

Research Article



Wellness Tourism: Investigation of Tourists' Profiles and Motivational Factors

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ABSTRACT

Wellness tourism has increasingly become an important economic and marketing strategy for tourist destinations attracting tourist visitations. The study on "investigation of profiles and motivational factors of international tourists to India" is an exploration to analyze the original reasons for international tourists selecting India as a wellness tourism destination. It is attempting to explore that a deep knowledge of tourist profile and their key motivations within this context is essential in order to withstand the growth of wellness tourism business. This study was conducted through a structured questionnaire and responses received from international wellness tourists in India. This study sought to understand the wellness motivation that are grasped in their own experiences during their visits to wellness service centers in India. It revealed the empirical findings of wellness tourists' motivation by expanding the push-pull motivation theory that focused on the individual psychological factors (motivation, perception and attitude towards wellness) and the destination's wellness attributes. A total of 350 tourists were interviewed amongst which only 150 were found to suit to the present study. Holiday packages offered by wellness tourism operators play a very important pull motivational factor, the presence of a partner or spouse played very important role in choosing to visit Indian tourist sites and information sources and the right educational background, wellness tourists could easily sieve through all competing tourist destinations to choose the best country to travel to for their relaxation needs and rejuvenation purpose. The findings benefit the wellness service providers in term of developing appropriate marketing strategies and improved tourist enlightenment. The scope of this study and the type of respondent limit to make a common implication of the research findings.

Keywords: Wellness tourism, push-pull strategy, Motivational factors

INTRODUCTION

The wellness movement was first initiated by American Public Health Service physician, Dr Halbert Dunn during the mid-20th Century, and is best considered multi-dimensional both in its scope and benefits. Wellness tourism involves people who travel to a different place to proactively practice activities that maintain or enhance their personal health and well being. Tourists are seeking unique, authentic, location based experiences and therapies not available in the home country. Wellness tourists are generally seeking integrated wellness and prevention approach to improve their health and quality of life. The enormous potential of the wellness tourism sector to act as a catalyst of economic and social improvement has been recognized in national and international forums. Wellness may be defined as "positively impact the assorted dimensions of the individual's well-being as a process, in which an individual makes choices that leads to health-promoting lifestyle behaviors".

This study aims to enhance the knowledge on wellbeing tourism by providing information about the push and pull factors that can enlighten the interest towards wellbeing tourism holidays.

Wellness Tourism in India

Spas and other rejuvenating centers become popular as people with sedentary lifestyles are forced to spend on

physical and mental well being. This creates an opportunity in many sectors.

The concept of travel for wellness is not new. It has been a centuries-old ritual. Take for instance, Greek pilgrims travelling to meet healing gods, or people travelling to the Himalayas for yoga and spiritual healing purposes were probably one of the first among wellness seekers. Today, holistic healing may be just a phone call away, but people are certainly catching on to the benefits, both physical and mental, that such visits can bring.

As per the most recent report by global hospitality consultant HVS, India was ranked in the top 20 list of top spa countries worldwide, with 2,359 operational spas. The industry is estimated to have generated around \$384 million annually and employs about 22,175 people. Jaideep Anand, General manager, Ista Hotel, Hyderabad explains, "India is associated with its rich culture and tradition of wellness therapies and spiritual practices.

It is therefore only natural for globetrotters to see our country as a leading destination for spa and rejuvenation." (Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, 2014)

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Tourist Travel Motives

The present globalization demands health care, in order to adopt global integration and interaction between



health human resource (HHR) systems across different jurisdictions. Indian health education systems are increasingly responsible to and are shaped by international HHR. Literature on HHR global migration were conceptualized through various perspectives, including push, pull, global care chain and more recently through perspectives informed by Global political economy (GPE). It's essential to identify main push factors of migration away from household and employment condition (Margaret Walton-Roberts, 2014)¹.

Wellness is to practice a healthy lifestyle. The price, functionality and performance of health and spa service providers are important and have attributed largely to wellness tourists' motivation. (Inoormaziah Azman, 2010)². Wellness have been defined as a positive psychological state of well-being which is the result of practicing a wellness lifestyle based on the belief in self-responsibility for one's own health and feeling well. This definition explained two main measurable constructs: wellness lifestyle (that is, been engaged in a range of health-promoting behaviors, such as healthy eating or actively managing stress), and positive psychological well-being. (Cornelia Voigt, 2010)³.

In a study on "Push and Pull Travel Motivations of Domestic Tourists to Kerala" by Kanagaraj (2013)⁴ an attempt has been made to analyze the reasons for travelers choosing a holiday destination. 34 push motives and 32 pull motives for tourists had been analyzed and the study enabled the service providers and planners in designing and positioning the destination's viable advantage and image.

The health and spa tourists' motives were mainly endorsed to the push factors, which was basically connected to the psychological needs of the tourists. This included escape, rest and relaxation. Besides, the pull factors, the key attributes of the whole spa experiences, key pleasant appearance to the tourists to visit wellness products, which included professionalism, treatments, and physical looks of the wellness service establishment. It is pay back by the wellness service providers in term of raising suitable marketing strategies that focuses on fulfilling the psychological needs of the tourists, and improved tourist fulfillment by paying attention to the key attributes that ultimately contribute to a more incredible wellness service experience (Jenifer Kim Lian Chang, 2013)⁵. Motivation (Push and Pull Factors) is a major topic in tourism research. The balancing and alternative medicines that are now becoming customized service were in a lot of cases used before the development of conventional medicine. Traditional medicines are not simply used to treat diseases, but are also intended to help individuals stay healthy and active. Wellness treatments originated in India over 2000 years ago and are now followed by practitioners throughout India. Wellness services are a holistic remedial system which teaches practices that create harmony between

the mind, body and spirit. The vast majority of business organizations such as travel agents, meeting planners, and other service providers, including accommodation, transportation, attractions and entertainment are classified as travel and tourism related business. In practice, these organizations are closely linked with the provision of services to the travelers.

The concept of wellbeing tourism suits better for this study as it includes motivation factors – more detailed both push and pull factors. Some studies are paying attention on different sub-sectors of health and wellness tourism. It is important to understand both push and pull travel motives of the tourists. Most of the study to investigate achievable predictors – push and pull factors, socio-demographic factors and previous travel behaviour – of tourists' interests in wellbeing tourism holidays as opposed to tourists that are not interested in vacation. Some reviews describing the interest towards wellness tourism holidays. The developed models seek to emphasize that tourist's option of a wellness destination. It is inclined by two main forces – push and pull factors. Push factors were explained of individual motivations that push individuals from home country, and pull factors are attributes of a destination, wellness service or a product that pulls individuals toward a destination. That is to explain, tourist travel because they were pulled by external forces and pushed by their internal motives of a travel destination.

Research Gap

There were descriptive studies on the topic, while an empirical analysis of tourists' profile and motivational factors is found to be the primary gap. Most of the research work concentrated only on the wellness tourism from the health care point of view, while the current study is aimed to focus on to investigate the push and pull factors (motivational aspects) of the wellness tourists.

Problem Identification

Over the last few years, it was observed that wellness tourism is slowly expanding itself beyond its theoretical boundaries to include wellness and leisure travel. While perceptions of consumers towards the healthcare aspect of wellness tourism is already being studied, the push-pull motivational factors of the wellness tourism, which includes wellness and leisure travel is yet unexplored by the researchers. This is identified as the problem under study.

Research Objectives

- To gather the wellness tourists' profile and give this information to the niche wellness tourism sector.
- To explore possible predictors – push and pull factors, socio-demographic factors and travel behavior – of tourists' interests in wellbeing tourism holidays.



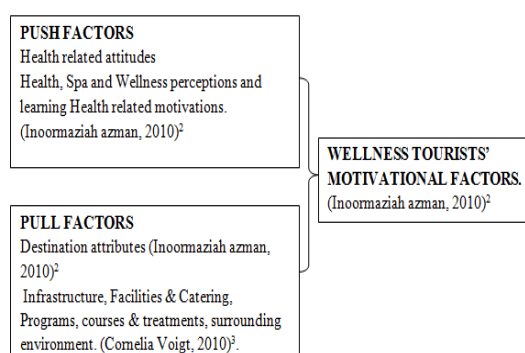
Significance of the Study

The significance of wellness tourism to an economy is measured by way of its contribution to the national income, the earnings of foreign exchange and its contribution to the state revenues and the creation of employment. Wellness tourism is India's new mantra and it is identified as a niche tourism product to promote tourism. It plays a significant role in India's economy for providing the opportunities for regional employment, contributing to the balance of payment and helping economic growth. It is expected that the study will help in understanding the impact of wellness tourism to India's economy. It will throw light on various issues such as the extent to which wellness tourism is gaining importance and its position in attracting tourists through promoting health and wellbeing. Significance of promoting wellness tourism is that, it reduces the burden on wellness services industry, it is an attraction to the tourists in providing wellness and wellbeing, a source of revenue for India and a boost to the economy of wellness service provider's areas. Therefore the need of the hour is to study the motivational factors influencing wellness tourists and suggest measures for providing wellness tourism in India.

Research Model

The conceptual framework of the research to investigate the tourists motives of push- pull factors and profiles of the tourists. Inoomaziah Azman (2010)² has adopted two main factors, mainly health related attitudes (Health, Spa and wellness perceptions and learning health related motivations) from push factors, and destination attributes (Wellness services as a tangible resource, unique wellness treatments and experiences or marketing image related motivations) from pull factors. The other two main factors identified by Ana Tezak Damijanac. B. S. (2013)⁶ are, Push motivations: push destination, push relaxation, push local people. Pull motivations: pull Infrastructure (Cornelia Voigt, 2010)³.

Proposed Research Model



Methodology

The research was conducted in India among international tourists visiting Indian tourist destinations at Chennai, Kerala, and Karnataka. Around 350 questionnaires were given to International tourists who were selected through

convenience sampling. According to Ministry of tourism, Government of India's survey more than 50% of international tourists arrived to above selected areas. The responses were taken during the months of April-June 2015. Amongst 350 questionnaires collected only 150 were representative of the population under investigation. The questions were adopted with slight modifications from the various literatures. Tourists were requested to participate in the survey, wherein the purpose of the survey was explained to them. Questionnaire consists of 4 sections. Part A was designed to gather travel experience of tourists. Part B focused on determining expected benefits of the tourists. Part C was based on tourists' personal beliefs and travel motives. The last section focused on to gather respondent's socio demographic characteristics (country of origin, gender, age, income, marital status, and occupation. As there was a necessity to recognize the significance of both push and pull variables meeting the necessities of international tourists, this study focused on India as it has grown into a hot spot for wellness tourism worldwide. From the literature push motives and pull motives were identified. Statements measuring push and pull motivational factors were assessed using a 5 point Likert scale (1= strongly agree, 5=strongly disagree). The data collected from the survey questionnaire were analyzed using SPSS 18 ver. statistical package. To ascertain the suitability of the scale in measuring the variables in question, reliability test was performed and the resultant Cronbach's alpha score was 0.926 which proved the scale's high reliability. After the initial analysis, factor reduction was done using exploratory factor analysis (EFA). Factor scores were calculated to identify the dominant factors influencing the motivation of wellness tourists. The four main factors found were used as the dependent variables in a linear multiple regression equation. The multiple regression analysis was used to investigate the relative contribution of individual tourist characteristics on tourists travel motives. Because the main motive was to explore various drivers of travel motives within push and pull factors, this analysis was attempted to identify determinants associated with these factors. In the regression analysis factors included were:

1. Socio demographic characteristics of respondents: Age (E1), gender (E2), education level (E3), profession (E8), annual income (E7), country of origin (E9), Marital status (E4), Number of dependents (E5), Reason for coming to India (E10) and information source (E11).
2. Travelling party: Holiday package (A2a), partner (A2c), family members other than spouse (A2d), friends (A2b).
3. Respondents' satisfaction with various aspects related to their travel was measured using a five point Likert scale on: Service quality (D2a), vacation (D2b) and destination choice (A4)



4. Possibility of recommending a tourist destination (D2d)
5. Perception of tourist destination (D2c)
6. Length of stay (A3)
7. Number of previous visits (A1).

To achieve stronger models, linear regressions were done twice for every travel motive (unrestricted and restricted models). In this context of a linear regression model that controls for independent set of variables, the models are expressed as follows.

Regression equations:

Pull infrastructure (Destination attributes)

$$i=X2A1i+X3A2ai+X4A2bi+X5PA2ci+X6A2di+X7A2ei+XA4i+X8D2ai+X9D2bi+X10D2ci+X11D2di+X12E1i+X13E2i+X14E3i+X15E4i+X1E5i+X17E7i+X18E8i+X19E9i+X20E10i+X21E11i+ei,$$

Push experience related to destination (Tourist attitudes)

$$i=X2A1i+X3A2ai+X4A2bi+X5PA2ci+X6A2di+X7A2ei+XA4i+X8D2ai+X9D2bi+X10D2ci+X11D2di+X12E1i+X13E2i+X14E3i+X15E4i+X1E5i+X17E7i+X18E8i+X19E9i+X20E10i+X21E11i+ei,$$

Push relaxation and escape (Tourist attitudes)

$$i=X2A1i+X3A2ai+X4A2bi+X5PA2ci+X6A2di+X7A2ei+XA4i+X8D2ai+X9D2bi+X10D2ci+X11D2di+X12E1i+X13E2i+X14E3i+X15E4i+X1E5i+X17E7i+X18E8i+X19E9i+X20E10i+X21E11i+ei,$$

Push experience related to local people (Tourist attitudes)

$$i=X2A1i+X3A2ai+X4A2bi+X5PA2ci+X6A2di+X7A2ei+XA4i+X8D2ai+X9D2bi+X10D2ci+X11D2di+X12E1i+X13E2i+X14E3i+X15E4i+X1E5i+X17E7i+X18E8i+X19E9i+X20E10i+X21E11i+ei,$$

The X represents unknown parameters that measure the impact of their respective variables on Yi. The random error term ei represents unmeasured factors that affect the dependent variable. It is assumed to possess a normal distribution across the population of respondents, with a mean equal to zero and a constant variance. (Ana Tezak Damijanic. B.S, 2013)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A total of 150 responses from international tourists were taken into the analysis. The proportion of female (50%) and male (50%) respondents were same. Most of the respondents were in the (35-44) and (25-34) years of age. The majority of respondents obtained some kind of higher education level. The respondents had different backgrounds and occupation, most of the respondents stated that they were employees (part time 36%) and full time (31%), while 5% were retired home duties and about 9% were not employed. Most of the respondents (22%)

were from Russia, about 17% were from European countries, about 14% from Mexico, 11 % are from US.

Table 1: Sample characteristics

Characteristics	Percent (%)	Characteristics	Percent (%)
<u>AGE:</u>		<u>GENDER:</u>	
18-24	19	Female	50
25-34	21	Male	50
45-54	35	<u>EMPLOYMENT:</u>	
55-64	12	Full-time student	
65-74	5	Full-time employed	19
75 or more	5	Part-time employed	31
<u>EDUCATION:</u>		Retired Home duties	5
Primary school	14	Not employed	9
Secondary school	22	<u>Country of Origin:</u>	
Apprenticeship	23	US	11
Collage	11	Canada	7
Diploma	10	Mexico	14
Undergraduate	7	Poland	4
Postgraduate	5	Australia	3
Ph.D	8	Sweden	7
<u>ANNUAL INCOME (\$):</u>		Russia	22
Less than 19,999	3	Europe	17
20,000 to 49,999	19	British	2
50,000 to 79,999	34	South Africa	3
80,000 to 109,999	27	Turkey	1
110,000 to 139,999	9	Korea	3
140,000 to 169,999	4	Thailand	3
170,000 to 199,999	7	France	3
230,000 +	3		

Source: Primary survey

To examine the reliability of the push and pull motivational factors, respondents were asked to state the importance for push and pull factors. Using exploratory factor analysis Cronbach’s alpha greater than 0.7 as criteria, three factor groupings of push factors and one factor grouping of pull factors were formed. The three factors representing push motives were labeled as: 1) Experience related to tourism destination, 2) Relaxation and escape and 3) Experience related to local people. Factor representing pull motivations were labeled as: 1) Infrastructure. Four push and pull motivation factors were taken into further analysis, which resulted in four models (Tables 2 and 3). A total of eight regression analyses, two for each motivation factor, were done in order to determine the relation between an individual tourist travel motive and various socio demographic and travel behaviour of wellness tourists who stated that wellness services are an important push and pull motive. Unrestricted models include all variables, while restricted models include only those explanatory variables that



proved to be significant in the unrestricted model on the 5 % level or less. The results of the restricted and unrestricted regression coefficient, their t values obtained from multiple regression analysis for push and pull factors are presented in Tables 2 and 3.

Table 2: Determinants of Pull Factors, Coefficients estimate by SPSS ver. 18

Explanatory variable	PULL –INFRASTRUCTURE	
	Unrestricted Model	Restricted Model
A1	-.232 (-2.460)	.192 (-2.631)
A2a	.307 (3.017)	.301 (4.073)
A2b	-.230 (-2.842)	.177 (-2.495)
A2c	.196 (1.957)	.239 (3.338)
A2d	.136 (-1.602)	
A2e	.270 (2.909)	.269 (3.826)
A3	.076 (-.715)	
A4	.065 (.573)	
D2a	.092 (-.812)	
D2b	.062 (.617)	
D2c	.071 (7.38)	

D2d	-.102 (-1.034)	
E1	.109 (1.250)	
E2	-.147 (-1.640)	
E3	.115 (1.301)	
E4	.209 (-2.369)	
E5	-.029 (-.315)	
E7	.012 (.132)	
E8	.050 (.501)	
E9	.057 (.653)	
E10	-.023 (-.235)	
E11	.014 (.142)	

Note: (t-value in parentheses): Values in bold are significant at 5% level.

Source: Primary survey

Infrastructure as a pull travel motive was a principal factor in the model-Pull-Infrastructure (Table 2).

Five variables were statistically significant at the 0.05 level or higher and 3 of them have positive sign: Holiday package, partner or spouse, and by yourself. Two variables were significant with negative sign: no. of previous visits, and personal friends.

Table 3: Determinants of Push Factors, Coefficient estimates by SPSS ver. 18

Explanatory variable	PUSH_DESTINATION		PUSH_RELAXATION		PUSH_LOCALPEOPLE	
	Unrestricted Model	Restricted Model	Unrestricted Model	Restricted Model	Unrestricted Model	Restricted Model
A1	.414 (-4.824)	-.383 (-5.363)	-.088 (-.966)		..043 (-.446)	
A2a	.530 (6.205)	.434 (6.320)	.194 (2.147)		.378 (3.936)	.315 (4.164)
A2b	-.091 (-1.246)		.004 (.046)		-.229 (-2.789)	.185 (-2.502)
A2c	.156 (1.719)		.196 (2.036)	.116 (1.574)	.033 (.326)	
A2d	-.047 (-.619)		-.261 (-3.216)	.273 (3.935)	.078 (.905)	
A2e	.122 (1.439)		.194 (2.158)		-.221 (-2.327)	
A3	-.151 (-1.611)		.072 (.724)		-.181 (-1.724)	
A4	-.016 (-.157)		-.172 (-1.591)		.046 (.405)	



D2a	-.141 (1.392)		.281 (2.607)		.064 (.561)	
D2b	-.039 (-.426)		.091 (.949)		.122 (1.199)	
D2c	.279 (3.171)	.311 (4.519)	-.075 (-.798)		-.057 (.572)	
D2d	-.203 (-2.300)		-.067 (-.716)		.015 (.151)	
E1	.179 (2.258)		-.069 (-.813)		.092 (1.030)	
E2	.008 (.096)		-.003 (-.035)		-.071 (-.778)	
E3	-.093 (-1.192)		.244 (2.946)	.273 (3.935)	-.154 (-1.754)	
E4	-.162 (-2.037)	-.224 (-3.253)	-.075 (-.886)		-.206 (-2.301)	
E5	.079 (1.056)		-.011 (-.132)		.032 (.384)	
E7	-.010 (-.098)		-.031 (.360)		-.203 (-1.851)	
E8	-.003 (-.033)		.048 (.466)		.008 (.080)	
E9	.015 (.169)		.004 (.044)		.234 (2.296)	.146 (1.956)
E10	.063 (.800)		-.099 (1.025)		.011 (.120)	
E11	-.133 (-1.506)		.282 (3.011)	.202 (2.836)	.014 (.138)	

Note: (t-value in parentheses): Values in bold are significant at 5% level.; Source: Primary survey

Similar to the pull travel motives, there were fewer variables which are significant statistically in determining push travel motives. In the push destination model illustrated in table 3 above, the relationship between tourist destination as a pull motivational factor and exploratory variables was analysed. Holiday package and perception of tourist destination as a positive motivating push destination variables are well pronounced in the model as evident from the above table. Whereas, the number of previous visits and marital status wore a negative sign which showed the weaning effect playing a role in motivating the visitors.

Push-relaxation model was determined by three explanatory variables. Partner or spouse, educational background, and information source had positive effect on this travel motive. Family members other than spouse had a negative influence upon the push motivation towards relaxation. Model on Push- local people represents the effect of independent variables on the experience related to local people as a travel motivational factor. Holiday package and Country of origin had positive effect on this travel motive, whereas, personal friends had a negative effect on the travel motive.

Length of stay, destination choice, service quality, vacation, possibility of recommending a tourist destination to friends and family members, number of

dependents, annual income, employment status, and reason to coming to India had no effect on either pull or push motivational factor. Though other researchers have confirmed their significance they are not proved in this research.

Certain implications are drawn from this study. Holiday packages offered by wellness tourism operators played a very important pull motivational factor because of the cost effective reasons and all services offered under one roof in an unknown region. Tourist commissions and other Government organizations have developed programs over the years to persuade people to take holidays, especially domestic short breaks. It is clear that people need to be convinced to take their leisure holidays, and to encourage the growth of a supportive corporate culture. (Sue Beeton, 2010)⁷. The presence of a partner or spouse played very important role in choosing to visit Indian tourist sites because of the fulfillment one gets. Also, a visit to India would perhaps be one of the desires of every foreigner. Those who travel alone to India are adventurous and fun loving. India is a land of different religion and culture and tourists are getting attracted to this diversity abundant in India. India is obviously the most preferred destination among the other South East Asian countries because of the rich tradition it has, besides the choice of wellness treatment

present here ranging from spa, spiritual retreat, and health resort. Also India is perceived to be the destination for those who seek Mukthi (ultimate freedom in their life after death) so is most preferred by those who seek one here.

Travelling along with a partner or spouse to India would be an ideal relaxing experience one would wait to enjoy in their life span. With the presence of natural springs with healing powers, and herbs which cure chronic ailments wellness tourists throng to India after a long work year to relax and rejuvenate. With abundant information sources and the right educational background, wellness tourists could easily sieve through all competing tourist destinations to choose the best country to travel to for their relaxation needs. The development of IT products and proliferation of the Internet and social media brings the experience one would gain even before the visit.

The experience one gains with the local people as a reason to revisit the same destination is influenced by the holiday package offered by the wellness tourist operators. Also, the country of origin of the tourist is incremental to his choice of tourist destination. India with socio-cultural synergies with Russia obviously would be the choice of Russians to visit followed by Europeans.

Limitations

Time constraint was the biggest limitation to the researcher. Opportunities to investigate wellness tourist profiles and motivational factors throughout India was limited, therefore research is deliberately restricted to the views of participants in the select areas.

The study would have additionally benefited from increasing the scope and number of spa businesses or holistic practitioners participating in the research, especially those producing or using natural medicines.

CONCLUSION

Previous research on the tourists' travel motives were studied from the views of wellness tourists, within the context of health care aspects. In order to attain push and pull motivational factors inducing travel, this paper

identified from the literature three push and one pull motivational factors. Tourists, who stated that wellness services were important pull factor, were pushed by a wish to desire to experience the attributes of tourist destination, to interact with local people and to relax and escape home country and everyday routine life, while they were pulled by Infrastructure as an attribute of the tourist destination.

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