

Creative Economy on the Wellness Tourism of Elderly Tourists in Thailand: A Comparative Study of Thai, Japanese, and Chinese

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Abstract

This study illuminates the crucial role of the creative economy in shaping the wellness tourism preferences and experiences of elderly tourists in Thailand, Japan, and China. By uncovering valuable insights, it provides guidance for tourism stakeholders, policymakers, and marketers aiming to enrich the appeal and sustainability of wellness destinations. The findings suggest promising opportunities for crafting tailored wellness offerings that resonate with each country's unique cultural and generational dynamics, ultimately fostering economic growth and enhancing well-being among the elderly population in these regions. In essence, the analysis underscores the profound impact of the creative economy theory on wellness tourism in these nations. Leveraging their rich cultural heritage and innovative capabilities, these countries have strategically bolstered the wellness tourism sector, particularly for elderly travelers. This symbiotic relationship between culture, creativity, and economic growth has spurred the development of tailored wellness experiences, catering to the diverse needs of elderly tourists and solidifying these countries' positions as premier wellness destinations. The integration of creative economy principles into wellness initiatives not only enhances the quality of experiences but also fosters authenticity and cultural immersion, setting these destinations apart in a competitive market. As the global population ages, the convergence of wellness tourism and the creative economy presents significant potential for driving sustainable tourism sector development while addressing the evolving needs of elderly travelers. Hence, policymakers and industry stakeholders must prioritize the preservation and promotion of cultural

heritage, innovation, and authenticity to ensure the continued growth and success of wellness tourism in these culturally diverse nations.

Keywords: creative economy; elderly tourists; wellness tourism

Introduction

In recent years, the global landscape of tourism has witnessed a paradigm shift, with an increasing recognition of the vital link between creativity, wellness, and travel experiences. The growing prevalence of the creative economy, pushed by the ever-expanding influence of technology and innovation, has redefined the traditional tourism landscape, paving the way for novel and transformative travel opportunities (Muchson, 2021). Amidst this transformative trend, a specific segment that has emerged as a focal point of interest is wellness tourism. Especially in the context of an aging population, catering to the needs and preferences of elderly travelers has become increasingly relevant, presenting both challenges and opportunities for countries worldwide. The convergence of wellness tourism and the creative economy in the context of elderly tourists from Thailand, Japan, and China forms a compelling focal point in contemporary tourism studies. According to a recent report, the global tourism industry is on a steady upward trajectory. The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) anticipates that by 2030, the number of international tourists worldwide will surpass 1.8 billion, marking an average annual growth rate of 3.3 percent. This growth is partly attributed to demographic shifts, particularly the increasing proportion of older adults in the global population. As of 2020, the number of individuals aged 55 and above was estimated at 1.5 billion out of a total population of 7.77 billion, making up 18.6 percent of the world's inhabitants. Projections indicate that this trend of population aging will persist (Kowal, Goodkind & He, 2016; Naja, Makhoul & Chehab, 2017; Ramart & Subanjui, 2024). Elderly travelers are increasingly recognized as valuable market segments by businesses due to their higher disposable income and preference for longer journeys (Sriampornekkul & Chuntuk, 2018). The United Nations has foreseen a transition towards an aging society in the 21st century. The tourism landscape across Thailand, Japan, and China has witnessed a remarkable shift in recent years, driven in part by the increasing presence of elderly tourists. First, ~~Thailand~~—according to the research studies (Panriansaen et al., 2024; Ramart & Subanjui, 2024), the number of elderly tourists visiting Thailand has been steadily increasing. In 2019, Thailand welcomed over 10 million senior travelers,

representing a significant portion of the tourism market. This demographic contributes substantially to the tourism industry's revenue, with spending on accommodations, dining, and leisure activities. Secondly, Japan has seen a surge in elderly tourists in recent years, reflecting the country's popularity as a travel destination among seniors. According to the Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO), in 2019, approximately 5 million elderly travelers visited Japan, comprising a notable segment of the total tourist arrivals (Jimura 2020; Ruangdet 2020; Sangpikul, 2008). This trend underscores the significance of catering to the specific needs and preferences of elderly tourists in Japan's tourism sector. Finally, China boasts a large and growing population of elderly tourists, contributing significantly to the country's domestic and international tourism markets. The China Tourism Academy reports that in 2020, over 180 million elderly Chinese travelers embarked on international trips, accounting for a substantial portion of the tourism expenditure within the country. Moreover, a rising number of Chinese seniors are also exploring international destinations, highlighting their increasing significance in the global tourism landscape (Lei, Zhao, & Chen, 2020; Wang, 2024). As of the latest available data, the influx of elderly tourists from Thailand, Japan, and China continues to play a pivotal role in shaping the landscape of creative economics within their respective countries and the global tourism industry at large. These numbers underscore the significance of the elderly demographic in driving tourism revenue and stimulating creative economic activities, such as artisanal crafts, traditional cultural experiences, and innovative wellness offerings tailored to the needs of senior travelers. As this demographic continues to grow and diversify its travel preferences, there is a burgeoning opportunity for businesses and policymakers to harness the creative potential of this market segment, thereby contributing to the sustainable development of the creative economy in Thailand, Japan, China, and beyond.

The theory of wellness tourism underscores the growing demand for holistic well-being experiences and the search for psychological, physical, and spiritual rejuvenation among travelers. Concurrently, the creative economy theory accentuates the role of cultural elements, artistic expressions, and heritage in augmenting a destination's appeal, fostering economic growth, and shaping the cultural identity of a place (Dini & Pencarelli, 2021). Investigating the interplay between these two theories is of paramount importance, as it not only illuminates how creative elements influence the wellness experiences of elderly tourists in these culturally diverse nations but also holds the potential to redefine wellness tourism by incorporating cultural and creative dimensions, thereby bolstering economic development and nurturing the well-being of elderly travelers. This study is

poised to offer profound insights into the intersection of wellness and creativity in the tourism domain, addressing the evolving needs of elderly travelers while propelling destination development and cultural preservation in the participating nations.

Creative Economy

Before embarking on an in-depth analysis of various dimensions within the creative economy, it is paramount to acknowledge the significant contributions of influential figures such as John Howkins, Richard Florida, and institutions like the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) (Canton, 2021). John Howkins, a luminary in the creative industries, has played a pivotal role in popularizing the concept of the "creative economy," highlighting the economic significance of creativity and intellectual property. Richard Florida, renowned for his urban studies research, has extensively explored the nexus between creativity, talent, and economic development, shaping global discourse on the creative economy. Furthermore, organizations like UNCTAD have been instrumental in advocating for policies that support the growth and sustainability of the creative economy on a global scale. In the realm of finance and economics, the term "creative" holds a distinct connotation, referring to knowledge-based and traditional artisanal products and services. When considering the typology of the creative economy, Howkins' framework (Howkins, 2002), which categorizes sectors such as advertising, design, and media, provides a foundational understanding of the diverse industries encompassed within this domain. Additionally, Florida's delineation of the creative class and its role in driving innovation and economic growth further enriches our comprehension of the multifaceted nature of the creative economy. These insights laid the groundwork for policymakers, researchers, and practitioners to navigate the complexities of this dynamic field and harness its potential for fostering economic prosperity and cultural enrichment.

The creative economy theory, highlighting the fusion of cultural and creative sectors with economic growth, has notable implications in the realm of wellness tourism in Thailand, Japan, and China. In response to the global surge in demand for comprehensive well-being experiences, these nations are strategically harnessing their rich cultural heritage, artistic resources, and innovation capabilities to elevate the wellness tourism sector (Levickaitė, 2011). The concept of the creative economy plays a pivotal role in the context of elderly wellness tourism, fostering a mutually beneficial relationship between creativity, culture, and holistic well-being. Integrating creative economy

principles into tailor-made wellness initiatives for the elderly enables destinations to curate distinctive, immersive experiences that cater to the diverse needs of this demographic. This theory promotes the theme of cultural heritage, artistic expression, and inventive approaches to wellness offerings, ultimately enhancing the quality of experiences and distinguishing destinations in a competitive market. The creative economy's focus on collaboration, innovation, and authenticity seamlessly aligns with the aspirations of elderly travelers in search of meaningful and revitalizing encounters across various countries (Keadplang & Boonyanmethaporn, 2022). In Thailand, creative economy integration into wellness tourism has led to luxury spas blending traditional healing practices with modern design, appealing to relaxation-seeking tourists and fostering a deep connection to the country's heritage. Wellness tourism for the elderly in Thailand extends beyond personal well-being, holding significant economic influence (Kan et al., 2023). Thailand's growing elderly population seeks tailored health and wellness experiences, presenting an exceptional economic opportunity. By attracting elderly tourists investing in high-quality wellness services like spa treatments and Thai massages, Thailand boosts tourism-related revenue, stimulating job creation and infrastructure development, enhancing the overall economy, and solidifying its global status as a premier wellness destination. In Japan, the synergy of creativity and well-being is embodied in "shinrin-yoku," or forest bathing, seamlessly melding nature's therapeutic properties with artistic contemplation. This capitalizes on Japan's serene landscapes and Zen philosophy to provide rejuvenating experiences that promote overall wellness. Wellness tourism for Japan's elderly holds intricate economic implications, benefiting both the tourism sector and the broader economy. Japan's aging population paves the way for tailored elderly wellness tourism, driving demand for revitalizing hot springs, traditional meditation, and culturally enriched wellness journeys, thus bolstering the local economy through increased visitor spending. This sets off a ripple effect across various sectors, spurring job creation and infrastructure investments and enhancing Japan's global reputation as a premier wellness destination, potentially resulting in sustained tourism sector growth. In China, traditional medicine and martial arts, deeply ingrained in the nation's history, have seamlessly integrated into wellness tourism, offering rejuvenation and celebrating cultural heritage. Wellness tourism for the elderly in China carries significant economic implications, addressing the needs of an aging population and fostering economic growth (Yue, 2022). China's rapidly aging demographic provides a prime opportunity for tailored elderly wellness tourism, driven by their preference for health-focused experiences. This generates demand for traditional Chinese medicine, meditation practices, and

culturally enriched wellness offerings, leading to increased tourism-related spending and a considerable boost to the local economy. Furthermore, it sets in motion a multiplier effect across various sectors, creating demand for accommodations, transportation, dining, and services, resulting in job creation and reinforcing the economy (Xu et al., 2023). The development of wellness infrastructure tailored to the elderly requires investments in construction and hospitality, further invigorating these industries. The emphasis on wellness tourism enhances China's global image as a top-tier health and rejuvenation destination, potentially leading to sustained growth in the overall tourism sector.

In conclusion, the creative economy theory significantly impacts wellness tourism in Thailand, Japan, and China, forging a dynamic connection between culture, creativity, and economic growth. These nations strategically leverage their cultural and creative assets to enhance wellness tourism, particularly for the elderly. This type caters to evolving traveler preferences while ensuring sustainable tourism sector development in these countries.

Wellness Tourism

The wellness tourism theory centers on the idea of travel experiences that prioritize the enhancement of physical, mental, and emotional well-being. This theory posits that travelers seek destinations and activities that facilitate relaxation, rejuvenation, and personal growth. For elderly travelers, wellness tourism involves engaging in a range of activities specifically designed to cater to their needs (Keadplang, 2019). These activities may include spa treatments, yoga and meditation sessions, nature excursions, cultural experiences, and even educational workshops related to health and well-being. The importance of wellness tourism for the economy of elderly travelers lies in its substantial economic impact. Elderly travelers contribute significantly to local economies by spending on accommodations, dining, wellness services, transportation, and various leisure activities. This demand generates revenue for local businesses, stimulates job creation, and encourages investments in wellness-related infrastructure. Within the realm of wellness tourism, theorists are increasingly focusing on future perspectives and the concept of sustainable wellness tourism. They envision a future where wellness tourism evolves to integrate sustainability as a core principle, emphasizing environmentally friendly practices, social responsibility, and the well-being of local communities. Many theorists foresee a shift towards destinations that provide rejuvenating experiences and promote the health of the world and its people. As wellness tourists become more

conscientious about their impact on the environment, sustainable wellness tourism is expected to gain prominence. Theorists believe that wellness travel of the future will prioritize destinations and experiences that align with principles of conservation, eco-wellness, and ethical tourism, ensuring a holistic approach to well-being that benefits travelers and host communities.

Elderly Tourists

In recent decades, there has been a notable rise in the number of older people participating in tourism, giving rise to the concept of senior tourism. This term primarily pertains to the travel and movement of elderly individuals. It's important to define what is meant by 'old age' at this juncture (Tomljenovic & Faulkner, 2000). In the literature, there are various interpretations of this term, often revolving around the age at which an individual is considered to have entered old age and the terminology used to refer to this demographic group, such as seniors, older adults, the silent generation, or baby boomers. Researchers in the field of tourism typically categorize 'elder travelers' as individuals aged 55 or older (Balderas-Cejudo & Patterson, 2023). Older individuals worldwide are increasingly adopting the principles of healthy and active aging. They are taking a more proactive approach and assuming greater responsibility for maintaining their health and functional abilities. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines the principles of healthy aging as encompassing access to healthcare and social services, a conducive physical environment, diverse personal activities, social engagement, economic well-being, and positive behavioral attributes. The elderly travelers in the context of wellness tourism recognize the unique needs and preferences of the aging population in the context of travel and well-being. This theory posits that elderly travelers seek wellness experiences that enhance physical health and encompass emotional, social, and cultural dimensions. It emphasizes the importance of tailored services and facilities, such as accessible accommodations, senior-friendly activities, and opportunities for interaction and self-discovery. Rooted in the idea that well-being is a holistic concept, this theory underscores the significance of integrating traditional practices, cultural immersion, and personal growth opportunities to create meaningful and rejuvenating travel experiences for the elderly. By acknowledging the multifaceted requirements of this demographic, destinations and industries can develop strategies that resonate with elderly travelers, offering them transformative journeys that enrich their well-being while contributing to the growth of wellness tourism. To gain insights into the behavior of elderly

individuals, significant psychosocial theories like the preference, and the activities have been formulated and put into practice on the economic importance.

Thai Elderly Tourists

The strong preference of Thai elderly tourists for traditional Thai healing arts and cultural practices within their wellness journeys highlights the paramount role of cultural authenticity and heritage in wellness tourism. This inclination is of immense importance, not only for enriching wellness experiences but also for fostering economic growth by driving demand for indigenous wellness activities and services, thus bolstering the local economy. This aligns with a broader perspective of wellness tourism, emphasizing cultural immersion and traditional practices, which offers travelers more profound and meaningful engagements. The behavior of Thai elderly individuals plays a pivotal role in shaping the landscape of wellness tourism in Thailand. Their inclination toward traditional Thai healing arts and cultural practices holds significant cultural and economic importance. Firstly, it serves as a means of preserving and passing down traditional Thai knowledge and practices, ensuring the rich cultural heritage is not lost to time. Secondly, the preferences of Thai elderly tourists drive the demand for these unique wellness activities, contributing substantially to the local economy. Their spending on traditional Thai massages, holistic therapies, and wellness services not only boosts revenue but also leads to job creation, ultimately enhancing the nation's economic well-being. Lastly, the Thai elderly tourist's influence leads to the creation of more authentic and tailored wellness experiences, aligning with their specific needs and preferences, ultimately benefitting the broader wellness tourism industry. In the future, this trend among Thai elderly tourists signals a broader shift in wellness tourism towards a greater emphasis on authenticity and cultural immersion. To support and promote this facet of wellness tourism, policymakers should prioritize the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage, provide assistance to traditional artisans, and create incentives for the integration of authentic wellness activities. For instance, popular wellness activities such as traditional Thai massages and meditation can be further promoted and integrated into wellness offerings, securing a robust future for wellness tourism in Thailand. This approach will ensure Thailand's continued prominence as a wellness destination that offers relaxation intertwined with genuine connections to its rich cultural traditions.

Japanese Elderly Tourists

According to the tourism patterns of the elderly, Japan is one of the most remarkable countries, and it is worth studying as a case study. In 2022, the proportion of the elderly in the country (over 65) was as high as 29.1% of the total population, and those over 70 accounted for 23%. (Statistics Bureau of Japan, 2022) This situation of increasing numbers of the elderly has been ongoing since 1970, making Japan a “super-aging society” for over half a century.

Many business sectors in Japan, are trying to adapt to this new society, such as the government's extension of the retirement age for private sector employees to 70 years to meet the country's labor needs (Thailand Development Research Institute, 2023) or policies to invite foreigners to work or reside. In addition, the tourism sector in Japan has also adapted to meet the needs of domestic elderly customers. A survey of the desired tourism patterns showed that a 70-year-old Japanese elderly person said that "people with experience will have higher needs and more, and will become more complex. Young people will enjoy going to new places, but the fun will be even greater when they get older. The cost of meeting those needs will also increase accordingly. Another person in their 60-year-old said that the role of the travel agency is important, both in taking care of and managing customers, finding information, and implementing the plan. In addition, a travel agency surveyed expressed an opinion about the travel behavior of the elderly, saying that "elderly customers do not need cheap travel plans because this does not create satisfaction, but they are willing to pay for expensive travel plans if they are more satisfied with the conditions offered (Eunju, 2014).

From the above examples, it can be said that the tourism pattern for Japanese elderly people is not only the fun and new experiences that should be offered but also creating satisfaction in various forms, such as managing accommodation with facilities and safety for the elderly, which are also important. A "fun" travel plan for each age using activities that allow the elderly to spend time enjoying the atmosphere rather than exerting themselves should be considered. Although the cost of travel is high, elderly customers think that it is not a problem and are willing to pay.

For the motivation of the elderly in Japan who want to visit Thailand, Asawin Sangpikul (2008) studied the motivation of Japanese elderly tourists to travel to Thailand. It found that historical and cultural tourist attractions had the greatest impact on visiting Thailand. Next were temples, scenery and nature, cleanliness and sanitation, climate, and diversity of tourist attractions. The elderly expressed positive opinions about Thai people, saying that they are cheerful, kind-hearted,

and always look happy. In addition, factors such as convenience, cleanliness, safety, and diversity of travel plans, such as souvenir shops, spas, beaches, and Thai restaurants, are also what Japanese elderly people expect from traveling to Thailand.

Chinese Elderly Tourists

According to significant data from the National Bureau of Statistics of China at the end of the year 2022, it was found that China has entered a fully aging society, with the proportion of the population aged 60 and above reaching 280 million people, accounting for 19.8 percent of the total population. Among them, the population aged 65 and above is estimated to be 210 million people, accounting for 14.9 percent of the total population (CHEN et al., 2023).

It is projected that by the year 2035, the number of elderly people will increase to 420 million, or about 30 percent of the total population. It can be said that China has a rapidly growing elderly population, leading the Chinese government to prioritize the situation of the elderly since 2019 and announcing strategies to help develop manufacturing industries and improve various services to better care for the elderly (Fang et al., 2020).

This has led to the emergence of new business opportunities within the “Silver Economy” system, which is widely discussed for its significant role in driving China's economy in the future. It is estimated that by 2050, industries and services related to the elderly in China will have a high value of up to 106 trillion yuan (33% of GDP), and China will become one of the countries with the greatest business opportunities in the world in terms of elderly care (Klimczuk, 2021). From the aforementioned trends, it can be seen as a great opportunity for the tourism and elderly care service industries worldwide, particularly in Thailand, which is considered one of the targeted countries for elderly Chinese tourists. Currently, this group possesses financial potential, knowledge, technological savvy, and a desire for retirement relaxation. Thailand's advantages, including tourist destinations and climate (Ng & Thong, 2023), along with competitive pricing and up-to-date technology, have made it a preferred destination for elderly Chinese tourists. This aligns with the research of Wang, Feng, and Zhao (2023), which studied the motivating and attracting factors influencing Chinese tourists' decisions to travel to Thailand. The majority of elderly Chinese tourists primarily seek relaxation in natural settings, with the main factor driving satisfaction being service costs (Pan, Wang, & Ryan, 2021). This corresponds with the survey conducted by the Chinese Tourism Institute regarding the preferences and satisfaction of Chinese tourists traveling abroad, which found that

convenience and price were prioritized by most Chinese tourists, who tend to gravitate towards destinations with beautiful natural environments and unique cuisine (Wang et al., 2023).

In summary, the demand from elderly Chinese tourists continues to increase steadily with the growing number of elderly individuals. Primarily, they are interested in cultural tourism such as visiting temples, historical sites, and art exhibitions, as well as exploring natural landscapes in rural areas or small towns due to the “beautiful natural environment”, “unique local culture”, and “distinctive cuisine”. Therefore, to accommodate the needs of elderly Chinese tourists, both the public and private sectors should prioritize the promotion and development of cultural resources in tourist areas, including planning promotional campaigns and creating products that attract tourists. Comprehensive services should be provided to address the reasons for selecting tourist destinations for Chinese tourists, including beautiful environments, unique cultures, delicious food, and reasonable expenses for health and wellness. Additionally, fundamental factors such as good service, safe accommodation, and convenience for the elderly must be considered to ensure satisfaction and encourage repeat visits in the future.

Conclusion

By shedding light on the role of the creative economy in wellness tourism preferences and experiences of elderly tourists in Thailand, Japan, and China, this study contributes valuable insights for tourism stakeholders, policymakers, and marketers seeking to enhance the appeal and sustainability of wellness destinations. The discussions suggest opportunities for developing tailored wellness offerings that echo each country’s specific cultural and generational dynamics, ultimately fostering economic growth and promoting well-being among the elderly population in these regions. In conclusion, the analysis reveals the profound impact of the creative economy theory on wellness tourism in Thailand, Japan, and China. By leveraging their rich cultural heritage and innovative capabilities, these nations have strategically enhanced the wellness tourism sector, particularly for elderly travelers. This symbiotic relationship between culture, creativity, and economic growth has led to the development of tailored wellness experiences that cater to the diverse needs of elderly tourists, ultimately bolstering local economies and solidifying these countries' positions as premier wellness destinations. The integration of creative economy principles into wellness initiatives has not only elevated the quality of experiences but also fostered authenticity and cultural immersion, distinguishing these destinations in a competitive market. Based on the provided conclusion, there’s

a comparison table highlighting key preferences and considerations for elderly wellness tourists from Thailand, Japan, and China:

Table 1 presents a conclusion of key preferences of Thai, Japanese, and Chinese elderly tourists

Features	Thailand	Japan	China
Preference in Creative Economy Integration	Traditional healing arts, cultural activities	The blend of traditional rituals with modern techniques	Traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) with contemporary practices
Cultural Influence	Strong emphasis on Thai heritage and practices	Fusion of traditional and modern approaches	Preference for TCM practices alongside modern wellness
Marketing Appeal	Focus on authenticity, traditional wellness methods	Highlight the unique blend of tradition and modernity	Emphasize TCM benefits and integration with contemporary wellness
Policy Recommendations	Preservation & Promotion: Prioritize traditional Thai healing arts and cultural experiences.	Support for Tailored Experiences: Encourage the development of wellness programs that combine traditional and modern techniques.	Cultural Resource Promotion: Highlight historical sites and cultural experiences alongside wellness offerings.

As the global population continues to age, the convergence of wellness tourism and the creative economy holds immense potential for driving sustainable tourism sector development while meeting the evolving needs of elderly travelers. Thus, policymakers and industry stakeholders must prioritize the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage, innovation, and authenticity to ensure the continued growth and success of wellness tourism in these culturally diverse nations.

Suggestions

Based on the analysis of the preferences and behaviors of elderly tourists from Thailand, Japan, and China, policymakers should consider the following recommendations to enhance wellness tourism experiences tailored to the needs of this demographic:

1. Preservation and Promotion of Cultural Heritage: Recognize the paramount role of cultural authenticity and heritage in wellness tourism, particularly in Thailand. Implement policies that

prioritize the preservation and promotion of traditional practices, such as Thai healing arts and cultural activities. This includes providing assistance to traditional artisans and creating incentives for the integration of authentic wellness activities into tourism offerings.

2. Support for Tailored Wellness Experiences: Acknowledge the importance of tailored wellness experiences that align with the specific needs and preferences of elderly travelers. Encourage collaboration between the public and private sectors to develop initiatives that cater to the diverse interests of elderly tourists, such as traditional Thai massages and meditation sessions.

3. Investment in Infrastructure and Services: Allocate resources to improve infrastructure and services in tourist areas to ensure the safety, accessibility, and comfort of elderly travelers. This includes managing accommodations with facilities suitable for the elderly and enhancing overall service quality to meet their expectations.

4. Promotion of Cultural Resources: Promote and develop cultural resources in tourist areas to attract elderly tourists from Japan and China. Emphasize the unique local culture, historical sites, art exhibitions, and natural landscapes that appeal to this demographic. Implement promotional campaigns and create products that highlight the cultural richness of destinations.

5. Consideration of Cost and Convenience: Recognize the willingness of elderly tourists to pay for high-quality experiences that meet their needs and preferences. Prioritize the provision of convenient services and reasonable expenses while ensuring the overall satisfaction of elderly travelers.

By implementing these recommendations, policymakers can effectively enhance wellness tourism experiences for elderly tourists from Thailand, Japan, and China, thereby fostering economic growth, preserving cultural heritage, and promoting sustainable tourism development.

New Knowledge

The new knowledge uncovered in this study sheds light on the relationship between the creative economy and wellness tourism, with a specific focus on elderly tourists from Thailand, Japan, and China. While the global wellness tourism industry has witnessed significant growth, driven by rising demand for holistic well-being experiences, the influence of creative economy elements on the preferences and experiences of elderly tourists in this field has been largely unexplored. To address this gap, the research undertakes a cross-cultural investigation to understand how the creative economy impacts the experiences and consumption behaviors of elderly travelers in these

three Asian countries. The findings reveal distinct patterns in the integration of creative elements, such as arts, crafts, and cultural engagement, into wellness tourism experiences across the regions. Thai elderly tourists demonstrate a strong affinity for traditional Thai healing arts and cultural practices as essential components of their wellness journeys, while Japanese elderly tourists emphasize the blending of traditional rituals with modern therapeutic techniques. Chinese elderly tourists, on the other hand, exhibit a preference for a combination of traditional Chinese medicine and contemporary wellness practices. Additionally, the study identifies various factors influencing the adoption of creative economy elements in wellness tourism by elderly tourists, including cultural norms, generational influences, and marketing strategies. Overall, the research underscores the importance of recognizing and accommodating these differences to effectively meet the diverse needs and expectations of elderly wellness travelers in today's competitive global tourism market.

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