

Factors Influencing Health Wellness and Spa Tourism among Foreign Visitors to Thailand

ปัจจัยที่มีอิทธิพลต่อการท่องเที่ยวเชิงส่งเสริมสุขภาพสำหรับ ชาวต่างชาติที่มาท่องเที่ยวในประเทศไทย

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Abstract

The purpose of this research was examine validity of the factors influencing health wellness and spa tourism among foreign visitors to Thailand. The multiple aspects of Escapism through Health Promotion Tourism primarily attract foreign visitor for their destinations. Then the questionnaires were distributed 400 people who were enterprenuers of health tourism, foreign tourists and tourist guide. In the final stage questionnaires were collected from respondents. Data analysis and descriptive statistic analysed quantitative data research analyzed by statistical analysis as follows: percentages, frequency, mean and standard deviation, the path analysis was used to test the hypothesis and methods of structural relationship models. Firstly, the data were statistically analysed by confirmatory factor analysis. Next by structural models the factors were rated in terms of their influence on the development model of health promotion tourism

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for foreign tourists in case of study in Thailand. The research found that the model level had high construct validity. The model comprises of 9 factors SIGX, SPAX, SPEX, SERX, SPIX, SPOX, SPRX, STEX and SUSX and 25 sub-factors. As the result, the confirmatory factor analysis the measurement model is valid and well fitted to empirical data. The fitness values for the basic overall model all met the standard criterions, thus achieving desired levels. This model exhibits acceptable level of fit. And used to confirm that all the factors are appropriate, construct validity and content validity the level is acceptable.

Keywords: Factors Influencing, Health Wellness and Spa Tourism

บทคัดย่อ

การศึกษานี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาปัจจัยที่มีอิทธิพลต่อการท่องเที่ยวเชิงส่งเสริมสุขภาพสำหรับชาวต่างชาติที่มาท่องเที่ยวในประเทศไทยกับข้อมูลเชิงประจักษ์ ซึ่งเป็นการศึกษาวิจัยจากกลุ่มตัวอย่างนักท่องเที่ยวชาวต่างที่เดินทางเข้ามาท่องเที่ยวในประเทศไทย เครื่องมือที่ใช้ในการเก็บรวบรวมข้อมูลเป็นแบบสอบถาม จำนวน 400 ชุด วิเคราะห์ข้อมูลโดยใช้สถิติพรรณนา ได้แก่ ร้อยละ ค่าความถี่ ค่าเฉลี่ยเลขคณิต ส่วนเบี่ยงเบนมาตรฐาน สถิติทดสอบสมมติฐานประกอบด้วยสถิติวิเคราะห์เส้นทางอิทธิพลและสถิติวิเคราะห์โมเดลสมการเชิงโครงสร้าง (SEM) จากผลการทดสอบองค์ประกอบยืนยันแบบจำลองโครงสร้างพบว่า จากการวิเคราะห์องค์ประกอบเชิงยืนยัน โมเดลการวิเคราะห์มีความสอดคล้องกับข้อมูลเชิงประจักษ์ ซึ่งประกอบด้วย 9 ปัจจัยหลัก SIGX, SPAX, SPEX, SERX, SPIX, SPOX, SPRX, STEX and SUSX และ 25 ปัจจัยย่อยที่มีความเหมาะสมมีความเชื่อมั่น ความตรงเชิงโครงสร้างและเนื้อหาต่อปัจจัยที่มีอิทธิพลต่อการท่องเที่ยวเชิงส่งเสริมสุขภาพ

คำสำคัญ: ปัจจัยที่มีอิทธิพล การท่องเที่ยวเชิงส่งเสริมสุขภาพ

1. Introduction

In modern day, the major motivation of the increasing desire of escapism through promotion health tourism has inspired people around the globe to escape from their homeland, busy lives, stress, routine, the rising health costs in the developed world to try a brand new exotic experience in a paradisiac land. As a consequence of its richness in natural and cultural heritage, Thailand had been well developed a unique Thai wisdom of healing arts and culture since ancestors in Health Promotion Tourism destination, including its stunning natural beauty.

Escapism through promotion health tourism has arguably always been an important element of tourism, but visitor gaze has usually been externally rather than internally directed. However, the growth of the holistic tourism sector suggests that there is an increasing desire to focus on “The self” rather than “Other”, and existential rather than “objective” authenticity. The information mentioned above represents “Escapism” of a different kind—a paradoxical desire to escape but in order to find oneself. Numerous factors have precipitated this growth, not least the apparent anomie of postmodern society. This paper discusses the way in which holistic products are being developed to meet the changing needs of tourists, considering some of the factors that have apparently engendered this development. The paper includes an analysis of typologies of activities, profiles of consumers and typical motivations. “Holistic retreats” tend to offer combinations of therapies and counselling, pathways to spiritual development, creative enhancement and many other routes to the reconciliation of body, mind and spirit. (Smith M and Kelly, 2006) One of the major motivations for the act of tourism is that of “Escape” (Goeldner and Ritchie, 2009). Escape from an everyday personal or physical environment to one perceived to be likely to give to the traveler all the elements of life, he or she

feels, are missing from those everyday experiences. In addition, satisfaction of the desire for a healthy lifestyle, which as Hall (1992) notes a significant intrinsic reward of much travel, has been essential part of the range of new products available to tourists in recent years. “This growing desire for the combination of Escape with satisfaction of the need to maintain or recapture personal well-being had been recognized by the tourist industry through the promotion of “Health Wellness and Spa Tourism”

2. Objectives of the Study

The purpose of this research was examine validity of the model of patterns of tourism among foreign visitors to Thailand: A promotional model.

3. Methodology

3.1 Population and sample size

The researcher used the multi-stage sampling technique. Then, the simple random sampling technique is used for selecting the provinces and hotels and collecting the data from foreign in Thailand. With population size of hotel customers is over 2,603,308 and sample size for $\pm 5\%$ precision levels where confidence level is 95%, sample size (n) for precision (e) of $\pm 5\%$ is 400 (Yamane, 1967). According to the Structure Equation Modeling (SEM) principle, the acceptable size is twenty times (20:1) based on the rule of thumb (Lindeman et.al., 1980).

3.2 Instrument

Related to the mixed methods research, the explanatory sequential design had been selected for this particular research (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

3.3 Quantitative method

A questionnaire as the research instrument for data collection that all survey items are originated. There are; part 1 as general personal data of respondent information in multiple choice questions and part 2 as all latent variables with measured on a five-point Likert type scale, ranging from 1 (extremely disagree) to 5 (extremely agree).

3.4 Validity and reliability

The content validity of the questionnaire was conducted by five professors to examine accuracy in both content and language which each item was evaluated a rating in three levels from 0 to 1 (Rovinelli & Hambleton, 1977) and the value of the IOC must be much greater than 0.5. The result of the IOC was ranging from 0.8 to 1 in each item. The reliability of the measurement items were verified by the Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha which should be greater than .70 (Hair et al., 2010) and corrected item total correlation should be greater than 0.3 (Field, 2005). The researcher conducted reliability both pre-test (n=100). The results of reliability indicated that each items met the minimized criteria that Cronbach's Alpha's all items was greater than 0.7 and corrected item total correlation was greater than 0.3

Based on questionnaire survey, sampling design was considered relating to a sample group of health tourism, foreign tourists and tourist guide in Thailand. The sample size is determined largely by three factors : (1) the estimated prevalence of the variable of interest; (2) the desired level of confidence; and (3) the acceptable margin of error.

For a survey design based on a simple random sample. In this effort, 400 questionnaires were using multi-stage and systematic samplings based on data sharing of various user groups. The researcher needs more information on re-testing and checking validity. The research methodology combined between qualitative and quantitative. The test for accuracy and quality of tools according to content and item objective congruent (IOC) by professionals, showed that the

content validity index was over and the average reliability of the research tool and the quantitative data research analyzed by statistical analysis as follows: percentages, frequency, mean and standard deviation, as well as Questionnaire designs to obtain data related to asked by using open-ended questions. It mainly includes attitude statements, to which respondents are raised the extent to which they agreed or disagreed on a five point likert scale from a strongly agree to strongly disagree'. The part involves individual characteristics (i.e. gender, age, educational level, status, etc.).

This is a descriptive study that was done to explore the challenges and solutions to health promotion tourism in Thailand. The study was conducted in two stages. First going to reputable sites, library resource and search for existing data on health promotion tourism industry in Thailand which were classified after this part, a questionnaires was improved by experts for confirming the validity and reliability was calculated 95% using cronbach alpha test. Then the questionnaire was distributed 400 people who were maker of health tourism, foreign tourists and guide. In the final stage questionnaires were collected from respondents. Data analysis was performed using SPSS and descriptive statistics methods were used. Next the factors were rated in terms of their influence on the development model of health promotion tourism for foreign tourist case study in Thailand.

The analysis of structural equations measures the direct interaction between variables and the degree to which certain variability is determined by individual causal factors. Path analysis is a recursive model and only allows a one way cause relationship. It is characterised by the following rules, resulting from a causal ordering of variables (Gotata, 1992, p. 15): In estimating the influence of any variable X on Y, all variables causally subsequent to X should be set. The following formula presents the above rules:

$$X_a \longrightarrow X \longrightarrow X_b \longrightarrow Y$$

X_a represents cluster of variables subsequent to X

X_b represents cluster of variables subsequent to X

Y – dependent variable.

The starting point for the path analysis is a qualitative diagram presenting the relationships between variables. The dependencies and relationship between the variables are created on the basis of the researcher's own knowledge. It is crucial to properly identify the type of variables introduced into the structural model. These include the following variables: observable, latent, exogenous and endogenous (Cwalina, 2000). In path analysis the cause and effect relationships between variables is expressed by means of a path coefficient. The coefficient informs which part of the variability of a dependent variable X_i (measured with the standard deviation of the standardised variable, which means it is equal to a unit) is expressed by the variability of the independent variable X_j assuming the constancy of the remaining factors (Szwarc, 2006). In other words, the path coefficient informs us as to what extent variable X_j (consecutive) changes when variable X_i (causal) changes by one unit. It is claimed that the path analysis modeling outgrows the regression analysis and is a more proper method used for analyzing the causal relationship between the variables, especially the qualitative ones, which do not meet the classical assumptions of regression (Sagan, 2003). In this paper, the author chooses path analysis as the research tool to examine the theory, since the structure of causal dependencies to be verified occurs only as a consequence of that theory.

Appropriate wording changes were made to account for features of international tourists. The items are measured by the 5-likert scale, with 1 indicating strong disagreement and 5 indicating strong agreement. For the content validity of questionnaire, five specialists and scholars confirmed and amended items in the questionnaire.

The results of the research are shown in the following table.

Table 1 Selected results of structural equation modeling, direct effects of interplay between variables

No	Independent	Observed Variable		Dependent	Bata/ Loading	Chi-Square/ df	Indicator	
1	SIGX	SIG 1	0.75		0.89	33.38/17 = 1.96	RMSEA	0.066
		SIG 2	0.74				GFI	0.930
		SIG 3	0.77				NNFI	0.97
2	SPAX	SPA 1	0.69		0.88	42.78/25 = 1.71	RMSEA	0.053
		SPA 2	0.82				GFI	0.950
		SPA 3	0.82				NNFI	0.99
3	SPEX	SPE 1	0.77		0.86	28.12/16 = 1.75	RMSEA	0.055
							GFI	0.960
		SPE 2	0.80				NNFI	0.99
4	SERX	SER 1	0.62		0.77	27.46/15 = 1.83	RMSEA	0.058
							GFI	0.940
		SER 2	0.85				NNFI	0.96
5	SPIX	SPI 1	0.76		0.76	52.15/26 = 2.00	RMSEA	0.064
		SPI 2	0.83				GFI	0.950
		SPI 3	0.86				NNFI	0.99
6	SPOX	SPO 1	0.76		0.74	29.10/17 = 1.71	RMSEA	0.053
		SPO 2	0.77				GFI	0.960
		SPO 3	0.75				NNFI	0.98
7	SPRX	SPR 1	0.80		0.73	36.68/24 = 1.52	RMSEA	0.046
		SPR 2	0.89				GFI	0.920
		SPR 3	0.86				NNFI	0.92
8	STEX	STE 1	0.55		0.72	40.81/24 = 1.70	RMSEA	0.053
		STE 2	0.59				GFI	0.950
		STE 3	0.78				NNFI	0.95
9	SUSX	SUS 1	0.74		0.61	50.70/17 = 2.98	RMSEA	0.089
		SUS 2	0.73				GFI	0.960
		SUS 3	0.73				NNFI	0.98

From the table 1, we obtained the values of satisfaction indices of the 9 – causal factor model as follows:

1. Chi-Square/df value which the criterion is set at < 2.00, 3.00, 5.00. The 9 causal factors effected on the dependent variable, SATY, had the values satisfied the criterion as follows: SIGX, SPAX, SPEX, SERX, SPIX, SPOX, SPRX, STEX and SUSX were 1.96, 1.71, 1.75, 1.83, 2.00, 1.71, 1.52, 1.70, and 2.98 respectively.

2. Goodness of Fit Index: GFI value which the criterion is set at > 0.90. The 9 causal factors effected on the dependent variable, SATY, had the values satisfied the criterion as follows: SIGX, SPAX, SPEX, SERX, SPIX, SPOX, SPRX, STEX and SUSX were 0.930 0.950 0.960 0.940 0.950 0.960 0.920 0.950 and 0.960 respectively.

3. Root Mean Square Error of Approximation: RMSEA value which the criterion is set at < 0.05-0.08. The 9 causal factors effected on the dependent variable, SATY, had the values satisfied the criterion as follows: SIGX, SPAX, SPEX, SERX, SPIX, SPOX, SPRX, STEX and SUSX were 0.066 0.053 0.055 0.058 0.064 0.053 0.046 0.053 and 0.089 respectively.

4. Non - Normed Fit Index: NNFI value which the criterion is set at > 0.90. The 9 causal factors effected on the dependent variable, SATY, had the values satisfied the criterion as follows: SIGX, SPAX, SPEX, SERX, SPIX, SPOX, SPRX, STEX and SUSX were 0.97 0.99 0.99 0.96 0.99 0.98 0.92 0.95 and 0.98 respectively.

5. Bata / Loading Factor value which the criterion is set at < 1.00. The 9 causal factors effected on the dependent variable, SATY, had the values satisfied the criterion as follows: SIGX, SPAX, SPEX, SERX, SPIX, SPOX, SPRX, STEX and SUSX were 0.89, 0.88, 0.86, 0.77, 0.76, 0.74, 0.73, 0.72 and 0.61 respectively.

Assigned Variables of Health Promotion Tourism Components.

SIGX : Sightseeing Highlights, Attractions.

SPAX : Spa.

SPEX : Specialized World-Class, Accommodations.

SERX : Service Infrastructure.

SPIX : Spice and Siamese Medicinal Herb.

SPOX : Sports for Health.

SPRX : Spiritual, Mind and Body Practices.

STEX : Steam and Sauna and Bathing with Hot Spring Mineral Water Treatments.

SUSX : Sustainability.

SATY : Satisfaction.

Most had prior experience in using spa in Thailand, often using hotel in-house spa services. The most popular body massage. The main influencer to go to wellness tourism was relaxation after work. They trusted recommendations from friends and family. The environment of the wellness tourism is a primary factor. The spa and wellness tourism is preferred to be relaxing. Services from a recognized brand or famous name are chosen over others. Staff in the spa and wellness tourism are expected to be polite displaying good manners and providing with confidence in their physical security.

4. Conclusions

As the result obtained, Thailand has amazing resources to propose a Unique Brand New Concept of Escapism from Stress, Routine, unpleasant Situations and Bustling city through the promotion of Health Wellness and Spa Tourism as a Destination for both domestic and foreign tourists in according to its 9 S for success.

These following 9 S Strategies for success health promotion tourism in Thailand.

(1) Sightseeing Highlights, visit to the Royal Grand Palace, Wat Phra Keo and Wat Pho in Bangkok and Cultural World heritage sites protected by UNESCO such as Wat Phra Sri Sanphet in Ayutthaya, Sukhothai historical park and Natural World heritage at Koh Tao and Huay Kha Khaeng etc.

(2) Spa massage therapy, a unique experience, blends Siamese Intangible Cultural Heritage of healing with world-class hospitality. Thailand has centuries of experience in this art of natural healing and attributes such as ancient Siamese massage, natural therapeutic springs, abundance of medicinal flora and excellent service that make “Thailand Spa unique”. Spa is rapidly climbing the popularity ladder all over the world. Resorts offering “Massage & Spa facilities” are sprouting in various countries. However, it is Thailand which provides cutting edge to the Health Art and its stunning surroundings.

(3) Specialized World-Class Seaside Resort & Spas, the Best of Spa & Massage Centers and the competent therapists.

(4) Service Infrastructure: Air Transport Infrastructure, Ground and Port Transport. Infrastructure and Tourist Service Infrastructure.

(5) Spice & Siamese medicinal herb, flowers and coconut oil are mainly used for Aromatic therapy, Steam Massages and Culinary. In Thailand, Thai people use much of turmeric for cooking food and skin care. During your long stays, you will have the great opportunity to learn our Intangible Cultural Heritage such as Thai cooking and also traditional Thai massage.

(6) Sports for Health. There are multiple choices of sea & river sport delights such as Sailing, Snorkeling, Sea Kayaking, Swimming, Sea Cruising, Fishing, Scuba Diving and Canoeing & Rafting in the River etc. For the main land sports, you can enjoy Walking in the national parks, Trekking or Footing or Golfing, or learning also our Intangible Cultural Heritage Muay Thai.

(7) Spiritual, Mind and Body practices, these 3 ancient Elements are based on Eastern religions or Beliefs or Asian Intangible Cultural Heritages, such as the Buddhist elements in meditation, South Asian Yoga and Ayurvedic practices, and Balinese Hindu philosophies. Meditation Retreat is situated almost everywhere and also you can benefit these practices along the way during your escaping in Thailand.

(8) Steam & Sauna and Bathing with Hot Spring mineral water treatments. Bathing in hot springs gradually increases the temperature of the body, thus killing harmful germs and viruses. Also drinking mineral spring water is part of holistic approach to Health and Wellness. Particularly, in Krabi province exists 2 Natural Heritages of Spring Waters such as Sra Morakot Cold Spring Water and Waree Raksa Hot Spring Water which offer for visitors who believe in ancient health and wellness model, based on 4 elements: Water, Fire, Earth and Air.

1. Water therapies help to heal and soothe the body.
2. Fire, Heat treatment induces body sweating and accelerating blood circulation.
3. Earth offers a number of herbs; flowers, plants, fruits, and mud.
4. Air, Fresh air, Sea air and Oxygen are the essence of life.

(9) Sustainable : Secret Garden Conservation and Education Program is a volunteer organization promoting conservation and education on the island of Koh Tao and Koh Lanta. Whether teaching school children, or cleaning the beach, both local and foreigner volunteers are involved in many environmentally projects in Koh Tao. It is also a gesture of Merit making for the Buddhist's way of life.

The results on the one hand, the usefulness of path analysis modelling, structural relationship models, while on the other, the undeniable influence of the preparation of a trip on the satisfaction gained by tourists. It is that

satisfaction which later results in a future intent to repeat the visit. Such a situation is observed in the case of nine specific segments. Which the government organization is responsible to promote health and develop tourism in Thailand. This research is to develop a good understanding on how Thailand could provide facilities and services about accommodation, activity and attraction to satisfy our visitors.

Suggestion to improve wellness tourism in Thailand. Should be surrounded with a natural environment. Staff should be trained and skilled for behave in a professional manner. Service price should be displayed clearly with options for payment methods. The menus should be targeted to consumer group and be presented in multiple languages appropriate to the targets.

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