

E-PROCEEDING HOTWEC 4.0
RESEARCH TOWARDS IR 5.0

**NURTURING
HOSPITALITY,
TOURISM AND
WELLNESS WORLD**



FHPK, UMK

E-PROCEEDING

RESEARCH TOWARDS IR 4.0

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Factors That Associated with Wellness Tourism in Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Malaysia is a country with potential in developing wellness tourism. However, there are very few studies conducted to determine the factors associated with wellness tourism. This study designed to examine the factors that associated with wellness tourism in Malaysia.

Methods: A cross-sectional study design was used in this study. A total of 384 of generation X and generation Y in Malaysia was involved in this study. A convenience sampling was used as sampling method and a set of online self-administered questionnaires was used for data collection. Data was analyzed by using Pearson Correlation analysis to determine the association between independent variables, namely; i) culture, ii) relaxation, iii) enjoyment and iv) beauty and wellness tourism. All analyses were conducted at the level significance was set at ($p < 0.05$).

Result: Majority of respondents were female, the average age of respondents was 36.4 years old, having Bachelor degree and having income level in between RM 2 501 to RM 3 500. Finding of this study showed that culture ($p > 0.05$), relaxation ($p > 0.05$), enjoyment ($p > 0.05$), and beauty ($p > 0.05$) were significant associated factors with wellness tourism in Malaysia.

Conclusion: Finding of this study could be used in developing an effective planning to promote wellness tourism in Malaysia. Future study could focus on other motivational factors that contribute to wellness tourism.

Keywords: Wellness Tourism, Culture, Relaxation, Enjoyment, Beauty

INTRODUCTION

In recent time health and wellness are very trending globally as a major factor that helps in cultivating individual's lifestyles (Voigt & Pforr, 2014). Wellness related travel is also a fast-growing market of the tourism industry (Voigt & Pforr, 2014), and well-being tourism is also concurred majority proportions in global health tourism (Gremnan & Raikkonen, 2015). A recent statement from Malaysian Tourism Promotion Board (MTPB), the Malaysian Association of Tour and Travel Agents (MATTA) had collaborated with Association of Malaysian Spas (AMSPA). The MATTA's President, elaborated that the well-being tourism is known are the most growing tourism field globally. Malaysia is holding the top 10 list in wellness related travel's market in Asia Pacific with expenditure standings at 5 billion USD which is equivalent to RM 20.5 billion and 8.3 million trips with an escalating culture for wellness related tours and packages, especially in Malaysia Malaysian Tourism Promotion Board (MTPB, 2018).

However, currently this scope studies are constrained regarding this topic area (Hall & Page, 2014). Wellness Tourism remains a field with little observational research to collect in-depth information to find on the tourist behavior very persistently (Hall & James, 2011). There are some study papers that have concentrated with various branches of well-being tourism including spa tourist, holistic tourist, or meditate tourist (Lehto et al., 2006). There is inadequate of research on wellness tourism, where the researchers mostly relate this content to with push and pull factors that associated with motivational scope and investigates to how far that a destination's well-being and spa features dominated a personality (Azman & Chan, 2012).

Based on the Travel and Tourism Competitive Advantage Report, it has stated that the competitive ranking of countries in Southeast Asia (Blanke & Chiesa, 2011). In the ranking, Singapore was on the top and follow by Malaysia and Thailand. Although the ranking of Malaysia was higher than Thailand but Thailand has more competitive advantages on considering health and wellness tourism compare to the other countries on Southeast Asia (Schwab, 2015). In Malaysia, government has put an effort on developing effective planning to promote tourism industry but more on tourism forms of leisure and gastronomic tourism such as diverse culture and attractive scenery. However, one of the challenges of wellness tourism development in Malaysia is lack of the image management and brand engagement of ASEAN health and wellness tourism (Romanova, Vetitnev et al. 2015).

This study designed to examine the factors that associated with wellness tourism. There were several factors which affect the tourists to choose wellness tourism such as culture, relaxation, enjoyment and beauty. The results could lead to particular wellness expectations for micro enterprises, resorts and remote areas will promote 'modern types' of tourism and non-seasonal tourism niches.

There were four objectives in this research:

1. To determine the association between culture and wellness tourism.
2. To determine the association between relaxation and wellness tourism.
3. To determine the association between enjoyment and wellness tourism.
4. To determine the association between beauty and wellness tourism.

Significance of the study

Researchers

The findings of this study provided information for future study that related to topic of wellness tourism and factors associated with wellness tourism. This research study was useful reference to researchers for related study in future.

Tourism industry

This research paper provided useful guidance for the tourism industry since this paper mainly related to the tourism industry. The findings of the research were useful in help to develop an intervention to increase wellness tourism program or to promote wellness tourism.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Wellness Tourism

According to Jafari (2000), originally wellness tourism was called 'spa tourism' this is because it used natural resources like mineral thermal water to help people improve their general health and also help them to prevent certain diseases. Some researcher defined that wellness tourism is a form of tourism that people who travel to another place to actively pursue the activities that can help to maintain or improve their health and well-being or people who want to find distinct, real or place-based experiences or therapy activities that are not convenient at home (Johnston et al., 2011). Wellness tourism is a form of tourism based on interest orientation of tourists (Težak Damijanić & Šergo, 2013). Wellness tourism is considered as one of a subcategory from health tourism (Mueller & Kaufmann, 2001). Wellness tourism is the combination of all the phenomena and relationships as well as experiences during the journey that generated by a travel and residence by people in order to preserve or promote their health (Mueller & Kaufmann, 2001).

Culture

Richards (2000) stated that, the concept of 'culture' has expanded in recent years. Therefore, the meaning of the 'arts' has also evolved to incorporate more popular culture elements. Hofstede (2001) believes that culture could be defined as the interactive collection of common characteristics that affect response of a human group to the environment. Rittichainuwat (2008) stated that, the culture from which the tourist originates influences travel behavior. Said and Maryono (2018) indicated that some basic dimension of motivation has identified, such as socio psychology, cultural, prestige, society, education, and welfare. Culture of the tourism destination is one of the tourism motivations factors that affect tourists to choose wellness tourism destination. According to statistics from the World Tourism Organization, 37% of the international tourism industry is culturally motivated, and it is estimated that demand is increasing at a rate of 15% annually (Commission, 1997). Thus, wellness tourism as a new tourism form may affected by culture factor.

Relaxation

Relaxation known as a meditation that can give a positive effect on human body, psychology, emotional, spiritual and mental aspect in community lifestyle. Including the structure of Western mentality, relaxation approaches begin to come out in the 20th Century (cf. Bagdy & Koronkay, 1988). Based on previous study, the possibilities of well-being and wellness tourism as a catalyst recuperate quality of health in the community, expecting that value of health maybe accomplish in performing through tourism, and in certain, through wellness tourism – expecting it is common of relaxation, to release from tension and revitalization of physical and mental (Bushell, 2009). In other study of spa guests in Hong Kong (Pesonen & Komppula, 2010) exposes that each important motivator for wellness recreation hub and wellness spa are physically relaxation, enjoyment, entertainment, peacefully, way to release from stress and totally can help in health improvement.

Enjoyment

According to Kimiecik and Harris (1996), enjoyment is an optimal psychological state that cause people carried out an activity essentially for its own purpose. Enjoyment is defined as a positive emotion and a positive emotional state (Wankel, 1993). A positive emotion not just only our 'happy feelings' in pursuit of instant pleasure it is play an important role in our daily life like the more negative emotion. The positive emotions that people experience is almost endless such as hope, joy, serenity, surprise, and etc. Berger (1996) also defined enjoyment like Wankel by involved enjoyment as a dominant theme in the preliminary exercise taxonomy, providing guidelines for improving mental health and conducting sports and emotional research. Meanwhile, Watson (1988) stated that there was possible that enjoyment has different relationships with positive and negative affective states. This is because the positive and negative affect has different correlates and related to different types of the variable when view it severally. Enjoying spa services on weekends or holidays is considered to be a psychosocial motive that makes individuals tend to use spa services involving the personal attributes of tourists (Sebery, Zuhdi, & Azman, 2019).

Beauty

Beauty factor also relatable with some other terms like physical health and experience like to be more fashionable, having a refreshed feeling with the improvised appearance. Moreover, the factors that is gained is also involves weight reduction, while the items related with escalated well-being is excluded anyway. According to Mak, Wong, & Chang (2009) a study paper on review of visitors to the Hong Kong Spa Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) identified health and beauty as one of the five benefits factors. According to Pearce and Lee (2005)

found out that self-improvement, refreshments and health and physical activity among the factors of general tourist motivation for a wellness trip.

Research Hypothesis

In this study, there were four hypotheses related to identify the relationship between culture, relaxation, enjoyment, beauty and wellness tourism in Malaysia.

H₁: There is a significant relationship between culture and wellness tourism in Malaysia.

H₂: There is a significant relationship between relaxation and wellness tourism in Malaysia.

H₃: There is a significant relationship between enjoyment and wellness tourism in Malaysia.

H₄: There is a significant relationship between beauty with wellness tourism in Malaysia.

Research Framework

A research framework has been conducted to investigate the factors that associated with wellness tourism in Malaysia. The conceptual framework below shows that how independent variables are identified with the dependent variable. The independent variables for this research are culture, relaxation, enjoyment and beauty.

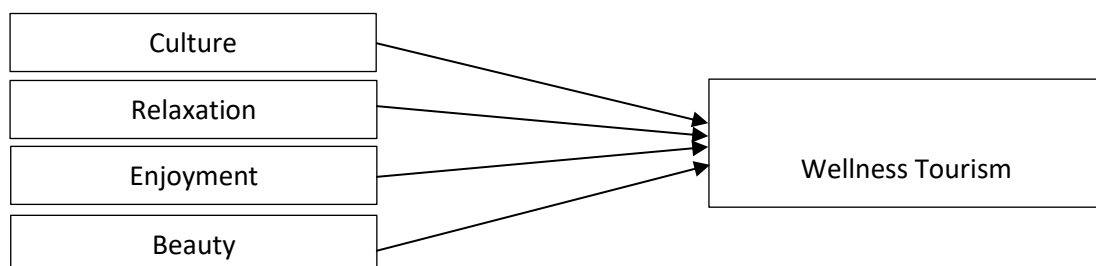


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of Factors Associated with Wellness Tourism

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study used quantitative method as the basic method of research design. Moreover, research design may help researchers in order to carry out research objectives. The aims of this study were to identify what are the factors that attract the tourist to a wellness tourism.

Data Collection

A set of questionnaires was distributed by Google form in order to collect all the required information with accurate, low cost and less time-consuming. Email and WhatsApp were the alternative methods when there is a problem of geographical difficulty. The respondents were randomly selected and the target population included Generation X and Generation Y in Malaysia. This study focused on generation X and generation Y is because according to Centre for the Promotion of Imports, CBI (2018), the wellness tourists most are between 36-55 years.

Sampling

The sampling method used in this study was the convenience sampling techniques. The tourist from the generation X and generation Y age range in Malaysia was randomly chooses to distribute the questionnaire. Due to the lack of time to do the research itself and due to the obstacles of pandemic disease corona virus, it was better to select the respondents that are easy to find. The sample size of 384 was derived based on the Malaysia population from generation X and generation Y.

In achieving reliable and valid sample of this study, the researchers used the equation from Krejcie & Morgan (1970) to determine the sample size. The formula will be shown as below:

$$s = \frac{x^2 N p (1 - p)}{e^2 (N - 1) + x^2 p (1 - p)}$$

s = sample size

N = population size

e = the degree of accuracy expressed as proportion (0.05)

x^2 = chi-square of degree of freedom 1 and confidence 95% (3.841)

p = proportion of population (if unknown, 0.5)

Data Analysis

Reliability test, normality test, and descriptive analysis, as well as Pearson's correlation were performed in this study. The data obtained was analyzed by using Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) version 22.

FINDINGS

This study was designed to determine the factors that associated with wellness tourism in Malaysia with the 4 research objectives. A total of 384 respondents in Malaysia were involved in this study. In this research, the factors that associated with wellness tourism in Malaysia were illustrated. According to the descriptive analysis in the study, majority of respondents were female, the average age of respondents was 36.4 years old, having Bachelor degree and having income level in between RM 2 501 to RM 3 500. Based on results of the study, culture, relaxation, enjoyment, beauty has a significant associated with wellness tourism in Malaysia. According to the results, the strength of association between enjoyment and wellness tourism was the strongest among the 4 independence variables in this study and followed by culture, relaxation and beauty. In addition, the beauty was the highest mean value (18.044) followed by the lowest mean value was wellness tourism (15.885).

Table 2 presented the correlation between mean value for the culture and wellness tourism of 384 respondents in Malaysia. The p value was 0.001. It showed that there was a significant relationship existed between the culture and wellness tourism in Malaysia. The value of r was 0.625. It explained that, there was a moderate strength relationship with positive direction between the culture and wellness tourism in Malaysia. Therefore, H0 was rejected.

Table 2 shown the correlation between mean value for the relaxation and wellness tourism of 384 respondents in Malaysia. The p value was 0.002. It showed that there was a significant relationship existed between the relaxation and wellness tourism in Malaysia. The value of r was 0.622. It explained that, there was a moderate strength relationship with positive direction between the relaxation and wellness tourism in Malaysia. Therefore, H0 was rejected.

As shown in Table 2, the correlation between mean value for the enjoyment and wellness tourism of 384 respondents in Malaysia. The p value was 0.001. It showed that there was a significant relationship existed between the enjoyment and wellness tourism in Malaysia. The value of r was 0.680. It explained that, there was a moderate strength relationship with positive direction between the relaxation and wellness tourism in Malaysia. Therefore, H0 was rejected.

Table 2 presented the correlation between mean value for the beauty and wellness tourism of 384 respondents in Malaysia. The p value was 0.001. It showed that there was a significant relationship existed between the beauty and wellness tourism in Malaysia. The value of r was 0.569. It explained that, there was a moderate strength relationship with positive direction between the beauty and wellness tourism in Malaysia. Therefore, H0 was rejected.

Table 1: Socio-demographic characteristic of respondents (n-384)

Socio-demographic characteristic	Frequency	Percentage (%) / Mean (SD)
Gender		
Male	181	47.1%
Female	203	52.9%
Age		36.40±7.855
Education level		
SPM	82	21.4%
Pre-University Level	19	4.9%
Diploma	114	29.7%
Bachelor Degree	155	40.4%
Master Degree	14	3.6%
Income level		
≤ RM 1,500	12	3.1%
RM 1,501 – RM 2,500	76	19.8%
RM 2,501 – RM 3,500	169	44.0%
RM 3,501 – RM 4,500	73	19.0%
RM 4,501 – RM 5,500	32	8.3%
> RM 5,500	22	5.7%

Table 2: Association between culture, relaxation, enjoyment and beauty with wellness tourism using Pearson's Correlation Coefficient

Independent Variables	Pearson's Correlation	p-value
Culture	0.625	0.001
Relaxation	0.622	0.002
Enjoyment	0.680	0.001
Beauty	0.569	0.001

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The finding of this study showed that culture is a factor that significant associated with wellness tourism. This finding was in line with previous study that found there was 37% of the international tourism industry is culturally motivated, and it is estimated that demand is increasing at a rate of 15% annually (Commission, 1997). This could be due to the culture from which the tourist originates influences travel behavior (Rittichainuwat, 2008). On the other hand, the previous study related to tourists' preferences to evaluate the wellness tourism market in Jamaica found that only 2% visited specifically for health and wellness, religious reasons and culture (Valentine, 2016). It may due to the differential of population of the study.

Besides, the finding of this study also showed that relaxation is a factor that significant associated with wellness tourism. This finding was supported by previous study that revealed rest and relaxation was the primary reasons of tourists for visiting the hotel types of mountain, city and beach (Rančić, Pavić, & Mijatov, 2014). Similarly, previous study discovered that escape and relaxation had the highest grand mean among of other six benefit factors (Hall, Voigt, Brown, & Howat, 2011). Previous study also found that regarding travel characteristics, most tourists travelled for rest and relaxation (59%) while others came to visit friends and family (17%), for business (10%) and for weddings (7%) (Valentine, 2016).

Another finding of this study has showed that enjoyment is a factor that significant associated with wellness tourism. This finding was consistent with previous study related to spa motivations and tourist visits to spa in Kuala Lumpur found that the most significant variables in the push motivational factors were enjoyment, and it was the motivation factor that have a strong correlation relationship with the visitor intention to visit spa in Malaysia (Sebery et al., 2019). According to Azman & Chan (2012), many tourists receive spa treatments during the holidays is usually related to enjoyment purposes and other psychosocial factors.

The finding of this study has showed that beauty is a factor that significant associated with wellness tourism. This finding was supported by previous study that revealed beauty was one of the influential factor tourists visit to spa with third ranked among the other 4 influential factors (Sebery et al., 2019). Another survey with 165 wellness tourists using the Vrnjacka Banja Spa facilities, Serbia reported obsession with health and beauty as of their significant factor that motivates the tourist for spa visitation (Dimitrovski & Todorović, 2015). The survey results as among five motivating factors that were chosen obsession with beauty is the fourth most significant factor (Dimitrovski et al., 2015).

The strongest association factor is enjoyment because the r value showed (0.680) is the highest. The second strongest association factor is culture with (0.625). The third strongest association factor is relaxation with r value (0.622), and the association between beauty and wellness tourism is weakest with r value (0.569) in this study.

The results of the analysis in this study are concluded, and the discussion on the results has been presented. The following are a few thoughts to be shared and considered for the future study that related to wellness tourism in Malaysia. For future research multi-language Mandarin and Tamil were suggested instead of the English and Malay versions. This was because it would allow the distinct race to grasp the question's significance clearly thereby precision, reliability and efficacy can be increased. Besides that, if there is sufficient time and budget for future study, it could also be recommended to go through all states in Malaysia to collect data. Next, the spa and wellness industry need to develop its services further because, based on some respondents, the spa in Malaysia did not meet its standards. Lastly, to give a good image of the tourist, the wellness industry itself needs to have the help of the local community because nowadays the tourist who wants to visit the spa will learn about the spa in social media and see what the local community's feedback about the spa itself is.

CONCLUSION

As a conclusion, the researchers found that culture, relaxation, enjoyment, and beauty have significant associated with wellness tourism in Malaysia. The strength of association between enjoyment and wellness tourism was the strongest among the 4 independence variables in this study and followed by culture, relaxation and beauty. Thus, culture, relaxation, enjoyment, and beauty were important factors that associated with wellness tourism in Malaysia, while especially enjoyment. Government could intensify enjoyment nature and cultural nature of wellness tourism. To developing effective planning to promote wellness tourism in Malaysia is urgently needed for economic recovery.

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