

Artificial Intelligence Adoption in Wellness Tourism Services: A Study of Tourist Perceptions

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ABSTRACT

AI is transforming the tourism industry through improved customer interactions, operational efficiency, and personalized services. AI technology, such as chatbots, recommendation engines, and virtual assistants, is used to deliver quality services in the wellness tourism sector. This study will explore tourists' perceptions of AI, factors contributing to the adoption of AI technology, and its influence on their satisfaction. The data for the research were collected from 50 tourists using a structured questionnaire under the quantitative research paradigm. The data was analyzed using the paired t-test, mean, standard deviation, percentages, and correlation analysis. The findings reveal that higher customer satisfaction is positively correlated with usefulness, convenience, and customization, which greatly contribute to the adoption of AI technology.

Keywords: Wellness Tourism, Artificial Intelligence, AI Adoption, Tourist Perception.

Introduction

Wellness is a relatively new trend in the travel industry, and the rate at which it is growing is tremendous (Koncul, 2012). The desire for wellness has increased because of factors such as an increase in stress levels, a fast-paced lifestyle, changes in traditional community structures, a focus on illness prevention and health preservation, and often a distrust of Western medicine (Voigt et al., 2011). The concept of wellness and its philosophy of wellness were developed by an American physician, Halbert Dunn, in 1959. He defined health as an overall sense of well-being that takes into account that man is composed of his body, spirit, and mind, and that he is related to his surroundings (Dunn, 1957). Dunn, Ardell, and Hettler were the pioneers in this field.

The Global Wellness Institute defines 'wellness as the active pursuit of activities, choices and lifestyles that lead to a state of holistic health'. There are two important parts in this definition. First, wellness is an "active pursuit" that includes intentions, decisions, and actions in our pursuit for the best possible health and wellbeing, rather than a passive state. Second, wellness is related to holistic health, which extends beyond physical health and includes a variety of elements that need to function in harmony (GWI, 2020). It has also been identified that there are two forms of wellness tourism: primary wellness tourists, referring to those tourists whose main purpose of visit is wellness tourism; and secondary wellness tourists, referring to those tourists who seek wellness tourism as part of a broader tourism experience. Today's society is under a lot of stress because of the rapid development of science and technology, which has accelerated the pace of living and caused stress. This leads to several health problems, for which wellness offers solutions (Feng et al., 2021). When they purchase expensive

packages that include physical training, a healthy diet, meditation, cosmetic treatments, and educational programs, wellness tourists claim that their primary motivation is to prevent and promote their health (Mueller & Kaufmann, 2001). Health and wellness are two different concepts, with health focusing on the attainment of total harmony in mental, physical, and spiritual well-being by living a healthy lifestyle rather than curing diseases (Koncul, 2012). According to (Smith & Puczko, 2014), wellness tourism is fueled by the need for tourists to maintain or enhance their physical, mental, and emotional well-being, as opposed to other forms of tourism that are based on leisure or sightseeing activities. The rising popularity of wellness tourism seems to be a reflection of changes in consumer values, perceptions of health, and lifestyle aspirations rather than a fleeting trend (Thapa et al., 2024). Digital platforms have increased the accessibility, convenience, and personalization of wellness experiences, enabling individuals to access activities like meditation, exercise, and mental wellness regardless of their physical location. The COVID-19 pandemic has also increased the adoption of digital wellness experiences such as virtual fitness and mindfulness programs. Despite the easing of restrictions, the continued high use of digital wellness experiences indicates a shift in consumer behavior, which the study aims to analyze.

- To identify the factors influencing tourists' adoption of AI-driven wellness tourism services.
- To examine tourists' perceptions regarding the usefulness of artificial intelligence in wellness tourism experiences.
- To analyze the relationship between AI adoption and tourist satisfaction.
- To examine tourists' behavioral intentions toward using AI-based wellness tourism services.

Most of the research in the field of tourism has concentrated on general tourism rather than wellness tourism, focusing more on the technical advantages than the perceptions of the tourists. Therefore, more research needs to be conducted to focus on the perceptions of tourists in the application of artificial intelligence in wellness tourism services.

Literature Review

Wellness Tourism

The term "wellness" has a long history, dating back to ancient times, and has gained popularity in the modern world. Health, or the state of well-being without illness, is the major factor related to wellness (PS & Abraham, 2017). Wellness follows a holistic or all-encompassing philosophy of human health, which assumes that every person is a participant in his or her own health, wellness, and prevention of illness, as opposed to medication (Smith & Puczko, 2008). Thus, all aspects of wellness, such as the intellectual, social, emotional, physical, and spiritual dimensions, tend to become balanced and harmonious when we travel for wellness (Aloha Travel; Kessler, 2020). Aside from the personal benefits, wellness has a positive impact on the social aspects. It helps restore traditional wellness practices, which include addressing mental health issues, eco-tourism, the preservation of natural and cultural heritage, and the preservation of the environment (Global Wellness Institute, n.d.). Technological developments and changes in consumer behavior also have an impact on wellness tourism. (Li et al., 2021) explore how virtual reality travel has impacted people's subjective well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic, with a focus on how virtual experiences can enhance people's well-being and support the rehabilitation of a destination. The growth of wellness tourism is fueled by the awareness of managing stress, work-life balance, and healthy living. As a sustainable tourism product, it plays a significant part in tourism development.

Tourist Motivation and Digital Wellness

In a move to cater to health-related needs, the wellness tourism sector has introduced activities that enrich the health of individuals by adding aspects such as yoga, meditation, spa, massage, gourmet meals, exercise, nature, and self-care (GWI, 2018). (Konu & Laukkanen, 2009) identified the seven factors, namely: nature, autonomy & stimulation, social status, solitude & nostalgia, relaxation & escape, healthy & physical exercise, and self-development, that motivate people to engage in outdoor activities. Of these factors, health & exercise, self-development, and leisure & escape were the factors that positively affected the decision to go on a wellness vacation. Wellness tourism is an effective strategy to overcome the disadvantages of the modern lifestyle and enhance general well-being (Kelly, 2010).

In popular and academic discourse, the concepts "digital wellness" and "digital well-being" have emerged as ways of integrating the aspects of well-being that are relevant in the online world (Feerrar, n.d.). Digital wellness has become significant in the travel industry with the development of digital

technology. It is the application of technology in ensuring the wellness of individuals, both mentally and physically. This is achieved through the use of technology, such as wearables, wellness apps, and AI health apps, which assist in tracking activities, as well as promoting healthy practices. While these goals are undoubtedly more altruistic and beneficial compared to the profit-driven goals of previous apps, the goal of influencing user behavior remains an important measure of success (Specker Sullivan & Reiner, 2021). Experiences of life satisfaction and social connectivity, mental and physical health and safety, are some of the factors that can be affected by digital life (James et al., 2017). Through improvements in accessibility, communication, and service customization, technology has revolutionized the tourism sector to a great extent. Technology has made it possible for travel agencies to deliver more effective services to tourists.

Methodology

The study employed a quantitative descriptive research design to assess the perception of tourists regarding AI in wellness tourism services. The researcher collected the primary data with the help of 50 respondents with prior experience in digital wellness services using the questionnaire method of data collection with the help of purposive sampling techniques. Secondary data was collected from reports, journals, and official sources. The data was collected over a period of one month using the online medium to maintain the confidentiality of the participants' data, and only complete data was considered for analysis using statistical tools such as percentage analysis, mean, standard deviation, correlation analysis, and paired t-test.

Results and Discussion

• Demographic Profile of Respondents

Table 1: Type of Tourist

Tourist Type	Frequency	Percentage
Domestic Tourists	18	36%
Foreign Tourists	32	64%
Total	50%	100%

Note. N= 50

The results indicate that the majority of respondents are foreign tourists (64%), while 36% are domestic tourists. This suggests that international visitors show considerable interest in wellness tourism services that incorporate artificial intelligence technologies. The higher participation of foreign tourists may also indicate their greater familiarity with digital tourism platforms and AI-based travel planning tools.

Table 2: Gender Distribution

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	30	60%
Female	20	40%
Total	50	100%

The gender distribution shows that male tourists (60%) represent the majority of respondents, while female tourists account for 40% of the sample. This indicates that male travelers in the sample are slightly more inclined to participate in AI-enabled wellness tourism services.

Table 3: Age Distribution

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage
20–30 years	20	40%
31–40 years	15	30%
41–50 years	9	18%
Above 50 years	6	12%
Total	50	100%

The results show that tourists aged 20–30 years constitute the largest group (40%), followed by the 31–40 age group (30%). This indicates that younger tourists are more likely to adopt AI-based technologies when planning wellness tourism activities.

- **Factors Influencing AI Adoption**

Table 4: Mean and Standard Deviation of AI Adoption Factors

Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation
AI helps easy access to wellness services	4.30	0.58
AI makes booking convenient	4.18	0.63
AI provides personalized recommendations	4.22	0.61
AI applications are easy to use	3.95	0.70
AI saves time in travel planning	4.26	0.57

The results indicate that easy access (Mean = 4.30) and time-saving capability (Mean = 4.26) are the most influential factors in AI adoption. Personalized recommendations also play a significant role, highlighting the importance of customized wellness tourism experiences.

- **Perceived Usefulness of AI**

Table 5: Mean and Standard Deviation

Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation
AI improves overall wellness tourism experience	4.34	0.56
AI helps select suitable wellness programs	4.20	0.62
AI provides useful destination information	4.10	0.66
AI improves service efficiency	4.18	0.60
AI enhances the quality of tourism services	4.16	0.61

The findings show that tourists perceive AI as highly useful, particularly in improving the overall tourism experience (Mean = 4.34). AI also enhances service efficiency and quality, reinforcing its value in wellness tourism.

- **Tourist Satisfaction**

Table 6: Mean and Standard Deviation

Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation
I am satisfied with AI-based wellness services	4.12	0.67
AI enhances my tourism experience	4.20	0.63
AI services meet my expectations	4.08	0.69
AI makes travel more enjoyable	4.14	0.65
I feel comfortable using AI technologies	4.06	0.71

The results indicate that tourists have a high level of satisfaction with AI-based wellness tourism services, with all mean values above 4.0. This suggests that AI contributes positively to the overall tourism experience.

- **Behavioral Intention**

Table 7: Mean and Standard Deviation

Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation
I intend to continue using AI services	4.22	0.61
I would recommend AI platforms to others	4.18	0.63
I prefer AI-based wellness tourism services	4.10	0.66
I am willing to try new AI tourism applications	4.15	0.64
I will depend on AI for future travel planning	4.05	0.68

The findings reveal strong positive behavioral intentions, with the highest mean for continued usage (4.22). This indicates that tourists are likely to adopt AI technologies in future wellness tourism activities.

- **Correlation Analysis**

Table 8: Correlation Matrix

Variables	AI Adoption	Satisfaction	Behavioral Intention
AI Adoption	1		
Satisfaction	0.60	1	
Behavioral Intention	0.65	0.68	1

The correlation results indicate a moderate to strong positive relationship between AI adoption, tourist satisfaction, and behavioral intention. This suggests that increased use of AI technologies leads to higher satisfaction and stronger intention to reuse such services.

- **Paired t-Test**

Table 9: Paired t-Test Results

Variable	Mean	t-value	p-value
Perceived Usefulness	4.20		
Tourist Satisfaction	4.12	2.35	0.02

The paired t-test result shows that the p-value (0.02) is less than 0.05, indicating a significant difference between perceived usefulness and tourist satisfaction. This confirms that perceived usefulness has a strong influence on satisfaction.

Discussion

This highlights the significance of artificial intelligence in improving wellness tourism services. The factors that influence tourists' adoption of artificial intelligence are accessibility, usability, and customization, and it is perceived as improving the quality of services. Adopting artificial intelligence has a positive effect on tourists' satisfaction and behavior, as indicated by the results, which showed that perceived usefulness has a significant effect on satisfaction.

Practical Implications

The survey also offers valuable insights for those in the wellness services industry and the tourism industry as a whole. It reveals that the application of AI technology in the industry would be beneficial in improving customer satisfaction and efficiency in the services provided. Therefore, tourism businesses in the wellness industry should focus on the development of user-friendly systems, personalized services, and efficient booking systems, as this would be possible through the application of AI technology, which would provide valuable insights regarding customer needs. Therefore, investing in the latest technology would be beneficial in improving customer service and competitiveness in the industry.

Conclusion

The implementation of AI in wellness tourism services and its effects on visitor perceptions, satisfaction, and behavioral intention were investigated in this study. The findings show that AI technologies greatly enhance wellness tourism services' efficiency, customization, and accessibility. Travelers view AI-powered platforms as useful tools that improve their trip overall and help them make better decisions. Additionally, the data showed that tourist happiness and AI adoption are positively correlated, which in turn affects behavioral intention. Travelers are more inclined to stick with AI-based services and refer others to them if they are happy with them. This result demonstrates how important it is to integrate AI technology into wellness tourism services in order to meet the changing demands of modern-day travelers. Tourist companies may be able to engage consumers more and provide better quality service by using AI technology in order to be competitive in a changing tourist industry.

Limitations and Future Result

The study also has some limitations, including the small sample size, the use of purposive sampling, and the reliance on personal opinions, which may affect the study's generalizability. However, future studies may be able to overcome these limitations by using larger samples, conducting comparative studies, and using advanced methods of analysis, as well as investigating the role of new technologies in the development of wellness tourism, including augmented and virtual reality technologies.

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