


Chapter 9

Wellness Tourism: Conceptual Analysis and Trends

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ABSTRACT

Crisis, social discontent, and dissatisfaction among people lead to a greater interest in relaxing the soul, body, and mind as a refuge within tourism. Thus, there are changes and new trends in international health tourism's demand and supply conditions. Even before the deep crisis caused by the new coronavirus pandemic in 2020, people increasingly turned to health and wellness activities while traveling, especially using tourist activities to achieve health. Since consumption patterns are changing among travelers, such as the growing popularity of wellness tourism, new forms of tourism may stimulate future tourism activities, and the changes are expected to push businesses to reevaluate their service designs and distribution channels. When the recovery of the tourism sector is under discussion, it is worth questioning how wellness trends could help tourism and what the perspectives are for the future. Therefore, this chapter makes recommendations based on new tourists' demands and new processes and protocols for the operation of wellness tourism services.

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-7998-7239-9.ch009

INTRODUCTION

The world is undergoing profound changes in people's attitudes, behavior, and economic life, especially in recent years (Ahmed et al., 2020; Faulkner et al., 2020; Wen et al., 2021). Facing crisis, economic decline, social discontent, and dissatisfaction among people lead to a greater interest in relaxing the soul, body, and mind as a refuge within tourism (Koncul, 2012; Cai et al., 2020). Thus, there are changes and new trends in international health tourism's demand and supply conditions (Bushueva, 2020; Csirmaz & Pető, 2015; Lee et al., 2020; Wen et al., 2021).

Even before the deep crisis caused by the new coronavirus pandemic in 2020, people increasingly turned to health and wellness activities while traveling, especially using tourist activities to achieve health (Chia & Liao, 2020; Csirmaz & Pető, 2015; Thal & Hudson, 2019). The new ways of life in society have increased the concern of individuals with well-being and body care, widening tourist motivations to explore health tourism (Cunha, 2006).

Consumption patterns are changing among travelers, such as the growing popularity of wellness tourism. New forms of tourism may stimulate future tourism activities, and the changes are expected to push businesses to reevaluate their service designs and distribution channels (Wen et al., 2021). When the recovery of the tourism sector is under discussion, it is worth questioning how wellness trends could help tourism and what the perspectives are for the future. Therefore, this chapter makes recommendations for wellness tourism business sector, according to the emerging tourism service management practices. The recommendations are based on new tourists' demands and new processes and protocols for the operation of wellness tourism services.

HEALTH TOURISM AND ITS CONTRIBUTIONS TO SOCIETY

The '*health tourism*' has many definitions and terms, such as health tourism, medical tourism, hospital and clinical tourism, wellness tourism, and sometimes medical travel. They are all used to describe the relationship between health and tourism (Quintela et al., 2016). Goodrich and Goodrich (1987, p. 217) define it as:

An attempt on the part of a tourist facility to attract tourists by deliberately promoting its health-care services and facilities, in addition to its regular amenities. These health care services may include medical examinations by qualified doctors and nurses at the resort or hotel, special diets, acupuncture, trans-vital injections, vitamin complex intakes, special medical treatments for various diseases such as arthritis, and herbal medicines.

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