' decisions to travel alone. Statements from K13 and K19, who reported that people in their social circles decided to travel alone after hearing about their experiences, are presented below:

I always sincerely share my solo travel experiences with people around me. I think I encouraged some of them—friends who first asked, 'Wouldn't you get bored traveling alone?' and then decided to try it. Hearing them later say, 'I went after listening to your stories, and I'm so glad I did,' makes me happy. (K13, Male, Journalist)

I share my solo travel experiences with others. I can recall several cases where I positively influenced someone's decision to travel alone. Of course, this wasn't because I said, 'You must try this,' but rather because after hearing my stories, people felt more excited and courageous. (K19, Female, Art Historian)

4.3.2 Inspiration

Eight participants stated that sharing solo travel experiences was inspiring for others. Statements from K15 and K21, who indicated that others traveled alone after being inspired by their shared experiences, are presented below:

Yes, I always share my solo holiday experiences and emphasize them. I can say that I have inspired many of my female friends to think differently about this and to travel alone. (K15, Female, Sales Representative)

Whenever it comes up in social settings, I always encourage people to travel alone. I don't know exactly how many people were inspired by me, but my closest friend did it and told me how much she enjoyed it. (K21, Male, Lawyer)

4.3.3 Memory Sharing

Findings indicate that although some participants shared their solo travel experiences with friends, family, and close social circles, this sharing did not have a positive or negative influence on others' decisions to travel alone. Three participants described their experience sharing as remaining at the level of memory sharing. Statements from K6 and K16 are presented below:

I'm someone who shares almost everything with my friends and family. But whether I influenced anyone positively or negatively... No, there hasn't been anyone so far. (K6, Female, Private Sector Employee)

I talk about it and praise it, but I guess I haven't managed to motivate anyone. (K16, Female, Clinical Psychologist)

4.3.4 Cautious Approach

The findings also indicate that two participants refrained from sharing their solo travel experiences. These participants reported concerns about their experiences being misinterpreted as promoting luxury consumption or appearing boastful. Statements from K2 and K3 reflecting this concern are presented below:

I'm not very eager to talk about it. I generally don't like sharing good things I've experienced without being asked. Traveling abroad has started to feel like a luxury, and talking about it feels like showing off. So unless someone asks, I prefer not to talk about it. (K2, Male, Engineer)

I used to share more enthusiastically, but I realized that it sometimes made people feel worse—especially if they didn't have that kind of courage. Others perceived it as showing off. So I mention it when it comes up, but if it doesn't, I don't push it. (K3, Female, Manager)

Participants' responses to the question "How many people do you think you have positively or negatively influenced in their decision to travel alone?" varied. Thirteen participants reported positively influencing between 1 and 4 people, three participants reported influencing 5 to 10 people, and one participant reported influencing 15 to 20 people. Four participants stated that they had not played any positive role in others' decisions to travel alone. Notably, none of the participants reported having a negative influence on anyone's decision.

Based on the data obtained from all participants, 77.3% stated that sharing solo travel experiences had an influence on others' decisions to travel alone. The arithmetic mean of the number of individuals influenced to travel alone was 3.3 persons. The number of individuals reported to have been influenced by participants' experience sharing is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Count of Individuals Influenced to Travel Solo

Participant	Positively Influenced Individuals	Negatively Influenced Individuals	Participant	Positively Influenced Individuals	Negatively Influenced Individuals
K1	3-4 persons	0	K12	2-3 persons	0
K2	0	0	K13	2-3 persons	0
K3	5-6 persons	0	K14	5 persons	0
K4	3 persons	0	K15	3 persons	0
K5	2 persons	0	K16	0	0
K6	0	0	K17	2 persons	0
K7	1 person	0	K18	1 persons	0
K8	0	0	K19	2 persons	0
K9	15-20 persons	0	K20	10 persons	0
K10	3-4 persons	0	K21	1 person	0
K11	2 persons	0	K22	1 person	0

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study aimed to examine solo travelers' tendencies to share their travel experiences, the contribution of these shared experiences to the well-being of the sharer, and the role of such sharing in influencing others' decisions to travel alone. The findings were analyzed under four categories: inspiration, encouragement, memory sharing, and cautious approach. Within this framework, it was found that individuals with solo travel experience tend to share their experiences with others and that these shared experiences play a positive role in others' decisions to travel alone. Individuals perceive the effects of sharing solo travel experiences as meaningful and rewarding (Kang & Schuett, 2013).

The way participants interpreted their influence on others' decisions to travel alone—as inspiring or encouraging—as well as the presence of different motivations underlying memory sharing and cautious approaches, indicates that experience-sharing behavior has a deeper significance for the sharer. These findings are consistent with previous research (Çiçek & Aşan, 2023; Chen et al., 2025; Dewi et al., 2025).

Studies by Li et al. (2022) demonstrate that experience sharing contributes to well-being and enhances life satisfaction, while sharing positive experiences significantly increases individuals' positive emotional states and happiness. Furthermore, research by Ghaderi et al. (2024) and Su et al. (2021) reveals that such sharing strengthens social bonds and fulfills the need for social approval.

Within this context, the findings related to the identified phenomena were categorized and analyzed according to Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Theory, Keyes' Social Well-Being Theory, and Diener's Subjective Well-Being Theory. The results indicate that the meanings attributed to sharing solo travel experiences and influencing others' decisions to travel alone support the positive relations dimension of Ryff's psychological well-being theory and the social contribution and social approval dimensions of Keyes' social well-being theory. However, no findings directly supporting Diener's subjective well-being theory were obtained. Accordingly, the results related to psychological and social well-being are discussed below.

Psychological well-being consists of six dimensions: autonomy, environmental mastery, self-acceptance, personal growth, positive relations, and purpose in life. Based on the findings related to the encouragement and inspiration categories, individuals play an inspiring and encouraging role for others through experience sharing, contributing to the establishment of trust-based, satisfying, and positive relationships. Conversely, findings related to the cautious approach category reveal concerns about sharing experiences, rooted in the perception that solo travel may be associated with luxury consumption or interpreted as bragging, potentially discouraging those who lack similar opportunities. This cautious behavior reflects an attempt to protect social relationships and, in doing so, supports psychological well-being. These findings support the positive relations dimension of Ryff's psychological well-being theory. Consistent with previous literature (Kang & Schuett, 2013; Akova et al., 2019; Li et al., 2022; Fan et al., 2024), the results confirm that experience-sharing behavior is closely related to individuals' psychological well-being.

Another dimension of well-being, social well-being, is explained through five sub-dimensions: social contribution, social actualization, social coherence, social integration, and social acceptance. According to the findings related to the encouragement and inspiration categories, individuals gain social acceptance and approval by making solo travel behavior socially acceptable through experience sharing. Simultaneously, they fulfill the social contribution dimension by developing a strong belief that their experiences add value to society. The finding that the average number of individuals positively influenced to travel alone after experience sharing is 3.3 provides strong evidence of perceived social approval and contribution. These

results support the social contribution and social approval dimensions of Keyes' social well-being theory. Similar relationships between experience sharing and social well-being have also been identified in studies by Arewasikporn et al. (2019) and Jolly et al. (2019), indicating consistency with the existing literature.

When examining the findings of the memory-sharing category, individuals tend to interpret their experience sharing as repeated memory sharing aimed at maintaining and strengthening social bonds. According to Keyes (1998), this behavior contributes to social integration and social acceptance within society. Accordingly, these findings support the social integration and social acceptance dimensions of Keyes' social well-being theory. In line with previous studies (Su et al., 2021; Ghaderi et al., 2024), the results confirm that experience-sharing behavior is positively associated with individuals' social well-being.

Overall, this study demonstrates that sharing solo travel experiences supports the positive relations dimension of Ryff's psychological well-being theory and the social contribution and social approval dimensions of Keyes' social well-being theory.

5.1 Theoretical Contribution

The increasing prevalence of solo travel has attracted the attention of both the tourism industry and researchers. Previous studies on solo travel have predominantly focused on experiences during the travel process itself.

However, research addressing the post-travel phase-particularly experience sharing-remains limited. There is a lack of studies examining solo travelers' post-experience sharing tendencies and how this behavior contributes to the sharer's well-being. By addressing this gap, the present study aims to contribute to the existing literature in tourism marketing, tourism psychology, and tourism sociology by revealing how solo travelers' experience-sharing tendencies and their influence on others' decisions to travel alone contribute to the sharer's well-being.

5.2 Practical Implications

This study demonstrates that solo travelers' tendencies to share their experiences and their influence on others' decisions to travel alone contribute positively to their well-being. Previous research indicates that individuals tend to share positive experiences with others and that such sharing plays a significant role in travel planning and destination choice. While this behavior fulfills the sharer's need for social approval, it also serves as a valuable source of information for potential solo tourists.

In this context, understanding the role of solo travel experience sharing in well-being may provide valuable insights for tourism stakeholders. The findings suggest practical implications for the development of new tourism products and the formulation of innovative marketing strategies targeting the growing solo travel market.

5.3 Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

The primary limitation of this study is that participants' solo travel experiences are based solely on self-reported data. Additionally, the study was conducted exclusively with Turkish citizens; therefore, the findings reflect the well-being of Turkish travelers and cannot be generalized due to potential cultural differences. Future research may adopt a comparative approach by examining differences between individuals who share solo travel experiences and those who share group travel experiences in terms of well-being outcomes. Furthermore, the extent to which experience sharing actually influences others' decisions to travel alone and its impact on well-being could be examined from the perspective of those influenced by such sharing. Future studies may also explore the role of experience sharing in well-being based on different sharing channels and gender perspectives. Such research would contribute to a deeper understanding of the role of solo travel experience sharing in well-being across diverse variables.

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