SPA PRODUCTS AS MAIN ORIENTATION IN WELLNESS TOURISM IN BALI

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ABSTRACT

Wellness Spa is developed from conventional spa in response to the influence of the present tourism trend which is much in demand of the achievement of wellness aspect of life. Wellness tourism is a subdivision of health tourism. Wellness spa is the core product for wellness tourism. In fact, to date, people's knowledge about wellness spa is still poor. This fact has motivated the implementation of this research under the title "Spa Products as Main Orientation in Wellness Tourism in Bali". The objective of the research is to find out what products becomes the orientation in wellness tourism in Ubud as well as in South Badung. This qualitative research uses a phenomenological approach to the study. The determination of the informants is purposively done, and the information concerning the object of the research is obtained by deep interview controlled by a checklist based on Wellness Wheel concept. The location of the research is Ubud and South Badung areas, the latter represented by Nusa Dua, Jimbaran, and Kuta. The research uses 10 informants, 5 from Ubud and 5 from South Badung. The informants include spa managers and spa therapists. The result of the research shows that such packages as Bali spa ritual package, personal growth, and ecoadventure package become the most attractive products offered by wellness tourism industry and enjoyed by the tourists for the fulfilment of the tourists' wellness needs.

KEYWORDS: wellness wheel, Bali spa ritual, personal growth, eco-adventure, wellness dimension.

INTRODUCTION

Wellness tourism is a subdivision of health tourism. Wellness spa is one of the core products of wellness tourism. Spa included in wellness tourism is for spa health treatment which is inclusive of the combination of the right method and various kinds of traditional and modern health treatments, using water as its main basis and some other supporting/complementary elements (Smith and Kelly, 2006). The complementary elements include massage, 'boreh' with spices as its ingredients, aromatherapy, physical exercises, colour therapy, music therapy, and health food. The therapies applied have positive effects on the five senses whereby balances (of the body) of the mind, and of the spirit are achieved, leading to the achievement of an overall balance condition on the part of the person using such treatment. Spa in the context of wellness tourism is called wellness spa (Minister of Health Regulation No.8.2014).

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Wellness spa is much used in spa hotels, resort spa, as well as a day spa for tourists coming to visit various destinations to enjoy relaxation and facial treatment and body treatment through water therapy, massage, and aromatherapy. Historically, the spa was practised in the form of a visit/pilgrimage to hot water spring as a popular health practice and maintenance in ancient time. Immersion in hot water spring was believed to possess healing power for the skin. These healing practices have been common among the Belgian community since ancient time in the bathing centre in Waloon and Liege cities (Bhardwaj and Kumar, 2013:21).

The same practice was also done during the Roman Empire. Bathing was done by the citizens of Rome as a kind of pampering and healing for themselves. The local people came to a place called Spau, a city closely associated with the spa located in Belgium (Hashemi, *et al.*,2015; and Frost,2004). The coming of the local people of Belgium to that place was for bathing in the belief that the water there possessed the healing power for the perfection of their health condition (Langviniene, L. 2011:46).

The increase in the need of human beings for things beyond the utilization of spa only as clearly known from its history, was utilized by the spa management who felt it necessary to do innovation not only on the spa products but also on the spa attributes until finally the spa activities as a whole achieved an industrial status known at present as wellness spa. Central to its development into wellness spa is its ability for spa product differentiation.

Wellness spa is developed from conventional spa mainly in terms of its products and facilities as stimulated by the latest trend in health tourism. The tourists, in travelling, are imbued with the idea of improving their health condition through holistic spa service and treatment. These service and treatment are so designed that they do not become monotonous due to the availability of only spa enjoyment, but are also made constantly attractive by integrating into it various recreation and wellness programs. The recreations can be presented by both active and passive activities. Among the active programs can be included such activities as trekking, mountain climbing, pedalling around the hotel area while enjoying nice scenery and fresh air (Okech, R. 2014 and Rodrigues, et al., 2010).

Among the passive recreation activities can be included, for example, social interaction (Krisnamoorty and Shanti Venkatesh, 2015) between visitors just for socialization while being there in the training/fitness centres within the hotel area. Some other activities in which this social interaction can be done include, for example, participating workshop, meditation or yoga classes, which are all in principle to allow themselves opportunities to establish contacts with other visitor having the same/similar preferences. The main purpose of

wellness program in both its passive and active activities is to fulfil the wellness dimension of human life including its prosperity goal (Swarbrick, 2010).

To date, people's knowledge of wellness spa can be judged as still remaining sparse in the world. The survey result presented below as conducted by Global Spa Summit LLC (2011) shows the perception of the respondents concerning wellness spa (consisting of 238 respondents) as still not inclusive enough. From this survey result, a conclusion can be taken that there is still unclear understanding on the part of the respondents of the concept of spa wellness. This fact actually serves as the background/the reason why a research on the topic "Spa Product as Main Orientation in Wellness Tourism in Bali" is considered interesting and necessary to conduct. Following is the survey result conducted by the Global Spa Summit LLC (2011).

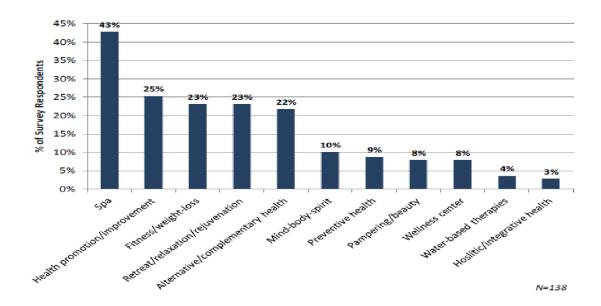


Figure 1: Perception of respodents

Figure 1 presents the perception of 138 respondents concerning wellness spa. Its details are as follows: 1) 43% of the respondents explain that wellness spa is spa; 2) 25% say that it improves health condition; 3) 23% say that it is for enjoyment of fresh service; 4) 23% say that it is for relaxation; 5) 22% say it is for retreat/recreation/rejuvenation (at the same time); 6) 10% say that it is for refreshing the mind/body/spirit; 7) 9% say that the visit to wellness spa is for prevention of sickness; 8) 8% explain that it is for pampering; 9) 8% assume that wellness spa is for enjoyment of services available at fitness centres; 10) 4% explain that the visit to wellness spa is for enjoyment of water-based therapy; and 11) 3% perceive that spa wellness is an integrated and holistic health therapy.

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The varied understandings of the respondents concerning wellness spa as mentioned in Figure 1 presents an interesting point to discuss in this article. Such variedness in their perceptions indicates the non-existence of any standard understanding of the concept of wellness spa in the society as represented by the respondents under study. This is quite reasonable realizing that wellness tourism is a kind of special-interest tourism which has developed and become a trend at so fast a pace recently.

The already well-known conventional spa has been so developed into a form known now as wellness spa. In a number of pieces of literature it is explained that wellness tourism demands individuals to be responsible for their own/respective health condition through their care of the wellness dimension in their respective individual life (Rodrigues et al.,2010), The care is done by observing their needs at several dimensions in respective individual life, particularly those dimensions under pressure of various tensions that can lead to depression and stress.

The tensions can be relieved through tourism activities such as wellness programs available in various wellness centres in tourist destinations. Choices can be done over various types of spa such as day spa, hotel spa, and resort spa (Voigt, 2010), which are all for relaxing the tense condition after intensive involvement in stress-causing activities. The stressed condition is in need of relaxation activities whereby fit/health condition can be regained. This could be achieved by wellness program within tourism activities. Joining wellness program is believed to be capable of relieving the tension in the mind and emotion ((Okech, R. 2014). The relaxed feeling is obtainable because wellness programs are intentionally designed for the fulfilment of various needs in the wellness dimension of the tourists' life (Swarbrick, 2010). For example, with the hydrotherapy method through immersion in the water under normal or neutral temperature such feeling of relaxing could be achieved. Immersion in hot water with the application of aroma oil can refresh the mind. Having massages, both traditional and modern, can smoothen out blood circulation, and treatment with steam, and that for the limbs (legs and hands) can cause a certain feeling of comfort on the body.

Moreover, another quite positive impact of tourism could be obtained. With wellness tourism, the occasion for fostering and improving relations within the family and with relatives could be achieved by going travelling together with an initiative for gaining some compensation of the missing opportunities for paying more attention/care to the family/relatives. In this case, travelling allows a chance to get together whereby warm relation could be established through re-creating the sense of love and belonging. The choices of programs already well planned before can guarantee the achievement of optimum improvement in health condition through tourism activities.

Holistic health condition, namely the condition of being physical, mentally, and spiritually healthy, could be gained through good planning (anticipative actions) before making a decision to buy relevant products. Good planning should be early done before the commencement of the tour travelling program based on the idea that human being as an active organism keeps stimulated (through the senses) by the idea of the fulfilment of various hopes/expectations in life. Deci and Ryan (2000) in Vallerand (2012) explain that human being as the organism will work hard through effective interaction with the environment for the fulfilment of his expectation to become a well-managed and integrated person in making his life meaningful (Vallerand, 2012:42).

Related to this study, the running of meaningful life could be done through tour activities by fulfilling the need for the wellness dimension of life through the utilization of the products designed under customer-oriented strategy by wellness tourist industry (Scharber, *et al.*, 2011). By customer, orientation is meant the concern on the customer's wellness dimension which becomes the primary motivation on the part of the tourist to make visits to wellness spa industry.

The modern life which triggers intensive mental crisis as the consequence of the unending pressure of professionalism has caused boredom due to monotonous routines, which is badly in need of fulfilment of the visitor's wellness dimension in the tourist destination. Regarding this condition that raises pressing demand on the part of the visitor, the industry then has a good opportunity to respond to such demand, a response manifested in the action of designing and providing various programs made into attractive offers available in the destination and of benefit to the visitors. This demand-offer or visitor-destination interaction is analysed based on the adoption of functional theory (Fodness, 1994).

Based on the description presented above, the main problem under concern in this study is formulated as follows: How are the wellness spa products oriented in trying to fulfil the wellness dimension of the visitor's life?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This is a qualitative research based on phenomenological approach. By phenomenological approach is meant the approach in need of the researcher's involvement in interpreting and understanding the meaning behind the phenomena under observation on a certain situation/context (Bungin, 2009). This qualitative research comprises several activities in demand of inductive reasoning in drawing a conclusion concerning the meaningfulness of the phenomena under concern. The inductive reasoning places the researcher in a position to draw the conclusion concerning the meaning of the phenomena being studied. The research is

conducted in the following phases: (1) preliminary study for identifying and determining the objectives of the study; (2) conducting an in-depth purposive interview with 5 wellness spa managers and 5 therapists (as informants) in order to obtain necessary information concerning wellness spa product designing strategies; and (3) categorizing the information obtained from the interview by using a list of questions based on the model proposed by Ellis (2014) in her wellness wheel model. The number of the informants is purposively determined by adopting Seidman via Yin's method (2011:136), which explains that in qualitative research the informants under interview could be 2 to 7 or 7-10 in number. The research is conducted in two locations (tourist centres), namely in Ubud area and South Badung area. 4 respondents were taken from Ubud and 6 from South Badung Area.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The data obtained through an interview with the managerial staff and the spa therapists, both of whom establish direct contact with the spa visitors. These informants explained that the beauty spa program is the program chosen the most by the tourists within the age range of 20-30 years. This program rich in cultural experience is most solidly represented by the Bali spa ritual with its 3-hour treatment duration, This treatment includes the 75-minute Balinese Massage, the 30-minute Balinese Scrub, the 15-minute immersion in a flower-fragrant bath, and the 60-minute hair cream bath and facial.

The comment of the tourists after enjoying the wellness spa treatment is all in support of the data (information) obtained through the interview with the informants. The visitor's comment is as follows:

Well..., my sister and I were treated like queens. With a beautiful friendly welcome and first class service on our massage, facial, hair cream, head massage, flower bath etc. were fantastic. We could not have wished for more. Our skin felt and looked incredible and our smelt gorgeous for days after. The staffs of a spa were brilliant they were so professional, kind and friendly. They couldn't (sic) do enough for us. We will be recommended this wonderful spa to everyone we know, It was just amazing and not to mention value for money.

The next program related to personal growth includes yoga, self-exploration, and pilate training activities. Both the spa products and spa treatment are much enjoyed by the visitors as reported by the five spa managers and five spa therapists under interview. In that way, the products and treatment provided could really meet the goal, which is all for the fulfilment of the visitors' wellness dimension of their life so that they feel this as a kind of self-reward fulfilment, a kind of self-pampering Moreover, this overall spa treatment is also for fostering and promoting self-capability. This kind of self-development experience on the

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part of the tourists is confirmed by Kelly's research (2012) with its empirical information concerning the visitors' self-development experience obtained through his in-depth interview with his (tourist) informants who visited Peru with similar orientation to the orientation of the tourists as informants in this research. The visitors' quite positive experience in Peru as reported in Kelly's study (2012) concerning their choice of self-development spa program can be presented as follows:

I have actually forgotten the date and loss of track of time! Thank you for the most amazing three days of my life, thank you for your support, your positive energy, your power in giving direction, and of course the amazingly tasty food and much needed pampering. This has been a profound experience for me, this place is a haven. I arrived exhausted; and I feel better after just one night thank you.

The choice of the recreation program referred to as eco and adventure program in the wellness-wheel model (Ellis, 2014) is all for the purpose of establishing social interaction (. This is explained by the spa manager based on his observation of the visitors' behaviour during the implementation of the chosen program. Such temporary behaviour of the tourists through involvement in those various activities in the forms of interaction with others, exchanges of ideas, or simply of expression of their feeling are all activities for the achievement of emotional wellness. Various forms of social interaction for wellness purposes are provided in the destination as parts of the wellness program. Among the activities allowing social interaction can be mentioned here, for example, painting on the ceramic, presenting dramatic performance, even cooking, out of which the tourists can get enrichment to their skills through the experience they obtain, which all together creates an educative impact on them, a form of intellectual wellness (Yousefi, M. Azizan Marzuki, 2015).

Such activities as cycling/ pedalling and hiking belong to physical activities (physical wellness), the execution of which allows the enjoyment of the green environment and appreciation of nature (environmental wellness). A lot of other benefits can be obtained such as, among others, the feeling of esteem, that is, the sense of being still fit for involvement. The sense of ego enhancement leads to gaining prestigious feeling due, perhaps, to the fact they can do activities in the destination which others cannot or have not yet done so far. There grows a sense of experiencing some things other people have not experienced yet (Kassean, H. and Rhaalib Gassita, 2013).

Those are several activities as well as their benefits covered in the concept 'do' according to include in the wellness wheel model (Ellis, 2014), to which the information obtained from the interview with the wellness industry management as product designer shows high conformity. Meanwhile, the concept 'visit' in wellness wheel conceptual model refers to the kinds of facilities required as the media for the fulfilment of the dimension of

need. For example, the tourists who want to remain fit or fresh in life will be encouraged to visit the fitness centre or the beauty spa program available with its necessary hotel facilities appropriate for that purpose.

The physical fitness on the part of the visitors as observed, understood and informed by the spa managers could be achieved by nutritious dieting consumed with the healthy meals provided in the hotel restaurant. By following the recommended activities included in the concepts 'seek', 'do', and 'visit' from the wellness wheel model (Ellis (2014), it is quite likely that all dimensions of human life can be given the appropriate fulfilment through tourism activities.

The choice of such programs as discussed above indicates that the present wellness trend shows a strong conformity with people's consciousness concerning health issues as the consequence of adopting a modern lifestyle which exercises certain negative effects on health (Chastain.S. et al.,2015). All exercise certain effects on the social behaviours of the people as the impact of, among others, fast food consumption, strict diet for idealized physical appearances, irregular meal taking, and lack of rest, which are all potential to trigger mental as well as physical depression. This kind of condition is also generally experienced by the visitors as observed by the spa managers under study. The spa managers further inform that such condition motivates the visitors to choose wellness program as the solution. In fact, there are a lot of stimulants for the irregular patterns in human behaviours, particularly the irregular and imbalanced time management for rest as well as for relaxation. In this case, the tourist industry, indeed, realizes that tourism is much needed as a form of inversion activity for the tourists whereby to set themselves apart from such monotonous and boring conditions. Therefore, the utilization of leisure (free time) for recreation needs to be well managed.

Based on such existing problems and learning what becomes the trend in modern life, the spa managers explain that the industry can anticipate such opportunities which are conducive for designing the right products by taking into account the combination between the tourists' available leisure and extra income for the optimum utilization of the opportunities. This is the right time for the wellness industry to create product packages related to wellness programs for the fulfilment of the tourists' expectation, which is, therefore, all customer-oriented in characteristic on the part of the industry (Interview with an informant).

In the context of wellness tourism, with spa wellness as its main product, any product is necessarily accompanied with optimum wellness-based services. Optimum wellness includes utilization of products and services towards the achievement of quality life characterized by prosperity, health, and happiness. This optimum achievement of quality life

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becomes the autonomous responsibility of each individual to assume. This responsibility includes that for one's own life, for the environment through close attachment/relation to nature, with necessary feeling of interdependence with each other, which is potential to foster the awareness of the need for the sustainability of the environment with all its contents (Chastain, *et al.*,2015).

The tourists are aware that wellness program as part of tourist activities is capable of fulfilling their need for optimum wellness achievement. Therefore, whatever the assumption of the respondents as presented in the survey results in Figure 1, it can be taken as true. It is true because such assumption locates itself along someone's health continuum, which is determinant to deciding what wellness service is to be prioritized. This is due to the fact that the range of wellness services for optimum wellness achievement is so wide inclusive of those for the physical, mental, spiritual, emotional, environmental, and intellectual.

It is quite logical when the respondents' responses as shown in Figure 1, particularly the fact that 43% have chosen spa as wellness tourism product, consider their needs to be fulfilled are the needs related not only to the physic and the mental but also to the spiritual and the social wellness. This indicates the freedom of the respondents to make their autonomous choices. Of course, their choices are so done that they guarantee the achievement of maximum satisfaction and happiness.

The choice of products which are prioritized is the choice under their own packaging. For example, the 3% respondents who assume that the holistic program as wellness product which they understand as providing mental wellness (achieved through meditation, yoga, and pilates) can be seen as the need which motivate them to choose the program for mental wellness.

It can be concluded that the wellness products designed and oriented to the customers' needs are already well packaged. However, from the survey result presented in Figure 1, there seems to be a gap between the respondents as to their understanding of the concept of wellness in its wholeness. There are those who perceive the concept of wellness in a sense limited only to certain dimensions of the concept. In this case, this article can provide them with necessary information as to how to come to an appropriate understanding of the concept of wellness in its wholeness through understanding the variedness of the wellness products as presented in Figure 1 through socio-psychological approach, which in principle states that human needs are unlimited. Maslow perceives human needs as showing hierarchies in their occurrences and fulfilment (Mill & Alastair.M. Morrison 1985:9). The fulfilment of the need in the first stage is followed by the occurrence of the need at the second stage which is to be fulfilled too, and

Wellness Travelers...

so on, and so forth *ad infinitum*. Figure 2, the wellness wheel model, shows the various points relevant to both the tourists and the tourism industry in establishing the right market.

Organic & natural restances (CAM centers) Wellness centers Finally hotels Wellness centers Finally hotels Spak Salors Bath & springs Thalasso Thalasso Thalasso Organic & natural restaurants Health food stores CAM Integrative medicine Health food stores Rating Bathing Body meanments Haling Form Calinary experiences Physical SEEK Spikitus Form Cym visits Filters classes Southless Fritees Southless Fritees Southless Fritees Time with family 8 fritends Time with family 8 frite

Figure 2. The Wellness Wheel Model

Source: The Global Wellness Tourism Economy 2013. New Delhi: Global Wellness Institute

The use of the socio-psychological approach in understanding the characteristics of the wellness products based on wellness wheel model (Ellis, 2014) can quite give effectively. The wellness wheel with its three main concepts of 'seek', 'do', and 'visit' can be regarded as representing the strategy for the proactive market creation and, therefore, is very good to be adopted by the industry. This model will guide the tourists (as the market) in how to get the right fulfilment of their need for establishing the wellness dimension of their life during their vacation in the destination. This is in line with the basic tendency of human life, namely the constant desire to make certain about what is being needed and wanted.

The tourists, within the limited time available to them, want a certain outcome in the form of maximum experience from their vacation in the tourist destination. In terms of the concept 'seek', according to wellness wheel model (Ellis, 2014) as manifested in the tour programs offered in the destination (Begun, 2013), observation can be done concerning human needs as reflected in the programs being offered, which include seven dimensions. The seven dimensions comprise the physical, mental, spiritual, intellectual, emotional, social, and

environmental dimensions. It is these seven dimensions which are included within the concept of 'seek'.

The fulfilment of the concept 'seek' are relatable to a number of choices on the part of the (tourists) respondents as presented in Figure 1 which are necessarily given realization/manifestation through the concept 'do'. The manifestation of the concept 'do' is observable in the community wellness program being offered which includes such activities as various recreations made available at the destination to be participated by the tourists. This is an opportunity which contributes to the fulfilment of the tourists' social wellness need (Krisnamoorthy and Venkantesh .2015). Beyond their consciousness they find themselves having and getting along with new friends and community, which reward them with a sense of self-esteem. Esteem is a subjective feeling obtained through personal efforts in facing challenges of life (Satyarini. R and Nuryati Atamimi, 2011). This feeling is quite significant to the mental wellness of the individual. In this case, the mind is determinant of the condition of physical health, human's mind and psychic being mutually affecting.

Yoga activities are offered by the wellness industry as a means for mental exercises (mental wellness), but among the participants involved in the activities, there are those who are motivated by the need for sociality (social wellness). So, the activities taken provide an opportunity for them to be involved in a social or interpersonal interaction. The experience obtained from such activities make the tourists knowledgeable (intellectual wellness) about the value of friendship fostered and established through such interaction as the manifestation of their spiritual wellness dimension.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

In conclusion, this study finds that the products designed by the wellness program management are oriented toward the fulfilment of the seven dimensions of wellness in human life (Swarbrick, 2010). These are dimensions that find fulfilment through wellness tourism program. Wellness spa with its beauty spa program is provided with hydrotherapy, massage and aromatherapy services method, or with recreation and holistic programs.

The fulfilment of the wellness dimensions affects the tourists' health condition, all achievable through the benefits being provided in the program. These benefits being for all dimensions of life, namely physical, mental, emotional, environmental, spiritual, and intellectual, they certainly become the essential motivation on the part of the tourists to visit the destination for gaining optimum wellness, which is analogous to gaining prosperity in life for the sake of quality life.

By understanding the wellness wheel model (Ellis, 2014) the tourists will have an overall picture of what to seek, where to go, and what to do in making a well-planned tour program for the fulfilment of their life's wellness dimension. Likewise, Ellis' wellness wheel model (2014) can also be of use for the industry in adopting the right marketing strategy through the creation of proactive markets. This strategy adopted by the wellness industry helps the potential markets to stimulate and attract the tourists to pay a visit.

Based on the result as well as the conclusion of this study, suggestions can be made to those involved in wellness tourist industry as to the attitude and behaviour in running the industry. While it right to be made profit-oriented, the industry should be so run that it guarantees the sustainability of the industry through not exercising destructive actions, particularly to all of the relevant resources, natural, human, as well as cultural, which are assets for sustainable tourism.

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