

Study investigates male and female travelers' 'transformations'

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A new University of Otago-led study has revealed men and women experience change while traveling in similar ways.

Consumers are increasingly seeking activities that help them achieve new levels of enrichment and since the lift of COVID-19 travel restrictions, they are more conscious of the value they want to gain from their holidays.

The study, published in the international journal *Tourism Recreation Research*, examines male and female travelers' subjective travel experiences and identifies nine types of tourist transformation, a process people undergo when they experience change during a trip.

Lead author Dr. Jessica Mei Pung, of the Department of Marketing, says of the types identified, there was a significant difference between men and [women's experiences](#) in just two—reflection and transformative learning outcomes.

"Female travelers have a greater engagement in consciousness and self-examination compared with [males](#)," Dr. Pung says.

"Secondly, female travelers show a greater achievement of self-efficacy as a result of facing challenges and solving problems during their trips.

"Holiday experiences are an opportunity for female travelers to reflect more on their [personal relationships](#), while males might have a less reflective approach to change and be more oriented towards mastering a specific activity."

The study provides useful knowledge for the design of transformative tourism products and services. Research comparing female tourists' transformations with males' is limited and is reflected in the tourism experiences on offer.

For women, there are getaway packages and well-being retreats, while men are targeted with more general offerings, especially within sports

tourism.

"There is an untapped market for transformative trips that are not necessarily portrayed as feminine or masculine but that can deliver different types of experiences and benefits. As a result, tourism operators need to rethink how they communicate the offering to their male customers as effectively as they do to their female customers."

Interestingly, the study, which surveyed 514 people, reveals men and women experience the other seven types of tourist transformation in similar ways.

"For example, there are no differences in how they experience the distance from their [everyday lives](#), or in their levels of immersion in nature and in the social dynamics of the holiday activities.

"Independence, freedom and [self-confidence](#) are equally perceived by both sets of respondents, showing that feelings of empowerment do not represent an outcome exclusive to women travelers."

More information: Jessica Mei Pung et al, Tourist transformation: an empirical analysis of female and male experiences, *Tourism Recreation Research* (2022). [DOI: 10.1080/02508281.2022.2117353](https://doi.org/10.1080/02508281.2022.2117353)

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