

Significant Trends in Asia's Wellness Tourism and Research Agenda: A Systematic Literature Review Analysis

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ABSTRACT

The research paper focused on the significant trends in the Wellness market, its demands and motivational factors, and the wellness tourism research agenda and policies that impact the Asian Wellness tourism industry in an Asian context. In a critical systematic literature review, the articles published on wellness topics in 143 Asian documents were selected from the Scopus and Web of Science databases published between 2003 and 2022. The performance analysis revealed that the theme's production reached an average annual growth rate of 17.67%. The recent trend of wellness tourism in Asian countries is based on wellness retreats that included holistic packages of services such as yoga, meditation, ayurvedic healing, spas, traditional experiences, forest parks, nature sceneries, characteristics food, ancient villages, hot springs, and mental healing. However, the research agenda was usually mixed with health and medical tourism. Health, satisfaction, experiences, and wellness tourism were used the most in the literature. This research paper presents deep insights to help policymakers develop policies which organizes and promotes their country's wellness tourism. It can be a reference document for further studies in wellness tourism in Asian countries.

Keywords: Wellness tourism, Trends, Asian countries, Wellness demand, Motivational factors, Wellness tourism structure, Science mapping, Knowledge structures

Introduction

In recent years, most Asian countries promoted tourism like never before. They recognized it as one of the most resilient and rapidly growing economic sectors. According to GWI (2022), the wellness economy for the Asia-Pacific region in 2019 was \$1602.8 billion, which became \$1500.2 billion in 2020 due to the COVID-19 outbreak. In 2017, the wellness economy was \$1370.5 billion USD. It recorded 8.1 per cent growth during 2017-2019. A similar average annual growth rate was recorded between 2017 and 2019 for North America at 8.4 percent with 1514.0 billion USD, Europe at five percent with 1288.6 billion USD, and the Middle East-North Africa at 7.4 percent with 120.9 billion USD. This trend in the wellness economy also recorded a considerable decline in 2020. For the Asia-Pacific region -6.4 percent, North America -13.4 percent, Europe -11.4 percent, Latin America - 22.1 percent and the Middle East-North Africa-10.9 percent decline was recorded. The following table shows the wellness economy of 2020 by country.

Concept of Wellness Tourism

On the surface, tourism appears to be an action done by tourists for pleasure and entertainment, but a deep analysis discards this notion (Andreu et al., 2021). Wellness tourism is usually mixed with health and medical tourism (Voigt, 2014; Bezner, 2015), but it is conceptually different from both of those. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines health to which well-being contributes as "a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity" (WHO, 2020). Thus, wellness includes psychological, social, and physical health (Kahneman & Krueger, 2006). Similarly, Voigt (2014) said that wellness combines well-being and fitness.

Over the past decades, the wellness tourism industry experienced unprecedented growth (Bushell & Sheldon, 2009), attracting high-end tourists from Western and Asian countries. The reason for the unprecedented growth in the tourism industry is the significant growth in the wellness industry of Asian countries. The Global Wellness Economy Monitor report noted this development.

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Table 1. *Wellness Economy*

Top 10 Markets in Asia-Pacific (2020)	
US\$ billions	
China	\$682.7
Japan	\$303.6
South Korea	\$94.1
Australia	\$84.4
India	\$77.6
Taiwan	\$38.4
Indonesia	\$36.4
Philippines	\$33.0
Thailand	\$29.0
Malaysia	\$24.4

Source: GWI, 2022

In 2015, tourists made 691 million wellness trips, an increase of 104 million visits from 2013. The total expenditures associated with wellness tourism reached \$563 billion in January 2017 (Global Wellness Institute, 2017). GWI's 2021 report showed that its market reached \$720 billion in 2019. Travelers worldwide made over 600 million national and international wellness trips in 2020. It was down from 936 million visits in comparison to 2019. Due to the pandemic and widespread travel disruptions, a drop was recorded to \$436 billion in 2020. The GWI report estimates that wellness tourism will grow annually by +20.9%, with a \$1.1 trillion market reach in 2025 as the world emerges from the global pandemic (Global Wellness Institute 2021). Several factors played a substantial role in the rapid growth of the "wellness industry," such as an increasingly hectic lifestyle, high levels of stress in the workforce, changes in religious and traditional community structures, people's desire to slow down their life and exploring themselves (Douglas, 2001; Pollock & Williams, 2000; Smith and Puczko', 2010).

This study sought to answer the research gap through the following research questions: (1) How has wellness tourism research in an Asian context grown over the last decades? (2) What are the knowledge structures (i.e., conceptual, social, and intellectual) of wellness tourism research in an Asian context? (3) What are the main features of wellness tourism research methods in an Asian context? Furthermore, (4) what does a proposed agenda for wellness tourism research in an Asian context for academics and practitioners look like? The study's main objective was to conduct a comprehensive bibliometric analysis of wellness tourism research in an Asian context.

Literature Review

Dimensions of Wellness Tourism

Wellness tourism commonly includes already healthy people proactively seeking engagement to maintain and enhance their overall wellness (GWI, 2018). Dunn (1959) described wellness as holistic as it includes four dimensions within the realm of the mind, body, spirit, and environment (Dillette et al., (2021). Thus, wellness tourism focuses on these four dimensions to facilitate wellness tourists.

Trends in Asian Wellness Tourism

The trends and opportunities for wellness tourism in Asia are mainly based on the components of yoga, meditation, and Ayurveda.¹, spas, and therapeutic² bath culture, nature, beauty and body treatments. Before 1994, very few spas were available in the Southern-Eastern Asia region. Today, most big hotels offer spas (Csirmaz & Petó, (2015). India's wellness tourism in South Asia is the fastest-growing among 46 countries worldwide. India scored 10 in the medical tourism index (2020-21) and seventh in wellness tourism, with a revenue of 16.3 billion USD. According to the GWI 2018c report, 3.8 million jobs were created,

¹ According to Atharva Veda (the last of the four Vedas), Ayurveda is the traditional Hindu system of medicine. Cures and treatments are done for several diseases through diet, herbal treatment, and yogic breathing.

² medicine.

representing 14 per cent of total employment (National et al. for Medical and Wellness Tourism 2022). The Indian government promotes wellness tourism through 'Incredible India', 'Heal in India' and 'Atithi Devo Bhava' campaigns. India's wellness tourism offers retreats that include holistic packages such as yoga, meditation, and naturopathy,³ marma therapy⁴, ayurvedic healing, spas, a traditional experience and journey (National et al. for Medical and Wellness Tourism 2022). The government facilitates digital apps and social media platforms to prospective tourists.

China's wellness tourism components are based on natural features such as clean water, fresh air, a health-spa, forest parks, healing qualities of food, ancient villages, hot springs, and rural scenery (Heung & Kucukusta, (2013). It is mainly catering to domestic visitors. A study revealed that the development of China's wellness tourism products could be more varied, and a complete countryside wellness tourism system still needs to be established (Feng et al., 2021). Wellness tourism research was also merged with medical and health tourism in China.

As global wellness tourism was undergoing dramatic changes post-pandemic, the **Korean** wellness tourism industry addressed the sag of in-country tourism. The policymakers made policy changes which promoted local wellness tourism. Han and An's (2022) research revealed that Korean wellness tourism required integrated platforms and robust IT infrastructure to promote the country's wellness tourism industry based on oriental medicine, beauty, spas, forest and nature, meditation, and healing. The country promoted 25 must-visit wellness attractions in Korea. The first-time awareness of wellness tourism is associated with the Korean Wellness Tourism Festival which was organized by the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism in 2021. **Japan's** wellness tourism is based on forest healing, hot springs, Marine healing (thalassotherapy), medical spas, and natural healing (Kim, 2021).

Thailand is considered one of Southeast Asia's leading and fastest-growing tourism destinations. One of the reasons for this growth is wellness and medical tourism. The strength of Thailand's wellness tourism is focused on spa resorts and traditional Thai massage. The Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) promotes forty-one spa and wellness resorts. These centres are primarily known for traditional Thai massage with traditional medicine, which helps to relieve physical and mental anxiety and stiffness to improve well-being among tourists. According to GWI, Thailand ranked 13th in 2017 in wellness tourism by earning around 12 billion dollars from 12.5 million wellness tourists. According to UNWTO (2020b), these wellness tours recorded an increase of 13 per cent from 2015 to 2017, 50 per cent more than overall international tours. In 2018, international tourist arrivals grew by 7.3%, ranking Thailand as the ninth most-visited country with earnings that reached more than 38 million (GWI 2018c).

Asian countries like India and Thailand followed similar trends as both integrated medical treatment with wellness experiences and offered comprehensive wellness packages with traditional healing. In contrast, China offers Chinese medicine with medical procedures like cosmetic surgery and dental treatments. This integration attracts tourists who seek rejuvenation along with medical care. Innovative digital platforms and mobile applications are being developed to provide personalized wellness experiences, including virtual coaching, fitness tracking, mindfulness apps and online consultation. These Asian countries' wellness tourism offerings are more inclined towards nature, such as Ayurveda, forest bathing, nature-based therapies, and spa treatments in pristine natural settings.

Knowledge Structure and Keyword Issues in Asian Wellness Tourism Research

In Asian countries, wellness tourism has a vital role to play. Scholars have researched wellness and well-being, but research on wellness tourism was less profound. Many researchers studied and evaluated medical and health tourism, which is conceptualized as wellness tourism. Cohen (2008) did exploratory research on medical tourism in Thailand. This study focused on key sociological issues related to the core development process of the Thai medical tourism industry, the commodification of Thai Medicine, the emergence and development of overseas-oriented medical facilities, creating and combining hotels with high-class remedial and hospitality amenities for foreign clients, and the consequences of such action on the Thai medical system. In his study, Connell (2006) examined medical tourism in India, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Mauritius, Cuba, and Australia. The study showed that medical tourism was likely to grow exponentially as medical services moved towards privatization, making it cost differentials. As a result, Western insurance companies might be encouraged to provide overseas treatment to reduce costs.

Research Agenda, Keyword Issue and Methods of Wellness Tourism in The Asian Context

Although a few research studies with the keywords of wellness tourism, yoga tourism, and health tourism were found, the more prominent topics for research by Asian scholars were wellness hotel centres (Chi, 2020), spiritual and physical healing through yoga (Dillette, 2019), health and wellness (Smith, 2010), and the cultural perspective of health and wellness tourism (Huang & Xu, 2014). During the last ten years, research targeted the keyword issues related to wellness tourism. In an Asian context, the

³ A system that treats disease without drugs and surgery. It emphasizes using natural elements such as air, water, and herbs. Physical means tissue manipulation and electrotherapy.

⁴ Marma therapy in Sanskrit means hidden common ailment to neuromuscular severe disease can be treated by marma therapy.

wellness tourism concept is related to the destination image of countries such as India, China, Russia, and South Korea. Due to Ayurveda's rich history and culture of yoga (Rawat, 2017), India is considered the fastest-rising wellness tourism destination, with an annual growth rate of 22% (Gregoire, 2013). The concept of yoga retreats is defined as a program where the central theme and purpose for travel is yoga practice, and the total travel experience is planned and developed around this (Lehto et al., 2006). This is considered an important element for promoting and motivating the Indian wellness industry.

Methodology

The bibliometric analysis adopted in this work proposed two techniques: performance analysis and scientific mapping. Performance analysis evaluates individual contributions, considering the number of publications, citations, and journal impact factors. It identifies the most successful researchers, research groups and institutions. While scientific mapping examines the relationships between research components through keyword co-occurrence networks, revealing trends, gaps, and the overall structure of the research landscape. These techniques made it possible to identify emerging fields, track developments and visualize collaborations within the research community. The packages include R's bibliometric program (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017) and CiteSpace software (Synnvestedt et al., 2005).

Search Queries

The search query in the Scopus database looked for documents related to "health tourism", "spiritual tourism", or "yoga tourism" in the countries/regions of Timor-Leste, Asia, Turkey, Southeast Asia, China, India, Singapore, Philippines, Hong Kong, Macau, Mongolia, Taipei, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Myanmar, Indonesia, Korea, Malaysia, Vietnam, Pakistan, Peru, Japan, Qatar, Taiwan, Thailand, United Arab Emirates, Middle East, Saudi Arabia, Bali, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Namibia, Bhutan, Iran, Maldives, and Nepal. The query specified for keywords in the document's title, abstract, and keywords fields. Only documents written in English were included in the selected database; documents published in 2023 were excluded.

Data Description

Table 2. *Descriptive Indicators of the dDatabase*

Description	Results
MAIN INFORMATION ABOUT THE DATA	
Timespan	1996:2022
Sources (Journals, Books, etc.)	267
Documents	408
Annual Growth Rate %	17.42
Document Average Age	5,52
Average citations per doc	11.8
References	18237
DOCUMENT CONTENTS	
Keywords Plus (ID)	1125
Author's Keywords (DE)	1167
AUTHORS	
Authors	960
Authors of single-authored docs	95
AUTHORS COLLABORATION	
Single-authored docs	107
Co-Authors per Doc	2.67
International co-authorships %	21.08

The table 2 provides information about the dataset for the timespan from 1996 to 2022 and includes 408 documents from 267 sources, such as journals and books. The annual growth rate for the dataset is 17.42%, indicating that the number of documents included has been steadily increasing. The average age of the documents is 5.52 years, meaning that most of the dataset consists of relatively recent publications.

The table provides insight into the contents of the documents, with 1,125 Keywords Plus (ID) and 1,167 Author's Keywords (DE) listed. These keywords help researchers identify and categorize the topics covered by the dataset. Additionally, the dataset includes 960 authors, with 95 writing single-authored documents. This suggests that most of the dataset consists of documents with multiple authors.

The table provides information about author collaboration within the dataset. Specifically, it indicates that 107 documents were single-authored, while the remaining documents had an average of 2.67 co-authors per document. Furthermore, the dataset had a relatively high percentage (21.08%) of international co-authorships, indicating that collaboration across different countries and regions is standard within the dataset.

Performance Analysis

Published Documents Evolution

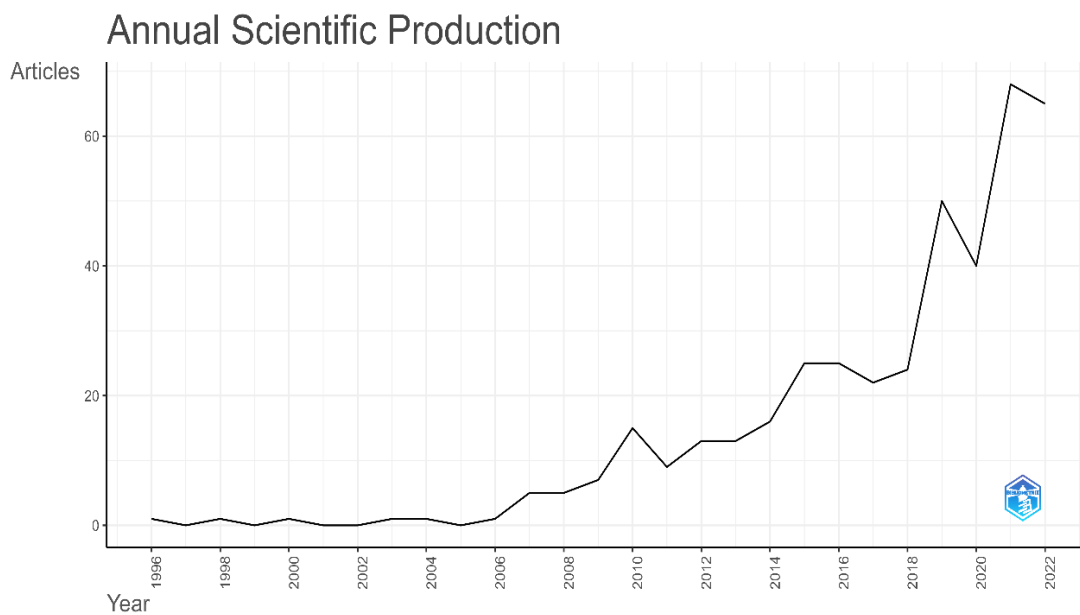


Figure 1. Title: evolution of publications in wellness tourism.

The graphic depicts the evolution of publications in the field of wellness tourism from 2001 to 2020. The vertical axis represents the number of publications, while the horizontal axis represents the year of publication.

The graph shows a steady increase in wellness tourism publications from 2001 to 2020. In 2001, there were only a few publications related to wellness tourism, but the number of publications increased substantially over the years, reaching a peak in 2020.

It is also interesting to note that there was a significant increase in publications after 2010. This could be attributed to the growing popularity of wellness tourism in recent years, which has led to increased interest and research in this area.

Source's impact

- H-index: a metric that measures the impact of a journal's publications based on the number of citations received by its articles.
- TC: the total number of citations received by the journal's articles
- NP: The number of published papers
- PY_start: the year in which the journal's publication started.

The table 3 shows that the highest h-index values are found in two journals: the Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research and Sustainability (Switzerland), with an h-index of 7. Regarding total citations received, the journal with the highest value is Tourism Management, with 673 citations, followed by Tourism Review, with 432 citations.

Table 3. 10 Most Impactful Sources

Element	h index	TC	NP	PY start
Asia Pacific Journal of Tourism Research	7	189	8	2013
Sustainability (Switzerland)	7	144	13	2015
Tourism Management	6	673	6	2007
International Journal of Tourism Research	5	296	6	2009
Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing	5	132	7	1998
Anatolia	4	137	4	2003
Iranian Journal of Public Health	4	69	5	2013
Tourism Review	4	432	4	2019
Annals of Tourism Research	3	98	3	2011
International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management	3	82	3	2013

Most of the journals have a relatively low h-index, which suggests that their articles are less frequently cited than those in the top two journals. However, the number of published papers varies significantly between the journals, with *Tourism Management* and *Tourism Review* having the highest number of published papers (6 and 4, respectively). Finally, the starting year of the journals ranges from 1998 (*Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing*) to 2019 (*Tourism Review*).

Authors Impact:

Table 4. 10 Most Impactful Authors

Element	h_index	TC	NP	PY_start
Timothy J Lee	5	111	6	2015
Pramod Sharma	5	194	8	2018
Heesup Han	4	64	4	2018
Jogendra Kumar Nayak	4	180	4	2018
Honggang Xu	4	120	5	2014
Feng-Hsiang Chang	3	91	3	2013
Kaung-Hwa Chen	3	91	3	2013
Farooq Haq	3	94	7	2009
Mang He	3	54	3	2021
Liyuan Huang	3	107	3	2014

Table 4 provides an overview of authors in wellness tourism research based on their h-index, total citations, number of publications, and starting years. The h-index and total citation counts indicate the authors' research impact and influence, while the number of publications and starting years provide insights into their productivity and tenure in the field. Timothy J. Lee has an h-index of 5, which indicates that he has published at least 5 papers that have received at least 5 citations each.

His total citation count is 111, suggesting that other scholars in the field have cited his research multiple times. With six publications starting in 2015, he has been actively contributing to the field of wellness tourism in recent years. Pramod Sharma, with an h-index of 5 and a higher total citation count of 194, has received substantial recognition and influence within the wellness tourism domain. Having published eight papers starting in 2018, he has been actively engaged in scholarly work for a relatively short time.

Heesup Han, Jogendra Kumar Nayak and Honggang Xu have h-indices of 4, indicating a commendable research impact and productivity level. While Heesup Han and Jogendra Kumar Nayak have fewer publications (4) and lower total citation counts (64 and 180, respectively), XU H has published five papers with a higher total citation count of 120. The authors' research contributions to wellness tourism have likely gained attention and recognition within the academic community. Feng-Hsiang Chang and Kaung-Hwa Chen have h-indices of 3, which is still respectable and reflects moderate research impact. With three publications each, their total citation counts are the same at 91. Their research has contributed to the knowledge base in wellness tourism since 2013. With an h-index of 3, Farooq Haq's research has garnered moderate attention and impact in the field. His work has expanded since 2009 with seven publications, allowing for deeper insights and contributions. Mang He and Liyuan Huang have recently entered the field of wellness tourism research, as evident from their starting years (2021 and 2014, respectively). While their h-indices and total citation counts are at 3, their contributions and impact are still emerging.

Most Locally Cited Documents

Analyzing the most cited document permits this article to identify the most influential and impactful publications within a specific field of study. By examining the citation patterns and frequency of particular documents, researchers can gain insights into the seminal works that have shaped the development and discourse of wellness tourism literature (Martín-Martín et al., 2018).

Table 5. 10 Most Locally Cited Documents

Document	Year	Local Citations	Global Citations
(Lehto et al., 2006) "Yoga Tourism as a Niche Within the Wellness Tourism Market".	2006	27	106
(Connell, 2013) "Contemporary medical tourism: Conceptualization, culture and commodification".	2013	20	356
(CHEN et al., 2008) "Determining the Motivation of Wellness Travelers".	2008	18	83
(Bowers & Cheer, 2017) "Yoga tourism: Commodification and Western embracement of Eastern spiritual practice".	2017	15	55
(Yu & Ko, 2012) "A cross-cultural study of perceptions of medical tourism among Chinese, Japanese and Korean tourists in Korea".	2012	15	209
(Maddox, 2015) "Studying at the source: Ashtanga yoga tourism and the search for authenticity in Mysore, India".	2015	14	30
(Heung & Kucukusta, 2013) "Wellness Tourism in China: Resources, Development and Marketing".	2013	14	70
(Haq & Jackson, 2009) "Spiritual journey to Hajj: Australian and Pakistani experience and expectations".	2009	12	67
(Mak et al., 2009) "Health or self-indulgence? The motivations and characteristics of spa-goers".	2009	9	131
(Buzinde, 2020) "Theoretical linkages between well-being and tourism: The case of self-determination theory and spiritual tourism".	2020	8	49

By examining the characteristics and motivations of yoga retreat participants, the findings offer practical insights for tour operators and destinations looking to tap into the growing market of yoga tourism.

This article provides an overview of the history, growth, and current understanding of medical tourism, highlighting the need for clear definitions and estimates of the number of medical tourists. It challenges popular assumptions by emphasizing that medical tourism often involves nearby border crossings, diasporas, and less medically significant procedures, with numbers typically lower than industry and media claims. The paper calls for further research on the motivations, behavior, economic impact, ethical considerations, and interconnections between medical tourism and the tourism industry.

This research focused on travel motivation to wellness destinations, clearly defining wellness tourism and conducting an empirical study to identify the underlying motivational factors. The study combined qualitative and quantitative methods to identify specific attributes that attracted travelers and ranked the motivation factors, with relaxation being the most prominent.

This paper explored the interconnections between yoga tourism, spiritual tourism, and wellness tourism. It investigated the motivations of Western yoga enthusiasts in Maharashtra, India, highlighting the pursuit of union with something higher as a key driver. The study discussed the implications for yoga and spiritual tourism, emphasizing the need to decolonize yoga and preserve its transformative essence in the face of commodification.

This article critically examined the concept of authenticity in Ashtanga yoga, focusing on the experiences of American practitioners visiting the K. Pattabhi Jois Ashtanga Yoga Institute in Mysore, India. It revealed how notions of authenticity in yoga and travel to India perpetuate Orientalist ideals, reinforcing stereotypes and disregarding the syncretic nature of yoga's evolution and India's contemporary reality.

This paper utilized self-determination theory (SDT) as a framework to examine the well-being outcomes of spiritual tourism, explicitly focusing on the author's personal experience at a yoga/meditation retreat in Rishikesh, India. By combining autoethnography with theoretical linkages to broader social phenomena, the study contributes to the ongoing theoretical development and understanding of well-being in the context of spiritual tourism and sustains the legacy of interpretive inquiry.

Conceptual Structure

The conceptual structure identified the underlying organization and relationships of concepts in the wellness tourism literature. It showed how concepts are connected and related based on semantic or theoretical associations. A Co-occurrence network analysis examined the co-occurrence patterns of terms or keywords in the literature to discover their implicit relationships and connections (Zarei & Jabbarzadeh, 2019). Figure 2 illustrates the keyword co-occurrence network of the seven most significant

thematic clusters. Cluster labels were determined from the document titles with the most keywords in the cluster based on the most significant likelihood ratio (LLR) (Synnæstvedt et al., 2005). The silhouette metric provided information that could be used to identify significant and coherent clusters within a co-occurrence network, helping researchers understand the structure and organization of knowledge in the wellness tourism field (Chen, 2004).

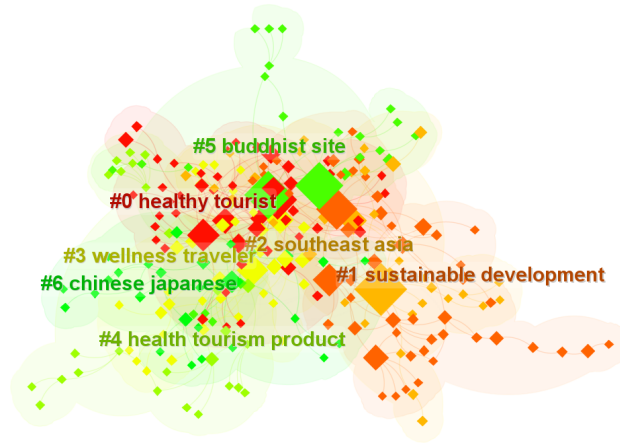


Figure 2. The most significant clusters of the keyword co-occurrence network.

Cluster (#0) Topics and Related Documents

The largest cluster (#0) has 51 members and a silhouette value of 0.892. It is labelled as a healthy tourist by LLR. The most cited article of the cluster is (Wirawan, Wirawan et al., 2020), which examined the perceptions of travel agents and tour guides in Bali regarding their role in promoting travel health measures. The authors found that both groups had good knowledge of general travel health issues and positive perceptions of their involvement in travel health and safety programs, highlighting their potential for contributing to travel health promotion efforts in Bali. The most cited keywords were "human", "article", and "adult".

This cluster included topics related to medical tourism, travel, marketing, and cultural factors. These topics are connected to various aspects of wellness tourism, including understanding consumer behavior and preferences, evaluating the impact of cultural factors on wellness experiences, analyzing marketing strategies, exploring the role of empowerment in wellness tourism, and utilizing technology and AI for enhancing wellness services. This cluster provided insights into different dimensions of wellness tourism, such as the perception of travel health promotion, the influence of therapeutic landscapes on longevity, the impact of COVID-19 on medical services, and the experiences of Muslim patients in South Korea. Overall, this co-occurrence cluster contributed to understanding and developing the field of wellness tourism by exploring various relevant topics and research studies.

Cluster (#1) Topics and Related Documents

The second largest cluster (#1) has 49 members and a silhouette value of 0.886. It is labelled as sustainable development by LLR and LSI. The major citing article of the cluster is Xu et al. (2022), which investigated the relationship between experiential value, place attachment, and environmentally responsible behavior in forest health tourism, highlighting the significant positive effects of experiential value and place attachment on tourists' environmentally responsible behavior, with place attachment playing a more crucial role than the elements of experiential value. The most cited keywords in this cluster were wellness tourism, India, and spiritual tourism. The most cited topics and the related documents are presented in Table 7.

This cluster examined the relationship between sustainable development and wellness tourism. It analyzed various aspects such as spas, yoga, ancient cities, destination branding, Chinese culture, behavioral intentions, service quality, creative economy, sustainability, religious tourism, and forest health. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Buddhist religious tourist destinations, brand culture, Buddhist dharma, India, and authenticity. These topics highlighted the importance of wellness values in spa visitors' decision-making and the interconnectedness of yoga, spirituality, and wellness tourism. The studies emphasized the need for sustainable strategies in ancient cities, effective destination branding for wellness tourism, and the role of Chinese culture in promoting wellness experiences. Furthermore, it explored behavioral intentions, service quality, creative economy, sustainability evaluation, religious tourism's post-pandemic recovery, and the relationship between forest health and responsible behavior.

Table 6. Cluster (#0) Most Relevant Topics

Basic Topics	Related Topics and Documents
Medical tourism	<p>Adult, healthy tourist</p> <p>(Sato et al., 2016) Short-term exposure to high concentrations of particulate matter (PM) in Beijing was found to have adverse effects on cough reflex and urge-to-cough thresholds, pulmonary function, and cough-related quality of life in healthy non-resident volunteers visiting the city.</p> <p>Packer et al. (2007) explored the complex factors influencing the participation of people with disabilities in tourism. It emphasized the importance of understanding these dynamics to promote accessible tourism and increase their active involvement in travel.</p> <p>Urinary Tract Infection</p> <p>Carlson & Seppänen (2000). Highlighted the first case of Melioidosis in Finland, a rare tropical disease typically found in Southeast Asia and Australia, emphasizing the increasing risk for tourists visiting infected regions.</p> <p>Halal food</p> <p>Alfarajat (2022) examined halal food services in South Korean healthcare institutions for patients from the UAE. It identified gaps in halal meal service and emphasized the importance of considering religious needs in medical tourism destinations for better patient satisfaction.</p> <p>Attitude to health</p> <p>Lee & Wu (2012) investigated consumer perception and demand for medical and wellness tourist services, offering recommendations for government organizations, medical institutions, and the tourism industry in response to the emerging trend of stress reduction, appearance changes, and wellness activities in travel.</p> <p>Medical care marketing</p> <p>Moghadam et al. (2021) investigated the role and importance of medical and cultural sensitivities in the marketing pattern of medical tourism, highlighting the impact on patient satisfaction, trust, and sense of security, emphasizing the need for healthcare providers and government officials to prioritize these factors in developing the health tourism industry.</p>
Travel	<p>Travel Health Promotion</p> <p>Wirawan, Wirawan et al. (2020) assessed the perceptions of travel agents and tour guides in Bali regarding their potential involvement in promoting travel health measures, finding that both groups had good knowledge and positive perceptions, indicating the potential for active participation in travel health promotion programs in Bali.</p> <p>- Patient travel motivation</p> <p>Pan & Moreira (2018) investigated Chinese perspectives on motivations, deterrents, and needs of outbound medical tourists, highlighting the varying urgency and specific factors which influenced their decision-making process.</p> <p>Travel health services.</p> <p>Wirawan, Putri, et al. (2020) developed an integrated travel health surveillance and information system for destination sites in Bali, mapping health hazards and risks at tourist attractions and assessing risk levels, emphasizing the importance of site-specific preventive measures for travelers.</p> <p>Travel Motivation</p> <p>Shalini (2017) explored the influence of factors such as Social Wellness, Emotional Wellness, Ayurveda Treatment, and Travel Motivation on Customer Satisfaction in Chennai's health and wellness tourism sector.</p> <p>Iran:</p> <p>Goodarzi et al. (2016) analyzed the SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) of health tourism in Sareyn, Iran, identifying its potential and providing guidelines for maximizing strengths and converting weaknesses into opportunities.</p> <p>Mosammam et al. (2019) examined the determinants of health tourism competitiveness in Iran, which revealed that while endowed resources were relatively favorable, the overall image of Iran's health tourism fell short, providing valuable insights for policymakers and planners.</p>
Cultural factors	<p>Cultural Sensitivities</p> <p>Moghadam et al. (2021) underscored the significance of cultural sensitivity in medical tourism marketing, emphasizing its role in building patient trust and enhancing healthcare experiences, calling for attention to cultural sensitivity in developing the health tourism industry.</p> <p>Longevity, symbolic landscape.</p> <p>Huang & Xu, (2018) examined wellness tourism in China, specifically in Bama, a "longevity village," and emphasized the importance of the symbolic landscape in attracting wellness tourists and creating a unique healing environment, filling a knowledge gap in the understanding of therapeutic landscapes in China.</p>

Cluster (#2) Summary and Most Citing Documents

The third largest cluster (#2) has 39 members and a silhouette value of 0.897. It is labelled as Southeast Asia by LLR. The major citing article of the cluster (Gönen, 2011) entitled "Health Tourism in Turkey and Some Effects for Accredited Hospitals" examined the marketing strategies and conditions of accredited hospitals in Turkey, aiming to identify challenges and provide

Table 7. Cluster (#1) Most Relevant Topics

Topic	Related Topics
Wellness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • spa Choi et al. (2015) explored how functional and wellness values influenced spa visitors' decision-making, finding that these values mediated the relationship between quality, satisfaction, and behavioral intentions, offering insights for enhancing revisitation and recommendation in the spa industry. • yoga Bowers & Cheer (2017) explored the interconnection between yoga tourism, spiritual tourism, and wellness tourism, examining the motivations of Western yoga enthusiasts in Maharashtra, India, and discussed the implications for yoga and spiritual tourism, • ancient city Varatipromma et al. (2020) analyzed the SWOT analysis and strategic model for wellness tourism development in FaDaet Song Yang Ancient City, Thailand, identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats and proposing an 8Ms model for enhancing the community's tourism strategy.
Wellness Tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • destination branding Ravichandran & Suresh (2010) branded India as a wellness destination, discussing its success, challenges, and opportunities in the context of unique travel experiences and destination branding. • Chinese culture Huang & Xu (2014) examined Chinese wellness tourism in the Bama, Guangxi Autonomous Region, emphasizing its connection to traditional Chinese wellness culture and the belief that Bama provides optimal results for activities such as nature-based experiences, moderate exercise, and appropriate diet, offering practical implications for the industry. • behavioral intention Sharma & Nayak (2019) explored the impact of memorable tourism experiences (MTEs) on behavioral intentions in yoga tourism, finding that MTEs had direct and indirect effects on destination image and tourists' satisfaction, challenging the emphasis on satisfaction alone in driving destination performance. • service quality Pinthong et al. (2021) investigated service quality and customer satisfaction in Pattaya, Thailand's PA and wellness tourism industry, focusing on the baby boomer generation. • creative economy Jedeejit et al. (2018) Developed a concept for integrating local knowledge and international concepts in Thailand's wellness tourism industry. They highlighted knowledge management's role in entrepreneurship and sustainable development in the changing global society.
Sustainable Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sustainability Fan et al. (2022) established a comprehensive sustainability evaluation framework for forest health tourism, evaluated the construction potential of forest health bases in China, and provided insights for sustainable site selection and development policies. • religious tourism The COVID-19 pandemic impacted religious tourism colossally, including the Kartarpur Gurdwara Corridor. It negatively impacted the region's local economy, employment, marketing, and peace. Haq & and Medhekar (2022) suggested that a post-COVID-19 public-private partnership was needed to plan, develop, and promote religious tourism cooperatively. This could create a mutually beneficial South-Asian economic success story based on responsible cross-border tourism. • forest health Xu et al. (2022) analyzed the link between experiential value, place attachment, and environmentally responsible behavior in forest health tourism, revealing that experiential value positively impacted place attachment and environmentally responsible behavior, with place attachment playing a crucial role as a mediator.
Spiritual Tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buddhist religious tourist destination Hermawan et al. (2019). Suggested alternative solutions for managing Borobudur Temple's sustainability through a paradigm shift towards sustainable tourism, emphasizing its heritage, spirituality, and shared responsibility among Buddhists. • brand culture Kim (2017) examined how Templestay used digital media and branding practices to shape the presence of Korean Buddhism in contemporary society. It revealed that the mediated presence of Korean Buddhism through digital media and branding practices created a constant tension between these different aspects. • Buddhist dhama Sirirat (2019) developed a practical process of participative education and sustainable tourism activities in spiritual tourism, focusing on Nakhon Phanom province, which increased knowledge, awareness, attitudes, and participation regarding environmental concerns among participants.
Yoga Tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • India Kainthola et al. (2021) found that Indian urban millennials were increasingly engaging in spiritual travel to cope with mental health issues, corporate pressures, and curiosity. These motivations shaped the activities they chose during their spiritual journeys. • yoga tourism Liu et al. (2020) found a growing demand for yoga tourism. However, the study also found several challenges facing the yoga tourism market, including the need for more professional organizations, industry standards, and high-quality yoga tourism projects. • authenticity Maddox (2015) examined the notion of authenticity in Ashtanga yoga and among yoga tourists in India, highlighting how perceptions of authenticity contributed to Orientalist imaginings, a rejection of yoga's syncretic evolution, and the construction of Otherness.
Impact of COVID-19 on Wellness Tourism	<p>COVID-19 Pandemic</p> <p>Sivanandamoorthy (2021) Examined the impact of COVID-19 on wellness tourism in Sri Lanka, revealing significant disruption and vulnerability in the industry due to the pandemic.</p> <p>(Pu et al., 2021) Analyzed the predictors of the health tourism intention after the COVID-19 pandemic. Its findings showed that the perceived usefulness of health tourism, subjective knowledge, and health consciousness influenced individuals' intentions, mediated by perceived behavior control.</p>
Millennials	<p>Kainthola et al. (2021). Explored the motivations and preferences of urban millennial spiritual tourists in India, revealing the push factors behind their travel choices and the desirable traits they sought in destinations, thereby expanding the understanding of contemporary spiritual tourism.</p>

recommendations to enhance the benefits of health tourism while ensuring public health was appropriately addressed. The most cited members in this cluster are health tourism, Thailand and satisfaction. This cluster review explored various aspects of health tourism, including its impact, competitiveness, customer satisfaction, destination development, and emerging trends. This cluster contributed to understanding the health tourism topic; Gönen (2011) discussed the effects of health tourism on accredited hospitals in Turkey, emphasizing the need for quality standards and accreditation in delivering healthcare services. Alberti et al.

(2014) examined the competitiveness policies implemented by the government of Thailand to promote medical tourism clusters, highlighting the role of government initiatives in enhancing the industry's competitiveness. Choksuchat et al. (2014) focused on health tourism information extraction and ontology storage, presenting a framework for efficiently extracting and organizing health tourism-related information. Saki et al. (2017) investigated tourists' satisfaction with hospital services in Lorestan Province, Iran, providing insights into the factors influencing their satisfaction and experiences with healthcare services. Shalini (2017) explored the potential of bridging healthcare with wellness tourism in India, discussing integrating traditional healing practices and modern medical treatments to attract wellness tourists. Asadi and Daryaei (2011) proposed strategies for developing health tourism in Iran, emphasizing the importance of infrastructure, marketing, and international collaborations.

Palutturi et al. (2017) identified key challenges and recommended implementing healthy cities in North Kolaka. Indonesia aimed to enhance the region's potential as a health tourism destination. Li et al. (2022) investigated patients' satisfaction with health tourism in Malaysia, focusing on the hospital environment, nutritional advice, and perceived value, explicitly focusing on Chinese exchange students. (Moslehifar et al., 2019) examined online trust and identity on health-related tourism websites in Southeast Asia, highlighting the importance of trust-building mechanisms in attracting potential health tourists. Ashton (2018) explored the impact of tourist satisfaction and intention to revisit spiritual retreat tourism development in Chiang Mai, Thailand, providing insights into the factors influencing tourists' loyalty and repeat visitation. (Williams et al., 1996) analyzed the health spa travel markets and the preferences of Mexican long-haul pleasure travelers, shedding light on the factors that attract tourists to health spas. Lee and Kim (2015) identified success factors for health tourism in Asian tourism cities, emphasizing the significance of infrastructure, service quality, and marketing strategies to enhance the competitiveness of health tourism destinations. Han et al. (2018) investigated the role of wellness spa tourism performance in building destination loyalty, explicitly focusing on Thailand, highlighting the importance of service quality and customer satisfaction in fostering loyalty among wellness tourists.

Cluster (#3) Summary and Most Citing Documents

The fourth largest cluster (#3) has 38 members and a silhouette value of 0.913. It is labelled as a wellness traveler by LLR. The major citing article of the cluster was (Majeed et al., 2018) entitled "Health Resorts and Multi-textured Perceptions of International Health Tourists". The most cited members in this cluster were China, tourist destinations, and tourist behavior. This cluster covered various aspects of wellness tourism, such as health resorts, therapeutic landscapes, visitor motivation, perceived destination qualities, and purchase intentions. The research investigated different regions, including Bama in China, Zhangye Danxia National Geological Park, and Guangxi Bama, while examining factors like nutritional knowledge, perceived medical quality, trust, experiential value, place attachment, message framing, and the influence of COVID-19. It emphasized the significance of understanding health perceptions, gendered spirituality, and quality in wellness tourism, particularly within the Chinese market.

Majeed (2018) studied health resorts and explored the diverse perceptions of international health tourists. The research highlighted the importance of understanding the multi-faceted aspects of health tourism in sustaining wellness experiences. Huang and Xu (2018) examined the concept of therapeutic landscapes and longevity in the context of wellness tourism in Bama, China. The study underscored the role of wellness tourism in promoting overall well-being and the connection between the natural environment and health outcomes. Yan He (2020) adopted an actor-network perspective to analyze the co-evolution of therapeutic landscapes and health tourism in Bama longevity villages in China. The research shed light on the dynamic relationship between the physical environment, health practices, and tourism development. Fengmin et al. (2022) investigated the revisit intention of medical tourists in China, focusing on factors such as nutritional knowledge, perceived medical quality, and trust in physiologists. The study provided valuable insights for shaping health tourism policies and enhancing the visitor experience. Yan et al. (2014) examined environmental problems in tourism resource development using Zhangye Danxia National Geological Park in Gansu Province, China, as a case study. The research highlighted the importance of sustainable practices in preserving tourism resources and minimizing negative impacts. Chen et al. (2008) explored the motivation of wellness travelers, emphasizing the factors that drive individuals to engage in wellness tourism experiences. The study contributed to a better understanding of the underlying motivations of wellness tourists. Lim et al. (2016) compared the motivational factors and satisfaction levels between first-time and repeat visitors in wellness tourism. The research highlighted the importance of understanding visitor motivations to enhance the overall wellness tourism experience. Lehto et al. (2017) validated the perceived destination restorative qualities scale from a Chinese perspective. The study contributed to cross-cultural research by examining the restorative aspects of destinations and their influence on visitor experiences. Xu et al. (2022) explored the experiential value, place attachment, and environmentally responsible behavior of forest health tourism in China. The research highlighted the potential of nature-based health tourism and the role of visitors in preserving and conserving natural environments. Zhang et al. (2021) investigated health tourism destinations as therapeutic landscapes, focusing on the health perceptions of senior seasonal migrants. The research provided insights into the role of health tourism in promoting well-being among senior populations.

Research Gap

This bibliometric analysis was done to detect research gaps. It identified thematic areas cited frequently but with a low centrality index. A centrality index measures how central a node is in a network. The high betweenness centrality of a keyword signifies its significant role in connecting diverse research themes in the network, underscoring their importance in facilitating interactions and connections among various research areas (Jaewoo & Woonsun, 2014). A node represents a topic in bibliometrics, and the edges between nodes represent citations. A thematic area is a group of research papers focusing on a common topic. A thematic area with a high number of citations but a low centrality index suggests much interest in the topic, but there needs to be a clear consensus on the best way to approach it. This can signify a research gap in the area and that new research could significantly contribute. The research themes that identified a research gap according to this method are:

- **Satisfaction:** Islam (2021) focused on the satisfaction of pilgrims and addressed the service gaps of tour operators. They found that by attending to the needs of spiritual tourists and enhancing their satisfaction, tour operators could strengthen their relationship with the pilgrims, who approached the journey as more than mere tourism but as a spiritual connection with their Creator. (Kouchebagh et al., 2017) Highlighted the vital role of quality service in the survival and success of wellness tourism organizations, particularly in medical tourism. Analyzing customer satisfaction factors and utilizing decision-making techniques provided valuable insights to enhance service quality and attract foreign patients. (Han et al., 2018) explored the relationships between performance, affective experiences, satisfaction, and loyalty in Thailand's wellness spa tourism market. The findings revealed significant associations between these variables, highlighting the importance of satisfaction in building loyalty. The study offered valuable insights for destination researchers and practitioners in enhancing the loyalty of wellness spa tourists.
- **Heritage Tourism:** Holman (2011) provided a detailed analysis of spiritual tourism in the Amazon, specifically focusing on ayahuasca tourism through an examination of the Blue Morpho Tours website, revealing the implications of appropriation and commodification for local communities in the Peruvian Amazon and potentially other cultures as well. Parker (2011) analyzed the transformation of the significance of ancient South Asian monuments through cultural tourism, highlighting how economic cosmology and the commodification of heritage could overshadow the cultural and spiritual values represented by these sites, ultimately questioning the trade-off between economic benefits and the preservation of cultural integrity.

Discussion and Conclusion

- After careful systemic analysis of the literature on wellness tourism in an Asian context, it revealed that the wellness tourism concept and evolution are significantly connected with the country's image and tradition. India's wellness tourism is the fastest growing among 46 countries and shares 14 per cent of total employment. It showed interconnections in the research topic, such as yoga, to special tourism and wellness. The systematic analysis of the document indicates that the number of publications on Wellness tourism has increased in the last ten years. Many Scholars have discussed wellness tourism, but it is not profound as the wellness topic is more mixed with Medical and Health Tourism for clusters that have been identified, such as healthy tourists, sustainable development, South Asia, and Wellness travelers. Healthy tourism covers medical tourism, travel, marketing, and cultural elements that help to understand the factors contributing to promoting health and wellness tourism by exploring various relevant topics and Research studies. The second cluster highlighted Wellness tourism's relationship with sustainable development, which requires facilitating better service to stimulate a country's economy.
- The third cluster indicated competitive policies to enhance the Wellness industry in South Asia. It related to providing the tourist with a better experience and high-level satisfaction.
- Cluster four revealed that landscape was a significant motivator, along with traditional medication, culture, naturopathy, and yoga.

Implications, Research Limitations and Future Direction

The trend of Asian wellness tourism has far-reaching implications for both the tourism industry and the research agenda. It has the potential to benefit the local economy by creating new job opportunities, promoting local culture and tradition, and improving the health and mental well-being of tourists. A thorough review analysis was conducted to understand this trend better, identify gaps in current research, and suggest areas for future investigation. Tourism stakeholders can collaborate with local communities and healthcare providers to offer authentic and culturally sensitive wellness experiences while balancing economic growth with environmental and social considerations. Ultimately, more focused policies and practices can achieve a sustainable and socially responsible approach to wellness tourism in Asia.

One notable implication of this trend is the increasing demand for holistic and alternative health practices among tourists. They are looking for destinations that offer a range of wellness activities, from yoga and meditation to traditional healing practices such

as Ayurveda, yoga, naturopathy from India and Traditional Chinese Medicine. This highlights the need for tourism stakeholders to work with local communities and healthcare providers to provide culturally sensitive and authentic wellness experiences.

Another implication is the potential economic benefits of wellness tourism for local communities, particularly in rural areas where traditional industries may decline. However, this raises concerns about the sustainability of wellness tourism and the need to balance economic growth with environmental and social considerations.

From a research perspective, a systematic review analysis can help us understand the factors driving the growth of Asian wellness tourism, such as changing consumer preferences, government policies, and technological innovations that are more focused on the wellness tourism industry. It can also identify gaps in existing research and suggest areas for future investigation, such as the impact of wellness tourism on local cultures and ecosystems, the effectiveness of different wellness practices in promoting health and well-being, and the potential for wellness tourism to promote social justice and equity.

The present study had some limitations. The study data relied on the availability and selection of relevant scholarly publications, which focused more on some areas of Asian countries. In addition, cultural and traditional nuances and context-specific factors could play a key role in creating perceptions and practices of wellness tourism. Bibliometric analysis is a quantitative data and citation approach which may overlook qualitative aspects and cultural intricacies to follow unique characteristics of Asian wellness tourism.

Future studies should include primary data on Asian wellness tourism to overcome these limitations. The findings with primary data will add value to the wellness tourism industry. This could include surveys, interviews, or country-based case studies to gather firsthand information on the motivations, experiences, and perceptions of wellness tourists in Asian countries. This would enhance the depth and richness of the wellness tourism industry.

Overall, the trend of Asian wellness tourism presents both opportunities and challenges for the tourism industry and research community. A thorough review analysis helps to inform policies and practices, leading to a more sustainable and socially responsible approach to wellness tourism in Asia.

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