WELLNESS TOURISM MOTIVATION OF GENERATION Z IN BALI: A STRUCTURAL EQUATION MODELING (SEM) APPROACH

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Abstract

Wellness tourism has gained increasing attention as individuals seek experiences that support physical, mental, and emotional well-being, especially among younger generations. Previous studies have highlighted that wellness tourism motivations often include stress relief, personal development, and the pursuit of unique experiences, yet research focusing specifically on Generation Z remains limited. This study validates the factors influencing wellness tourism motivation among Generation Z. Using a quantitative approach with a cross-sectional survey and purposive sampling of 310 respondents, motivational factors were analyzed through Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). The results show that Generation Z's wellness tourism motivation is multidimensional, encompassing physical health, transcendence, escape from routine, care for others, new experiences, and self-esteem development. For this generation, wellness tourism functions not only as a form of recreation but also as a coping mechanism for modern life pressures, a medium for self-reflection, and a tool for personal growth and emotional recovery. These findings contribute theoretically by extending the literature on youth travel behavior and wellness motivation, while practically informing the design of tourism experiences that cater to Generation Z's holistic well-being needs. Future research could investigate wellness tourism motivations across diverse cultural and regional contexts, adopt longitudinal designs to monitor motivational changes over time, and explore the influence of digital wellness platforms or social media on travel behavior. Additionally, qualitative studies could provide deeper insights into personal narratives and emotional experiences, enriching the understanding of how wellness tourism shapes the lifestyle and psychological well-being of young travelers.

Keywords: Wellness tourism; Motivation Gen Z; Wellness Tourism Motivation; Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)

Introduction

The concept of wellness tourism represents the pursuit of life balance through travel experiences that support physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health. Although the term wellness holds diverse meanings across cultures, its essence has been recognized for thousands of years, particularly through the traditions of Ayurveda in India and Traditional Chinese Medicine (Kessler et al., 2020). In modern contexts, wellness is understood as a holistic lifestyle that emphasizes emotional, social, physical, and spiritual balance (Smith & Puczkó, 2014). However, this conceptual interpretation varies between countries; for instance, in Germany, wellness is associated with luxury and experience-oriented consumption, while in Finland, it is viewed through the lens of holistic wellbeing tourism, rooted in local values and a connection to nature (Konu et al., 2010). This nuanced understanding highlights that wellness tourism is not merely a consumer trend but a representation of the search for life harmony, which is becoming increasingly relevant to the dynamics of younger generations.

Several studies demonstrate a strong connection between exposure to nature, tourism activities, and improved mental health (Cohen et al., 2017; Kessler et al., 2020; Konu et al., 2010). Tourism activities have been shown to not only enhance psychological well-being (Pyke et al., 2016; Smith & Puczkó, 2014) but also provide economic benefits through increased productivity and reduced healthcare costs (Ismarizal et al., 2023). In the context of rapid social, technological, and demographic changes, the tourism sector is required to adapt to the emergence of a new generation of travelers with unique values and preferences(Ismarizal, & Kusumah, 2023). Generation Z (Gen Z), born between 1997 and 2012, is a demographic group that is highly exposed to digitalization, sustainability issues, and global uncertainty (Li & Huang, 2022). While technology offers convenient access to information, excessive digital exposure also poses risks to mental health. Studies (Carr & Hayes, 2015) indicate that high levels of social media usage correlate with increased anxiety, and depression. This phenomenon has fostered a new awareness among Gen Z about the importance of maintaining mental and emotional balance. In this context, wellness tourism serves as a means of self-actualization for Gen Z through experiences based on relaxation, self-reflection, and connection with nature such as yoga, meditation, spa treatments, and outdoor exploration (Lehto et al., 2006; Smith & Puczkó, 2014). More than just recreational activities, wellness tourism acts as a coping mechanism for the pressures of modern life and the search for meaning in the post-digital era. However, academic research on the motivations of Gen Z in this context remains limited.

Nguyen et al. (2021) highlight that wellness tourism is perceived as a means of managing stress and achieving holistic life balance. Similarly, Cohen et al. (2017) emphasize that tourists' motivation to engage in wellness activities extends beyond physical relaxation, encompassing the need for self-reflection and the search for life meaning. However, most previous studies have predominantly focused on adult travelers in developed countries, leaving a research gap regarding the motivations and perceptions of younger generations, particularly Generation Z, in developing contexts. This study seeks to fill that gap by exploring how Generation Z interprets and motivates themselves to participate in wellness tourism, particularly within the Indonesian context. The findings are expected to contribute theoretically to the enrichment of youth tourism behavior literature and practically to the development of marketing strategies and experience design based on well-being principles.

Literature Review

Tourist Motivation

Motivation is a fundamental factor underlying an individual's attitudes and actions. The higher a person's motivation, the greater the effort exerted to achieve their desired goals (Schaller et al., 2017). Essentially, motivation serves as an internal driving force that guides individuals to behave and strive toward specific objectives. In the tourism context, travel motivation is generally influenced by two key factors: push and pull factors (Nikjoo & Ketabi, 2015). This theoretical framework is widely used to understand why individuals engage in travel activities and what factors shape their decision-making processes.

Push factors refer to internal motives that drive an individual to travel, such as personal needs, desires, or psychological states. According to Ryan (1991) several push factors include escape, relaxation, play, strengthening family bonds, prestige, social interaction, romance, educational opportunity, self-fulfillment, and wish-fulfillment. Dann (1981) further conceptualized travel motivation as a combination of push and pull forces. Push forces are associated with the tourist's desire to travel, while pull forces relate to the attractiveness of a destination that entices individuals to visit. In the present study, self-healing is positioned as a primary push motivation among Generation Z travelers. The analysis focuses on identifying the underlying motivational factors that encourage Gen Z to pursue self-healing experiences through travel.

Travel Career Pattern (TCP) Theory

Pearce & Lee, (2005), through the Travel Career Pattern (TCP) theory, identified 14 motivational dimensions: self-actualization, self-enhancement, romance, belonging, autonomy, self-development, nature, escape/relaxation, novelty, kindship, nostalgia, stimulation, isolation, and recognition. The TCP framework emphasizes that travel motivations are dynamic and evolve over time. Travel experiences contribute significantly to personal growth and psychological maturity, suggesting that motivations may shift in response to life stages and accumulated travel experiences. This approach provides insights into how individuals' travel motivations develop throughout their life course (Fu et al., 2022).

Travel, therefore, can serve as an avenue for temporary escape from monotonous routines. Beyond visiting new destinations, tourism allows individuals to explore new experiences that inspire and rejuvenate the mind. Encountering new environments and refreshing one's perspective through novel experiences can enhance creativity and promote mental well-being. Intrinsic motivation plays a pivotal role in tourists' decision-making processes, often acting as a primary trigger for travel behavior even if individuals are not consciously aware of it (Dai et al., 2022; Decrop, 2000).

Wellness Tourism Motivation

In the context of wellness tourism, travel motivation can also be categorized into *pull* and *push* factors. *Pull motivations* are associated with the attractiveness of destinations that offer wellness-related features such as spas, health treatments, and holistic experiences (Heung & Kucukusta, 2013). Moreover, natural landscapes with restorative and spiritual qualities provide a sense of cleansing and renewal (Majeed & Ramkissoon, 2020). Social

aspects such as local hospitality and interpersonal connections among tourists—also play a significant role in enhancing wellness experiences (Lee & Li, 2019). Lee & Li, (2019) identified three main dimensions of motivation in wellness tourism Attraction motivation, Natural environment motivation, and Interpersonal motivation.

Wellness travelers often pursue healing through the consumption of wellness products and services, including spa treatments, medical experiences, and holistic therapies (Elbaz et al., 2021). They also seek relaxation and rejuvenation in natural environments that provide fresh air and tranquility, often unavailable in their daily routines (Majeed & Ramkissoon, 2020). Interpersonal interaction, meanwhile, serves as a key element that enhances the emotional and social benefits of wellness tourism. Wellness travel provides an opportunity for self-reflection, spiritual alignment, and the rediscovery of life purpose. *Holistic retreats*, in particular, combine therapy, counseling, and spiritual development, integrating the body, mind, and soul in a comprehensive healing process (Smith & Puczkó, 2014).

Smith (2006) emphasized that wellness tourism plays an increasingly vital role in addressing mental, psychological, and emotional well-being. Similarly, Lehto et al. (2006) and Cohen et al. (2017) validated a wellness tourism framework, highlighting the significance of mental experience as a key dimension of self-healing. Voigt et al. (2011) identified six primary motivational factors in wellness tourism Physical healt, Transcendence, Escape, Caring for others, Novelty, and Self-esteem rebuilding. Collectively, these dimensions demonstrate that wellness tourism serves not merely as a leisure activity but as a holistic experience that supports personal transformation, emotional restoration, and psychological growth.

Method

A cross-sectional quantitative survey design was adopted as it provides an efficient and cost-effective snapshot of perceptions among Generation Z within a single timeframe (Setia, 2016; Wang & Cheng, 2020). To enhance analytical rigor, the study was followed by a confirmatory phase to test and validate the measurement model (Fetters et al., 2013). Purposive sampling was employed to ensure that respondents met specific criteria consistent with the research objectives. The target population comprised individuals belonging to Generation Z (born between 1995 and 2012) (Li & Huang, 2022), who have previously participated in wellness tourism activities in Bali. Purposive sampling was selected because it allows researchers to focus on participants possessing characteristics directly relevant to the study (Taherdoost, 2016). Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) using AMOS v.26 was applied to validate the measurement model and assess the structural relationships. A total of 310 valid responses were analyzed to ensure sufficient statistical power and enhance the robustness of the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and subsequent structural model testing.

To determine the required sample size for SEM, Lemeshow's formula was applied, considering that the actual population size was unknown. The calculation indicated a minimum of 382 respondents. This figure was then rounded up to 400 to improve data reliability and ensure compliance with SEM recommendations regarding respondent-to-parameter ratios (Hair et al., 2014). The measurement tools for this research were all taken and modified from existing literature. DMO-generated photo content items were taken from Ismarizal, & Kusumah (2023), Yu et al (2021), Hauser et al (2022), and Leung (2021). Data collection techniques are a crucial

component of research design, as they ensure the relevance of responses to the research questions. This study employed a questionnaire as the primary instrument to obtain primary data from followers of the Instagram account @wonderfulindonesia, specifically targeting Generations Y and Z. The distribution of the questionnaire was conducted online via Google Forms, with the link shared through Telegram and WhatsApp groups. Following this, a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was conducted with AMOS version 26 to validate the hypothesized factor structure.

All measurement instruments used in this research were adapted and modified from previous studies. The items related to wellness tourism experiences were adopted from Voigt et al. (2011), Kessler et al. (2020), Kelly (2012). Data collection was conducted using an online questionnaire distributed via Google Forms, with the link shared through Telegram and WhatsApp groups. Purposive sampling was employed to target Generation Z respondents (born between 1995 and 2012) who had previously engaged in wellness tourism activities in Bali. This method ensured that the collected responses were relevant to the study objectives (Aguinis et al., 2019). Subsequently, a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) using AMOS version 26 was performed to validate the factor structure.

Results

Based on the collected data, a total of 310 respondents participated in this study. The findings indicate that the majority of wellness tourism participants are women (56%), while male participants account for 44%. The study also shows that wellness tourism experiences tend to vary across gender groups. In terms of occupation, 52% of respondents are university students, followed by students at 20%, civil servants at 17%, private employees at 9%, and other professions at 2%. Furthermore, all respondents belong to Generation Z (born between 1995 and 2012). The majority (81%) are between 11 and 28 years old, demonstrating that wellness tourism is particularly appealing to younger generations.

Normality Test

For data analysis using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), Hair et al. (2010) emphasize the importance of testing assumptions related to the data and variables, particularly the normality assumption. This test ensures that the data distribution meets the criteria required for SEM, as non-normal data may compromise the robustness of the results. Prior to applying the measurement model, univariate skewness and kurtosis were examined to verify normality (Table 1). The skewness values (< 3) and kurtosis values (< 10) met the recommended thresholds (Kline, 2023), while the multivariate kurtosis (t = 2.572 < 5) indicated a multivariate normal distribution (Byrne, 2013). These results confirm that the data satisfy the normality assumption and are appropriate for SEM-based analysis.

Table 1. Assessment of normality

Variable	min	max	skew	c.r.	kurtosis	c.r.
NV5	3,000	5,000	-,107	-,766	-1,480	-5,319
NV4	3,000	5,000	-,104	-,746	-1,584	-5,692
NV3	3,000	5,000	-,103	-,740	-1,387	-4,985

Variable	min	max	skew	c.r.	kurtosis	c.r.
NV2	3,000	5,000	-,097	-,699	-1,566	-5,628
NV1	3,000	5,000	-,181	-1,300	-1,256	-4,513
RL4	3,000	5,000	-,159	-1,141	-1,559	-5,604
RL3	3,000	5,000	,059	,425	-1,490	-5,357
RL2	3,000	5,000	-,138	-,995	-1,520	-5,462
RL1	3,000	5,000	-,012	-,084	-1,465	-5,266
SE6	3,000	5,000	-,103	-,744	-1,571	-5,646
SE5	3,000	5,000	-,151	-1,088	-1,242	-4,463
SE4	3,000	5,000	-,041	-,294	-1,455	-5,231
SE3	3,000	5,000	-,060	-,429	-1,519	-5,460
SE2	3,000	5,000	-,036	-,256	-1,164	-4,182
SE1	3,000	5,000	-,179	-1,285	-1,583	-5,689
RR5	3,000	5,000	-,085	-,609	-1,556	-5,591
RR4	3,000	5,000	-,084	-,607	-1,542	-5,543
RR3	3,000	5,000	-,048	-,345	-1,245	-4,474
RR2	3,000	5,000	-,005	-,036	-1,144	-4,110
RR1	3,000	5,000	-,128	-,922	-1,427	-5,130
SC7	3,000	5,000	-,098	-,704	-1,592	-5,720
SC6	3,000	5,000	-,101	-,729	-1,503	-5,402
SC5	3,000	5,000	-,040	-,291	-1,152	-4,140
SC4	3,000	5,000	-,055	-,397	-1,138	-4,091
SC3	3,000	5,000	-,047	-,340	-1,492	-5,363
SC2	3,000	5,000	-,180	-1,297	-1,495	-5,374
SC1	3,000	5,000	-,132	-,949	-1,385	-4,979
Multivariate					11,563	2,572

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

This study aims to examine the key factors shaping the wellness tourism experience among Generation Z. Ensuring data validity is essential to guarantee the accuracy and reliability of the research findings. In this regard, a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was performed to validate the unidimensionality and construct validity of each latent variable (Hair et al., 2019; Kline, 2016). The results of the CFA are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Regression Weigh

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Label
SC	<---	MW	1,146	,077	14,910	***	par_23

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Label
RR	<---	MW	1,190	,079	15,125	***	par_24
SE	<---	MW	1,212	,082	14,720	***	par_25
RL	<---	MW	1,138	,078	14,516	***	par_26
NV	<---	MW	1,000				
SC1	<---	SC	1,000				
SC2	<---	SC	1,089	,060	18,205	***	par_1
SC3	<---	SC	1,047	,060	17,587	***	par_2
SC4	<---	SC	,849	,056	15,172	***	par_3
SC5	<---	SC	,871	,056	15,681	***	par_4
SC6	<---	SC	1,057	,060	17,598	***	par_5
SC7	<---	SC	1,142	,060	18,890	***	par_6
RR1	<---	RR	1,000				
RR2	<---	RR	,849	,054	15,688	***	par_7
RR3	<---	RR	,872	,055	15,802	***	par_8
RR4	<---	RR	1,054	,057	18,377	***	par_9
RR5	<---	RR	1,060	,056	18,820	***	par_10
SE1	<---	SE	1,000				
SE2	<---	SE	,802	,051	15,723	***	par_11
SE3	<---	SE	,890	,055	16,136	***	par_12
SE4	<---	SE	,958	,052	18,329	***	par_13
SE5	<---	SE	,816	,051	16,024	***	par_14
SE6	<---	SE	,996	,053	18,643	***	par_15
RL1	<---	RL	1,000				
RL2	<---	RL	1,020	,062	16,453	***	par_16
RL3	<---	RL	,992	,059	16,687	***	par_17
RL4	<---	RL	1,094	,060	18,343	***	par_18
NV1	<---	NV	1,000				
NV2	<---	NV	1,105	,076	14,571	***	par_19
NV3	<---	NV	1,038	,069	15,012	***	par_20

		Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Label
NV4 <---	NV	1,138	,074	15,296	***	par_21
NV5 <---	NV	1,105	,070	15,711	***	par_22

Table 2 shows that all indicators are valid, as indicated by p-values < 0.05 and Critical Ratio (CR) values > 2.0. According to Ghozali (2020), two main criteria determine indicator validity. First, a CR value greater than 2.0 indicates a significant relationship between an indicator and its corresponding latent construct, reflecting strong and meaningful association. Second, a p-value below 0.05 confirms that the relationship is statistically significant. Therefore, all indicators are considered relevant and valid in representing their respective constructs.

Structural Model Fit

The structural model analysis focuses on evaluating the parameters that represent causal relationships among latent variables. This stage is essential for understanding the interactions between variables and their contributions to the overall model. Figure 1 presents the complete structural model, illustrating the estimated parameters for each variable examined in this study. The model shows standardized factor loadings that explain the factors shaping wellness tourism motivation. These estimates provide insights into the strength and significance of the relationships among variables, forming the basis for hypothesis testing and further interpretation of the model's dynamics.

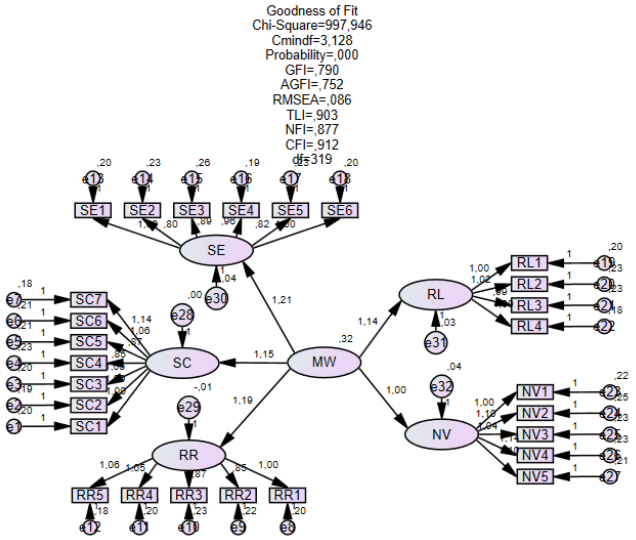

Figure 1. Structural Model

Overall Model Fit

The structural model analysis focuses on evaluating the parameters that represent the causal relationships among latent variables. This stage aims to understand the interaction patterns and contributions of each variable to the overall model. Figure 1 presents the structural model along with the estimated parameters for each relationship. The estimation results show

the factor loading values that reflect the strength and significance of the relationships among variables, serving as the basis for hypothesis testing and interpretation of the structural model.

Table 3. Goodness Of Fit

No	Test Statistic	Test Criteria	Test Statistic Value	Test Result
1.	Chi square	-	920.597	Fit
2.	Degree of Freedom	-	314	Fit
3	p-value	> 0.05	0,00	Not fit
4.	Cmin/DF	< 2.00	2.932	Marginal Fit
5.	Root Mean Square Error of Approximation	< 0.08	0.079	Fit
6.	Goodness of Fit Index	≥ 0.90	0.818	Marginal Fit
7.	Adjusted Goodness of Fit	≥ 0.90	0.781	Marginal Fit
8.	Comparative Fit Index	≥ 0.90	0,927	Marginal Fit
9.	Tucker Lewis Index	≥ 0.90	0.918	Fit

The evaluation of model fit was performed using nine widely recognized goodness-of-fit indices in structural equation modeling (Hair et al., 2019; Kline, 2016). As shown in Table 3, several indices demonstrate acceptable fit values, including the Chi-square statistic, degrees of freedom, RMSEA, CFI, and TLI, all of which meet the recommended thresholds. Meanwhile, indices such as the Cmin/DF ratio, GFI, and AGFI fall within the marginal fit category, indicating that the model's fit is close to but not fully optimal according to conventional standards. However, the p-value remains below the expected threshold ($p < 0.05$), suggesting a lack of perfect fit. Overall, despite the p-value's limitation, the majority of fit indices indicate acceptable or marginally acceptable values, implying that the proposed structural model achieves an adequate level of fit. Thus, the model can be considered valid and appropriate for further interpretation and generalization of the examined constructs.

Discussion

The results of this study confirm that the measurement indicators used to assess the constructs of wellness tourism motivation among Generation Z are valid and statistically reliable. The Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) results indicate that all indicators have Critical Ratio (CR) values greater than 2.0 and p-values below 0.05, demonstrating strong and significant relationships between each indicator and its respective latent construct. These findings confirm the construct validity and unidimensionality of the measurement model (Hair et al., 2019; Kline, 2016). Additionally, the results of the normality test meet the recommended thresholds, ensuring that the data are suitable for Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) and supporting the

robustness of the model estimation.

The overall structural model fit demonstrates that most indices, such as RMSEA, CFI, and TLI achieve acceptable values, suggesting that the model fits the empirical data adequately. Although the p-value (< 0.05) and several indices such as GFI and AGFI fall within the marginal fit category, these results are still acceptable for behavioral and social science research (Byrne, 2013). This indicates that the proposed model effectively explains the relationships among latent variables, particularly in identifying the factors that shape wellness tourism motivation among Generation Z. Therefore, the model can be considered statistically sound and appropriate for further interpretation.

Furthermore, the study highlights the multidimensional nature of wellness tourism motivation among Generation Z, encompassing physical health, transcendence, escape, caring for others, novelty, and self-esteem rebuilding (Voigt et al., 2011). These dimensions collectively describe how wellness tourism fulfills both intrinsic and extrinsic needs, providing opportunities for physical rejuvenation, emotional balance, and personal transformation. Generation Z travelers tend to pursue wellness experiences that combine relaxation with self-discovery, such as yoga retreats, spa therapies, mindfulness practices, and nature-based activities. This aligns with Majeed and Ramkissoon (2020), who emphasize that wellness tourism fosters a deeper sense of connection with oneself and the environment. Thus, wellness tourism for Gen Z is not merely a recreational pursuit but a holistic lifestyle expression that supports self-growth and psychological well-being.

The findings also reveal that wellness tourism motivation significantly influences psychological and behavioral outcomes related to self-healing and well-being. This supports prior research suggesting that wellness tourism functions as a form of self-actualization and emotional recovery for younger generations (Smith & Puczkó, 2014; Lehto et al., 2006). Generation Z, who experience high exposure to technology and social pressure (Li & Huang, 2022; Carr & Hayes, 2015), tend to view wellness tourism as a strategy for restoring mental balance and emotional stability. Activities such as yoga, meditation, and nature immersion are perceived not only as recreational pursuits but also as tools for self-regulation and stress management. Furthermore, the study highlights the multidimensional nature of wellness tourism motivation among Generation Z, encompassing physical, emotional, and spiritual aspects. Consistent with Voigt et al. (2011) and Majeed & Ramkissoon (2020), the results demonstrate that Gen Z travelers are driven by both intrinsic (push) and extrinsic (pull) motivations seeking physical rejuvenation, social connection, and self-discovery.

Conclusion

Based on the study of Gen Z's wellness tourism motivation in Bali, several directions for future research can be suggested. First, examining post-tourism behavior could reveal how wellness experiences influence loyalty, word-of-mouth promotion, and long-term healthy lifestyle changes. Second, exploring the role of social media in motivating Gen Z to choose wellness destinations can offer insights for digital marketing strategies. Comparative studies between generations, such as Gen Z and Millennials, may uncover differences in preferences, values, and motivations. Additionally, investigating the influence of local culture, spirituality, and nature on wellness tourism motivation can support the development of authentic and

sustainable tourism products. Finally, research measuring the actual impact of wellness tourism on mental health, stress, or overall well-being would provide empirical evidence of its psychological benefits.

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