Tourism Innovations

A Bi-Annual Refereed International Journal

Research Papers

Indian Tourism and Hospitality Congress (ITHC)

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TOURISM INNOVATIONS: A JOURNAL OF INDIAN TOURISM AND HOSPITALITY CONGRESS (ITHC) is a bi-annual international referred research Journal focusing on academic perspectives in Tourism and Hospitality. Being an journal of inter-disciplinary field, the journal focuses on various aspects of tourism and hospitality like, Tourism Issues, Tourism Impacts, Eco-tourism, Sustainable Tourism, Tourism Marketing, Medical Tourism, Health Tourism, Culture Tourism, Culinary Arts, Service Operations and other tourism, trave and hospitality areas. The objective of the journal is to have a comprehensive collection of research articles and dispersal of updated knowledge and information about tourism sector.

TOURISM
INNOVATIONS

An International Journal of Indian Tourism and Hospitality Congress (ITHC)

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Aims and Objectives:

TOURISM INNOVATIONS: A JOURNAL of Indian Tourism and Hospitality Congress (ITHC) is a bi-annual international PEER REVIWED referred research Journal focusing on academic perspectives in Tourism and Hospitality. Being an journal of inter- disciplinary field, the journal focuses on various aspects of tourism and hospitality like, Tourism Issues, Tourism Impacts, Eco-tourism, Sustainable Tourism, Tourism Marketing, Medical Tourism, Health Tourism, Culture Tourism, Culinary Arts, Service Operations and other tourism, travel and hospitality areas. The objective of the journal is to have a comprehensive collection of research articles and dispersal of updated knowledge and information about tourism sector.

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✪ *Second sheet;* Abstract of 300 words with at least 3 keywords.

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✪ The abbreviations and terminology should be fully spelled out and defined when first used in text.

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Editorial:
Tourism and Peace – The Essential Synergy for a Harmonious Global Future

As the world celebrates World Tourism Day under the theme "Tourism and Peace," it is essential to reflect on the profound relationship between tourism and the pursuit of peace. In a world marked by economic disparities, cultural differences, and political tensions, tourism stands as a bridge that connects societies, promotes mutual understanding, and fosters harmony. This year's theme calls upon governments, industries, and individuals to recognize the transformative power of tourism as not just an economic driver but also as a tool for building and sustaining peace.

Tourism is inherently an act of cultural exchange. As travelers visit new destinations, they immerse themselves in the traditions, values, and histories of other cultures. This act of cultural immersion has the potential to challenge stereotypes, diminish prejudices, and foster empathy. The intercultural dialogue that tourism facilitates encourages an appreciation of diversity and cultivates a sense of shared humanity. When people from different backgrounds meet and interact in a peaceful and friendly setting, it becomes much harder to view the "other" as a threat. Rather, the other becomes someone with a different perspective, shaped by unique cultural experiences, but still fundamentally human.

International tourism, which involves the crossing of borders and the interaction between people of diverse nationalities, plays an essential role in promoting peace. For example, people-to-people interactions through tourism in conflict zones or between communities that have experienced historical tensions can foster reconciliation. In such situations, tourism becomes an avenue for shared experiences that highlight commonalities rather than differences, contributing to the healing of past wounds. A traveler who experiences the warmth and hospitality of another culture is more likely to develop positive perceptions of that culture, leading to greater intercultural tolerance and less likelihood of conflict.

One of the most tangible ways tourism contributes to peace is through its economic impact. Tourism is a vital industry for many countries, providing jobs and income that support livelihoods. When tourism flourishes, it can improve the economic well-being of local communities, leading to a reduction in poverty and social inequality—two major contributors to unrest. By creating economic opportunities, tourism can promote stability, as people have a greater incentive to preserve peaceful conditions that allow for continued economic prosperity.

For developing nations, especially those recovering from conflict, tourism can be a crucial industry for reconstruction. Take, for example, countries such as Cambodia and Rwanda, both of which have leveraged their tourism sectors to rebuild after periods of intense conflict. In these cases, tourism has been instrumental in reintegrating former combatants into society by providing employment opportunities. Furthermore, as tourism brings in foreign investment and creates jobs, it helps reduce social tensions that often arise from economic disparities.

Moreover, governments are more likely to maintain peaceful environments when tourism plays a significant role in their national economy. Peace is not only necessary for tourism to thrive, but it is also maintained as a consequence of tourism's success. Countries that rely on tourism revenue are less likely to engage in aggressive policies that could deter tourists. For instance, the small Pacific Island nation of Fiji, which faced military coups in the late 20th century, has found that maintaining political stability is crucial for its tourism industry, which is a significant part of its economy. Thus, tourism can act as a motivator for peace on a national scale.

Sustainable tourism, with its emphasis on responsible travel that minimizes environmental impact and supports local cultures, has a particularly important role in peacebuilding. It is a model that encourages travelers and the tourism industry to be mindful of their effect on destinations. By promoting environmental conservation and the protection of local cultures, sustainable tourism advocates for a future where human activity, including tourism, supports the well-being of both people and the planet.

One of the key aspects of sustainable tourism is community involvement. When local communities are empowered to manage and benefit from tourism, it fosters a sense of ownership and pride. This, in turn, creates conditions for peace, as local residents see tourism as a positive force for their development. Sustainable tourism ensures that the benefits of tourism are not concentrated in the hands of a few, but rather distributed across communities, reducing the likelihood of social conflicts over resources. Moreover, involving local populations in decision-making processes related to tourism development promotes transparency and builds trust between communities and government authorities.

In post-conflict societies, sustainable tourism can aid peacebuilding efforts by ensuring that tourism development

respects the social and cultural sensitivities of affected communities. For example, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, tourism has been used as a tool to foster reconciliation between ethnically diverse populations. Guided tours that focus on the country's multicultural heritage and the impacts of the Bosnian War allow visitors to engage with difficult historical narratives, promoting dialogue and understanding between different ethnic groups. In such cases, tourism becomes a platform for peace education, helping visitors and locals alike to reflect on the causes of conflict and the importance of coexistence.

While tourism has immense potential as a force for peace, it is not without its challenges. The rapid expansion of tourism can sometimes lead to negative consequences such as cultural commodification, environmental degradation, and over-tourism, which can strain local resources and lead to resentment among host communities. These issues must be addressed carefully to ensure that tourism remains a positive force for peace.

Additionally, tourism in conflict zones or politically unstable regions can sometimes exacerbate tensions if not managed properly. Tourists may be perceived as outsiders or even as a threat by local populations, especially if tourism development displaces local communities or disregards their cultural practices. It is therefore crucial for governments and tourism operators to engage with local communities in a respectful and inclusive manner, ensuring that tourism benefits everyone.

Tourism professionals and stakeholders must take responsibility for ensuring that the industry promotes peace. This requires a commitment to ethical practices, including respect for human rights, cultural heritage, and the environment. It also means using tourism as a platform to raise awareness about peace and conflict issues, encouraging travelers to be responsible global citizens.

The theme of "Tourism and Peace" for this year's World Tourism Day is both timely and necessary. As we navigate a world fraught with political and social challenges, tourism offers a powerful tool for fostering peace and understanding across borders. By promoting cross-cultural dialogue, economic stability, and sustainable development, tourism can contribute to a more peaceful and harmonious world. However, this potential will only be realized if we commit to ethical tourism practices that respect and uplift local communities.

Let us use this World Tourism Day as a reminder that tourism is not just about travel—it is about building bridges, promoting understanding, and contributing to global peace. With thoughtful planning, responsible practices, and a focus on sustainability, tourism can continue to be a driving force for peace in our world.

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Potential Assessment of Wellness Tourism in Varanasi Region

Alok Ranjan Singh & Dr Anil Kumar Singh

Abstract

The city, renowned as the cultural capital of India, embodies a multifaceted essence encompassing spirituality, yoga, Ayurveda, naturopathy, and sociology. Its orientation towards a holistic lifestyle, prioritizing aspects beyond mere materialism, renders it an ideal haven for wellness tourism. Wellness tourism entails journeys undertaken with the explicit aim of enhancing or maintaining personal well-being. This type of travel focuses on physical, mental, spiritual, or environmental health and can occur during both leisure and business trips. Post Covid-19 pandemic tourism can be performed keeping in mind the rejuvenation of body, mind and spirit altogether (आरोग्यं परमं भाग्यं स्वास्थ्यं सर्वार्थसाधनम्।।) - these are three essential dimensions of 5-point wellness tourism model. (Corbin et al. 2006). Current study is a systematic evaluation of the standard parameters for wellness tourism available in Varanasi and study of the demand & awareness of tourist and local people on wellness tourism in Varanasi. It is a mixed bag study of qualitative and quantitative research methods.

Keywords: Wellness, Tourism, Varanasi, Yoga, Ayurveda, Spirituality.

Introduction

The conceptual understanding of wellness takes it to the point where dearth of illness could not be classified as wellness. It is a positive approach of having good health, purpose in life, satisfaction, work, play, healthy body, environment and happiness etc. Wellness can be comprehensively described as the integration of physical, mental, and spiritual health, resulting in a state of overall well-being. Wellness tourism encompasses journeys aimed at rejuvenating one's mental, physical, and spiritual health. As defined by the Global Wellness Institute, this form of travel emphasizes the preservation or improvement of individual well-being through a range of activities encompassing physical, mental, spiritual, and environmental aspects, pursued either for leisure or professional purposes. The five-dimensional model aptly encapsulates the essence of wellness tourism.
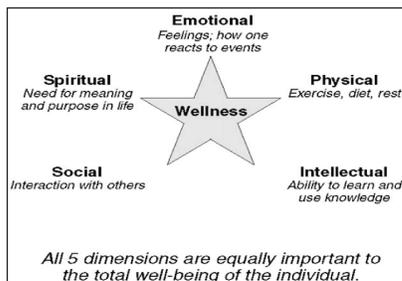
Wellness in totality is equilibrium of Emotional, Physical, Social, Intellectual and Spiritual aspects of an individual. If one lives in accordance to all of it together wellness is inevitable. At times to reenergize all these individuals opt to travel to evaluate their current situations of life or at times to enhance it to higher levels.

Wellness Tourism Market Worldwide: The wellness tourism is a proactive approach towards holistic health. Major points of wellness tourism in comparison to medical tourism are as follows: -

1- Travel to sustain, enhance, or manage health and wellbeing.

2- Driven by a commitment to healthy living, preventing illnesses, reducing stress, managing unhealthy lifestyle choices, and seeking genuine experiences.

3- Activities are designed to be proactive, voluntary, non-invasive, and non-medical.

The current picture shows part and parcel of overall demography of wellness tourism worldwide. Highlighted area of India is indicative of Meditation, Yoga and Ayurveda retreats as a unique tourism product of India for wellness tourism. It's not limited to that itself as many other products of wellness tourism is prevalent and famous amongst domestic tourists and can be presented to international tourists as well.

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According to Global Wellness Tourism estimates, India held the 7th position in wellness tourism in 2017, with 56 million trips generating a total revenue of USD 16.3 billion.

India has emerged as a prominent player in the global medical tourism landscape, securing the 10th spot in the Medical Tourism Index (MTI) for 2020-21, among 46 competing destinations, according to the Medical Tourism Association. This recognition underscores India's growing stature as a preferred destination for medical treatments and procedures worldwide.

Constituting 6% of the global Medical Value Travel (MVT) market, India's healthcare sector has witnessed a significant influx of approximately 1.4 million medical tourists in the past year alone. This influx speaks volumes about the trust and confidence international patients place in India's healthcare infrastructure, expertise, and affordability.

Highlighting the country's commitment to nurturing healthcare professionals, the Ministry of Tourism's website notes that India boasts 1,000 accredited nursing training centers. These centers collectively churn out an impressive 10,000 nursing graduates annually, ensuring a steady supply of skilled healthcare personnel to cater to both domestic and international healthcare needs.

India is widely recognized for its extensive heritage of traditional medicine systems like Ayurveda, yoga, and naturopathy, which significantly contribute to the nation's wellness tourism sector. A significant proportion of foreign patients seeking medical treatment in India come from diverse countries such as Bangladesh, Iraq, Maldives, Afghanistan, Oman, Yemen, Sudan, Kenya, Nigeria, and Tanzania, accounting for approximately 88% of the total overseas patient influx. This pattern is reinforced by a consistent increase in the number of patients from both developing and developed nations, pointing towards a favorable outlook for the healthcare tourism industry. Forecasts predict a significant expansion of this industry by the year 2026.

India's healthcare infrastructure is widely acknowledged for its robustness and accessibility, boasting advanced diagnostic facilities that are renowned worldwide for their quality and affordability. This acknowledgment solidifies India's standing as a pivotal contributor to the worldwide healthcare arena. India not only boasts exceptional medical proficiency but also provides an environment conducive to comprehensive healing experiences.

Literature Review: Wellness, while a term of modern coinage, finds its roots entwined with the tapestry of history. Although its contemporary understanding has blossomed notably since the 1950s, its essence resonates through the corridors of time, echoing the contributions of visionary American physicians and scholars. Yet, to grasp the true essence of wellness, one must embark on a journey through epochs, tracing its lineage to epochs long past.

The notion of wellness transcends any particular epoch, harkening back to the vibrant intellectual milieu of the 19th century. In this era of profound change, nascent notions began to surface, laying the groundwork for the comprehensive comprehension of wellness we presently embrace. Diverse intellectual, spiritual, and medical movements across the United States and Europe in this epoch forged the bedrock for a transition towards a broader perspective on health and well-being.

Wellness is not just a modern concept; it is a timeless pursuit deeply embedded in human history. Its development mirrors the accumulated knowledge of both ancient and current civilizations, highlighting humanity's persistent quest for health and well-being. As we face the challenges of contemporary life, we should tap into the rich reservoir of wisdom from the past, adopting a comprehensive approach to wellness that acknowledges its full scope and variety.

Ancient Wellness

3,000-1,500 BC: Ayurveda – Ayurveda, originating from an ancient oral tradition and subsequently documented in the Vedas, embodies a comprehensive approach to well-being. It endeavors to foster equilibrium among the body, mind, and spirit, offering personalized regimens based on individual constitutions.

3,000 – 2,000 BC: Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), One of the most ancient medical systems in the world, Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), has its roots deeply intertwined with Taoism and Buddhism. Practices derived from TCM, including acupuncture, herbal remedies, qi gong, and tai chi, have not only found their place in modern wellness practices but have also been integrated into Western medical methodologies*500 BC:* Hippocrates, an ancient Greek physician, is often considered the pioneer in emphasizing the prevention of illness rather than just the treatment of diseases. He also proposed that diseases are influenced by diet, lifestyle, and environmental conditions.

50 BC: Ancient Roman medicine placed a strong emphasis on disease prevention, drawing inspiration from Greek philosophy which attributed illness to factors like diet and lifestyle.

19th Century Intellectual & Medical Movements: During the 19th century, both the United States and Europe witnessed a notable surge in novel intellectual movements, spiritual philosophies, and medical practices. This era marked the emergence of diverse alternative healthcare methodologies emphasizing self-healing, holistic techniques, and preventive healthcare. Prominent among these were disciplines like homeopathy, osteopathy, chiropractic, and naturopathy, which gained substantial acceptance throughout both regions.

Research Gap: On the front of wellness to cater the mind, the body and the spirit naturally, the city is having all to offer to one and to all. It is well-desired for spirituality, knowledge, enlightenment and variety of traditional systems like *yoga, meditation and Ayurveda, Unani, siddha, pranic healing, acupressure, acupuncture and spiritual therapies* also. Varanasi has long been celebrated for its rich heritage in wellness traditions, offering extensive opportunities for those seeking wellbeing.

Lacks of proper education, language barrier, government's support are few to mentions out to chalk out for point of betterment. Need of destination branding is required in Varanasi and its regions to make it wellness hub. Awareness of people is important for the growth of Wellness tourism & professionals in Varanasi and regions. Attention of government is a needed to develop Varanasi and regions as wellness hub.

Research Questions

Are people in Varanasi aware about wellness tourism in Varanasi and nearby regions?

How is wellness tourism perceived by people of Varanasi and nearby regions?

What factors can attract wellness tourists in Varanasi and nearby areas?

What challenges hinder the progress of wellness tourism in Varanasi and its adjacent areas?

Objective of the Study

To examine the Wellness tourism potential with reference to the Study area.

Hypotheses

(H1) Varanasi and its region have immense potential to be developed as the most sought out wellness tourism destination in the world.

Research Method

Research Design: The current research approach is Inductive in nature. The methodological choice is qualitative and quantitative both. The research strategy is obtained from survey, questionnaire etc. to make it a mixed approach of primary and secondary data collected through various means. To mark important sources of primary data is interviews, observation, comparative studies, case studies, questionnaires and field surveys.

This study adopts a descriptive approach, gathering secondary data from a diverse array of sources including online resources, research articles, academic journals, reference materials, newspapers, magazines, and books. Primary research relies on the analysis of secondary data to identify key focal areas for subsequent investigation, with specific reference to studies, publications, and articles concerning wellness travel. This particular research study is mainly supportive secondary data to some extent and is descriptive in nature. The primary data is through interview, survey, questionnaire, observation. This research is going to feature to the explanations of the methods and plan of action done in order to acquire the data how to be examined, interpreted and the way the end is met.

Area of Research: The area of research is Varanasi and its region for development as a world class wellness tourism spot.

Sampling & Data Collection: The data was collected from questionnaire (foreign tourists & tourism professionals) using convenience sampling method. Initially the observation, comparative analysis, interviews, case studies, survey, records & past research studies methods were used to collect general data to construct the questionnaire. Overall collection of data was around 180 out of which 150 is found suitable for this research work.

Data Analysis: Initial data analysis which were general in nature were analysed on *Microsoft Office Excel Worksheet*. Advance and final descriptive analysis is done on R-studio R 4.2.2 of overall 43 variables of competitiveness for wellness destination.

Analysis & Findings

Tourist's profiling: Demographic characters like gender, age, origin, occupation, purpose of visit etc.

Demographic Characteristics	Category/Class	Percentage
Gender	Male	56
	Female	44
Age groups (Years)	20-29	52
	30-39	22
	40-49	10
	50-59	8
	60 and above	8
Region-wise origin	Tourists belonging to Europe	56
	Tourists belonging to USA	22
	Tourist belongign of Australia	5
	Tourists belonging to West Asia & Africa	3
	Tourists belonging to East, SE & South Asia	14
Tourist Class as per hotel tariff rate	Low	42
	Medium	38
	High	20
Occupation	Teacher	13
	Doctor	6
	Engineer	7
	Business/Commercial Executives	16
	Writer/Musician/Painter etc.	4
	Govt. Officers/bureaucrats	8
	Nurse/Social Workers	8
	Students	26
	Others	12
Purpose of Visit	Holiday and Sight-seeing	62
	Business/Conference	8
	VFR	3
	Study-related tour, project work, field work etc.	23
	Others	4
Duration of stay at Varanasi	1to 3	27.6
	4to7	29.1
	8to14	11.5
	15to30	13.5
	31to90	9.4
	91to100	8.9

Dimensions of competitiveness assessment for wellness tourism destination: Analysis-

Dimensions of the Wellness Destination Competitiveness Assessment	
1- Destination Environment	1a- Political Stability
	1b- Number of University Hospitals
	1c- Perceived Safety
	1d- the Sanitation, Hygiene & Cleanliness
	1e- Human Resources & Local Labour Mkt.
	1f- Friendliness of Local People
	1g- Responsiveness of Tourism Employees
	1h- Ease of Communication
	1i- Communication Infrastructure
2- Wellness Tourism Policy	2a- Transportation
	2b- Methods to Attract
	2c- Price Competitiveness
	2d- Destination Package
	2e- Cost relative to Competitor
	2f- Environmental Sustainability
3- Wellness Tourism Infrastructure & Capacity	3a- Connectivity
	3b- Local transportation
	3c- tourism Service Infrastructure
	3d- Accessibility & Accommodation
	3e- Quality Food & Meals
	3f- Activities
	3g- Recreational Opportunities
4- Wellness Tourism Man-Made & Cultural Resources	4a- Destination Appeal
	4b- Natural Attractions
	4c- Cultural Attractions
	4d- Local Knowledge
	4e- Resource for Wellness Activities
	4f- Modern Medical Facilities
	4g-Readiness of Wellness Resources
	4h- Other Services
5- Wellness Tourism Strategy & Structure	5a- Professional Services
	5b- Awards
	5c- Quality Certificates
	5d- Customer Satisfaction
	5e- Ease of Services
	5f- Spas & Wellness activities
	5g- Rejuvenating Activities
6- Wellness Tourism Innovation Potential	6a- New Products Development
	6b- Openness to New Products

	6c- Adaptive Response System
	6d- Community Support
7- Wellness Tourism Collaborative & Proactive Marketing	7a- Collaborative Cluster
	7b- Collaborative Projects
	7c- Local Support
	7d- Public & Private Partnership
	7e- Targeted Brand Building
	7f- Brand Identity

Destination Environment

Political stability	Result
Mean	4.473333333
Standard Error	0.054912309
Median	5
Mode	5
Standard Deviation	0.672535687
Sample Variance	0.452304251
Kurtosis	1.258302291
Skewness	-1.176332196
Range	3
Minimum	2
Maximum	5
Sum	671
Count	150
Confidence Level(95.0%)	0.108507446

The statistical summary for the factor "Political stability" in the Destination Environment:

1. **Mean**: The average score for political stability is 4.47 out of 5, indicating generally high stability.

2. **Standard Error**: The standard error, which quantifies the precision of the mean estimate, stands at approximately 0.055 in this context.

3. **Median**: The middle value of the data set is 5, suggesting that half of the responses rated political stability at 5 or higher.

4. **Mode**: The most frequent score is also 5, indicating that it's the most common rating for political stability.

5. **Standard Deviation**: This calculates the spread or diversity of the scores relative to the average. The value obtained, 0.67, indicates a degree of variability in the ratings.

6. **Sample Variance**: This value, approximately 0.45, represents the variance of the data, reflecting its dispersion from the mean.

7. **Kurtosis**: Kurtosis serves as a measure of the degree of peakedness or flatness within a distribution. When the kurtosis value is positive, it indicates a distribution that is relatively peaked. With a kurtosis value of 1.26, the distribution can be described as moderately peaked.

8. **Skewness**: Skewness is a statistical measure utilized to assess the asymmetry of a distribution. When the skewness value is negative, it signifies a leftward skew, indicating that the distribution tends to have more values towards the lower end than the higher end. For instance, a skewness value of -1.18 suggests a moderate left skew within the distribution.

9. **Range**: The range, which denotes the extent of variation within responses, is 3, representing the disparity between the highest and lowest scores..

10. **Minimum**: The lowest score given for political stability is 2.

11. **Maximum**: The highest score given for political stability is 5.

12. **Sum**: The sum of all the scores given for political stability is 671.

13. **Count**: The number of responses collected for political stability is 150.

14. **Confidence Level (95.0%)**: This represents the confidence interval around the mean. Specifically, it is about ±0.11, indicating a 95% confidence level that the actual population mean falls within 0.11 units of the sample mean.

Wellness Tourism Policy

Transportation	Result
Mean	4.253333
Standard Error	0.068989
Median	5
Mode	5
Standard Deviation	0.844935
Sample Variance	0.713915

Kurtosis	-1.41205
Skewness	-0.51063
Range	2
Minimum	3
Maximum	5
Sum	638
Count	150
Largest(1)	5
Smallest(1)	3
Confidence Level(95.0%)	0.136322

Interpretation of the statistics in the context of transportation as a factor in wellness tourism policy:

1. **Mean (Average)**: The average rating given to transportation in the context of wellness tourism policy is approximately 4.25. This suggests that, on average, people perceive transportation positively in relation to wellness tourism policy.

2. **Standard Error**: The standard error, which is about 0.069 in this instance, indicates the variability in the sample mean. It provides an estimate of how much the sample mean is likely to differ from the actual population mean.

3. **Median (Middle Value)**: The median rating of 5 implies that transportation tends to be rated highly in wellness tourism policy. This means that half of the ratings fall at or above 5, indicating a generally positive perception.

4. **Mode (Most Common Value)**: With a mode of 5, it indicates that 5 is the most frequent rating given to transportation, reinforcing the idea that it is commonly perceived positively.

5. **Standard Deviation**: The standard deviation, approximately 0.845, shows the variability in transportation ratings. Given a mean of around 4.25, it suggests that individual ratings typically differ from this mean by about 0.845 points on average.

6. **Sample Variance**: This indicates the extent of the spread of ratings around the mean. A variance of approximately 0.714 suggests moderate variability in the ratings.

7. **Kurtosis**: With a negative kurtosis of -1.412, the distribution of ratings is slightly flatter than a normal distribution. This means there are fewer extreme ratings compared to a normal distribution.

8. **Skewness**: The negative skewness value of approximately -0.511 indicates that the distribution of ratings leans slightly to the left, suggesting a tendency towards more frequent occurrence of lower ratings in comparison to higher ones, as opposed to a symmetrical distribution.

9. **Range (Difference between Maximum and Minimum)**: The range of 2 (from 3 to 5) indicates the spread of ratings. This means that the ratings for transportation vary by a maximum of 2 points.

10. **Minimum and Maximum**: The lowest rating given to transportation is 3, while the highest rating is 5, providing insights into the range of perceptions.

11. **Sum and Count**: The sum of all ratings is 638, and there are a total of 150 ratings considered in the dataset.

12. **Confidence Level (95.0%)**: With a 95% confidence level, the true population mean rating for transportation falls within a range of ±0.136322 of the calculated sample mean. This provides an indication of the precision of the estimated mean rating.

Overall 43 factors of Competitiveness Assessment Scale were evaluated in the current study and the outcome as mentioned above are chiefly aligned to the hypothesis. All factors are positive to a greater extent in context of Varanasi Region for the development of the wellness tourism.

Initial Focused Products/Activities for Wellness Tourism in Varanasi

The city has always been a centre of knowledge, spirituality, philosophical discussions, medicine, ayurveda and activities which either directly or indirectly promotes a holistic life-style or to say way of living. The focal points of discussion in this particular research are the three major dimension of this holistic lifestyle to say *Yoga, Ayurveda & Spirituality.*

Yoga

The Yoga is an ancient Indian holistic lifestyle technique which almost incorporates all facets of life or lifelong activities of any individual. It is a well-defined approach towards an activity undertaken by an individual. The word originated from ancient Sanskrit word Yuj which etymologically means 'to unite'. It is a unity to universal conscious of an activity where an individual achieves sublime wisdom towards the activity undertaken. It is establishing a perfect harmony with nature to achieve a particular task. The history of Yoga dates back to Indus Valley Civilization where yogic practices are found out in contextual explanations. The ancient seals of Indus Valley depict a figure in yogic sitting posture in between animals representing proximity of nature. The figure is interpreted by scholars as ancient form of Shiv the perennial yogi. The Indus Valley Civilization dates of 3500-3000 BC can be taken as the ancient dates of Yoga.

History of Yoga	
Time Period	Details
Origins and Early Development	Indus Valley Civilization around 5000 year ago
The Classical Period and the Yoga Sutras	Yoga Sutras of Patanjali around 2 century BC onwards
The Development of Hatha Yoga	the medieval period
Yoga in the Modern Era	19th to 20th century

Ayurveda: Ayurveda, derived from the Sanskrit terms "Ayu" meaning "life" and "Veda" meaning "knowledge," represents a holistic comprehension of life. Rooted in ancient wisdom, this system offers a profound understanding aimed at enriching life's quality. As highlighted by Muralidhar and Karthikeyan (2016), Ayurveda explores the positive and negative dimensions of existence, distinguishing between states of contentment and distress, pinpointing the factors contributing to these states, and unraveling the essence of life itself.

Central to Ayurvedic practice is the utilization of herbal remedies and treatments, which are renowned for their efficacy in fostering holistic well-being, both physically and mentally, devoid of adverse side effects. The innate healing properties of herbs serve as natural allies in restoring health and equilibrium to the human body and psyche.

A core tenet of Ayurveda is its emphasis on preventative measures and the augmentation of the body's innate capacity for self-maintenance and harmony. In alignment with this philosophy, Ayurvedic treatments are characterized by their non-invasive and non-toxic nature, rendering them safe and suitable for employment as either standalone therapies or complementary adjuncts to conventional medical interventions.

The versatility of Ayurveda is evident in its extensive application across a spectrum of ailments, ranging from acne to ulcers, and encompassing conditions such as allergies, asthma, anxiety, arthritis, and beyond. Its efficacy in addressing diverse health concerns underscores its status as a holistic healthcare system with profound implications for overall well-being.

Ayurveda has captivated individuals globally for centuries, particularly in developed nations. Across history, foreign travelers have journeyed to India to delve into its wisdom, immersing themselves in Ayurveda alongside religious and philosophical studies at esteemed institutions such as Nalanda, Taxila, and Kashi. This cultural exchange is evident in the integration of Ayurvedic concepts into diverse traditional medical practices worldwide. Religious leaders, particularly Buddhist scholars, have played a pivotal role in spreading Ayurvedic teachings internationally, notably in East Asian regions like Malaysia, Cambodia, Thailand, Myanmar, Japan, Singapore, Korea, and Tibet.

Spiritual Tourism: Spirituality encompasses a range of concepts intertwined with religious traditions, a focus on self-philosophy, inner tranquillity, holism, interconnectedness, intentionality, exploration, experiential orientation, nontheistic cosmology, peacefulness, tolerance, and associated positive values (Heidari et al., 2018). In contemporary society, many individuals are drawn to seek meaningful answers to the existential void prevalent in modern lifestyles (Robledo, 2015). Consequently, present-day spirituality exhibits certain inclinations towards exploration in terms of both physical locales and personal introspection. Sharpley and Jepson (2011) assert that spirituality, as a postmodern reinterpretation of religion, necessitates achieving harmony between the individual and their surroundings, with tourism serving as an ideal avenue for enthusiasts seeking profound experiences of spirituality and religiosity (Kujawa, 2017). While spirituality has long been recognized as a primary motivator for tourism (Bowers & Cheer, 2017), contemporary tourism increasingly incorporates spiritual elements into its operational frameworks (Robledo, 2015). Currently, destinations worldwide are increasingly recognizing and leveraging the potential of spiritual tourism, sometimes intersecting with religious practices in locales such as India (Haq & Medhekar, 2020).

Conclusion and Discussion: The hypothesis is aligned and the outcomes are rewarding to the constructions in context of the area of the study. It clearly indicates that the city and region can be developed as a major wellness tourism destination in the world. Evaluating the secondary sources and explaining it on the parameters of wellness tourism, the basic raw products, prevalent tourism & products, allied services, activities, infrastructure, collaborative & proactive participations, PPP etc. are all to a greater extent very supportive for development of the city & region as a hub of wellness tourism destination. It is suggestive that parts of it need proper evaluations, implementation and betterment to make it a world class wellness tourism destination. Few policy changes, mindset of tourism professionals, tourism participants, community understanding is required. Branding is another aspect that need to be redesigned to a certain extent.

Limitations & future research recommendations: As any single study of primary nature can't incorporate all the facets of the area so is true to this research work as well. It has tried all the elements of the wellness tourism competitiveness assessment points but still there is a scope to take it to higher dimensions. Initial product suggestions are in line with the current tourism practices of the city but later other products can also be incorporated and researched as this study itself indicates to some point.

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