

TOURIST DEMAND FOR WELLNESS TOURISM IN VIETNAM: A CASE STUDY IN BA VI NATIONAL PARK

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Abstract. This research aims to analyze the needs of tourists for this type of wellness tourism. The research was carried out with a survey method on 118 tourists who visited Ba Vi National Park. Research results show that 89% of tourists surveyed have a desire to travel healthily to improve their physical and mental health. Ba Vi National Park has many favorable conditions for the development of wellness tourism. Tourism products that meet the needs of tourists mainly focus on products that are close to nature and have health care activities. Factors of income, location of destination, and attractiveness of natural landscape are the main factors affecting the demand of tourists.

Keywords: demand, wellness tourism, Ba Vi National Park.

1. Introduction

Health tourism is relatively new and has a particularity. In a broad sense, health tourism is understood in two aspects: wellness tourism and medical tourism [1]. According to World Tourism Organization [2] [3], the term “Health tourism” was first used in 1973 and originally meant a trip using medical facilities to exploit natural water resources, and climate and environmental health equipment facilities provided in a host country. Mueller and Kaufmann (2001) said that: Healthcare tourism is the sum total of all relationships and phenomena resulting from the journeys and residence of motivated people is to preserve or improve their health. They stay in a specialized hotel, which provides tailored expert know-how and personal care. They require a comprehensive service that includes fitness/beauty, nutrition/healthy diet, relaxation/meditation and mental activity/education [3]. Cohen (2008) points out that wellness tourism means that people leave their ordinary life for the benefit of maintaining or improving their minds and body by using the services offered by medical facilities at the destination. Therefore, wellness tourism can be considered as mainly related to relaxing exercise, massage, spa, therapy, dieting and plastic surgery (for beauty) [4]. Some other authors take a realistic point of view when mentioning that wellness tourism mainly consists of massage or acupuncture and light medical procedures during the holiday [5].

Some of the above definitions have led to confusion between wellness tourism and medical tourism not only for tourists but also for people in the profession. This confusion is due to inadequate

Received September 1, 2022. Revised October 14, 2022. Accepted November 5, 2022.

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understanding of these markets and inconsistent usage of lexicon among destinations, government entities and promotion agencies. Sometimes, the term “health tourism” is also used to describe a wide variety of medical and wellness services and activities - from open heart surgery and dental care to spas and yoga retreats - causing more confusion. In fact, these two types mostly operate in separate fields and meet different needs of customers. Healing tourism primarily addresses a client's “poor health”, with the patient traveling to another place for specific treatment or health promotion. Top medical travel procedures include cosmetic surgery, orthopedic surgery, heart surgery, and dental procedures. Patients and their families are attracted by the availability, better quality, and/or price of care in destinations. Therefore, successful medical tourism depends on the level of health development of the destination country, along with appropriate government regulations, patient protection measures, training standards, insurance frameworks, travel and visa restrictions, and other issues that promote patient experience and outcomes. Wellness tourism attracts customers who are looking for activities and destinations that expand their wellness lifestyle and help them proactively maintain and improve their health and well-being. The attractiveness and success of wellness tourism depend on a whole host of different factors, business models, customer mindsets, human resources and industry culture, and it is more relevant. with rest, entertainment and hospitality [6]. Thus, wellness tourism is the sum total of relationships and phenomena arising from leaving the tourist's usual place of residence to suitable locations in order to increase or stabilize, and restore physical, mental, and health or well-being when experiencing health care services and at the same time the impact of the destination itself, the people, the environment, the place where the visitor comes service use [7]. The type of health tourism is understood in the sense of health care and healing. With those understandings, the development of health tourism needs factors in tourism resources, infrastructure conditions, technical facilities, the development of medicine, especially tourists’ awareness about this type of tourism. The difference between wellness tourism and medical tourism can be summarized as follow:

Table 1. Compare wellness tourism and medical tourism

Tourist – wellness tourism	Tourist – medical tourism
Usually healthy people	Usually sick (with illness)
Take the trip to maintain, control and improve your health	Take the trip to receive a cure for a diagnosed illness
Desire to lead a healthy lifestyle, prevent disease, reduce stress, control harmful habits and/or have authentic experiences	Desire for cheaper, better quality medical services, or because those services are not available in their usual place of residence
Trip activities are proactive, non-invasive, voluntary, and do not involve medical personnel.	Activities during the trip that are mandatory, medically necessary, for medical treatment, and/or supervised by medical personnel

(Source: Author's summary)

In this research, authors analyze the needs of tourists for wellness tourism. In Vietnam, wellness tourism is still a relatively new concept and has been developed in recent years, especially under the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, tourists pay more attention to this type of tourism. Ba Vi National Park has many conditions for the development of wellness tourism. Currently, there are health tourist sites like Medi Thien Son located in Ba Vi national park, taking advantage of nature to exploit this type of tourism. This study aims to comprehensively evaluate the potential for the development of wellness tourism and analyze the needs of tourists

for this type of wellness tourism. From there, propose solutions to develop the type of wellness tourism in Ba Vi National Park in particular and in Vietnam in general.

2. Content

2.1. Research method

Method of collecting and synthesizing documents: the authors have researched and synthesized assessment documents on tourism resources of Ba Vi National Park, and at the same time synthesized Studies on the development of wellness tourism in the world and in Vietnam.

Secondary data collection methods: Data on total tourism revenue, number of tourists, resources of Ba Vi National Park and other types of data were collected from Ba Vi National Park Management Board, Ba Vi District Culture and Information Department, Thien Son Medi joint stock Company.

Methods of sociological investigation and descriptive statistics are used to collect and analyze the demand of domestic tourists for wellness tourism in Ba Vi National Park. The online survey form was randomly sent and 118 people who used to engage in wellness tourism in the place responded to the survey was carried out over two weeks (from May 23, 2022, to June 3, 2022).

Table 2. Survey sample structure

Criteria	Sex		Age			
	Male	Female	Under 25 age	25 – 40 years old	41- 60 years old	Over 60 years old
Amount	37	81	18	27	71	2
Ratio %	31,4%	68,6%	15,3%	22,9%	60,2%	1,7%

(Source: Author's summary)

Methods of data analysis and processing: The data is checked and calculated on a computer using Microsoft Excel software.

2.2. Research result

2.2.1. Wellness tourism resources

Ba Vi National Park has coordinates from 20⁰55' to 21⁰07' north latitude, from 105⁰18' to 105⁰30' east longitude. Ba Vi National Park is divided into 3 subdivisions: strict protection subdivision over 400, the ecological restoration subdivision under 400, and the administrative service subdivision. The buffer zone of Ba Vi National Park covers an area of over 35,000 ha in 15 mountainous communes in Ba Vi, Thach That and Quoc Oai districts of Hanoi city and Luong Son, Hoa Binh city of Hoa Binh province [8].

The topography of Ba Vi National Park is a mountainous area of medium height, the highest peak is King Peak with an altitude of 1296m, Tan Vien Peak at 1227m, Ngoc Hoa Peak at 1131m above sea level. Ba Vi Mountain is located in the plains interspersed with hills, at the edge of the Red River Delta, the landscape of the region is from a combination of the plain and mountainous area, which creates a unique attraction to tourists. In terms of geology of the area, this area has a stable and sustainable geology, the topography is formed from the late Triassic tectonic movement, and the change of geology is very little; this is an important condition for

the construction of works that require a solid foundation, avoiding subsidence during construction such as large-area resorts and amusement parks.

Ba Vi National Park is a place with a fresh and cool climate, the temperature decreases with altitude. At an altitude of 500-700 m, the annual average temperature is about 19-20°C. Up to an altitude of 900-1000 m, the average annual temperature drops to 18°C [9]. Ba Vi's climate is typical with fog covering almost all year round. Annual rainfall is from 1890-2500 mm/year, but unevenly distributed, there is a difference between the East and West slopes, from the foot of the mountain to the top of the mountain. The East side receives wind in both seasons, so the rainfall is much higher than the leeward western slope. At the foot of the mountain on the eastern slope, the rainfall is about 2000 mm/year; at an altitude of 400 m, the average rainfall increases to about 2200 mm/year, at an altitude of 600 m the rainfall is about 2400 mm/year, from an altitude of 800 m, the rainfall is about 2500 mm/year [9]. Ba Vi Mountain also often occurs thunderstorms due to more water condensation than in the plains. The sunny period in Ba Vi lasts during the day on the west side, but is not as hot in the summer. Winter is typical by humid subtropical monsoon weather, with the peak of snowy and icy days, the scenery of Ba Vi Mountain is as beautiful as Europe [9]. This climatic feature is suitable for human health and is an important basis for the development of wellness tourism.

High mountain terrain, cool climate, there are many spectacular natural landscapes with many streams originating from Ba Vi Mountains and forests all year round, such as Thien Son - Suoi Nga, Ao Vua, Khoang Xanh, Tien Sa lake. This area is also home to many historical and cultural relics such as: Thuong temple, Trung temple, Lower temple, Uncle Ho temple, Bao Thien tower, Ngoc Hoa cave [10].

The plants here are abundant with a lot of rare species. There are 3 types of forests at 3 locations of different altitudes in Ba Vi National Park is reflected in: subtropical moist evergreen closed forest; closed evergreen mixed forest of subtropical broadleaf and coniferous trees and tropical moist evergreen broadleaf forest on low mountains [10]. With rich vegetation, it will be an abundant source of medicinal herbs, many precious medicinal plants are used in folk remedies, which is an important condition for the formation of a wellness tourism product. Local traditional treatment is a tourist attraction to Ba Vi national park and also a base for extending the stay of tourists.

Along with its majestic and poetic nature, Ba Vi National Park is the residence of Kinh, Muong and Dao ethnic groups with more than 30,000 people in 2019 [10]. Each ethnic group here has its own unique cultural features, which is the basis for enriching the ethnic cultural experience activities of tourists in this region. The Muong and Dao people have valuable remedies for daily health care, exploiting the value of these remedies into health care tourism products.

It is the above conditions that have made Ba Vi National Park an ideal highland resort for the whole country, developing various types of eco-tourism, resort tourism and recently a type of tourism of wellness tourism.

2.2.2. Current status of wellness tourism in Ba Vi National Park

Wellness tourism in Ba Vi National Park has just started to be formed since 2020 with the birth of Medi tourist destination Thien Son is located in the core area of Ba Vi National Park.

- Tourists: With the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic, tourist destinations have a very low number of tourists. However, with the wellness tourism model, Medi Thien Son tourist destination will receive nearly 1 million visitors in 2021 and is on the rise. In the first half of 2022 (from January 2022 to May 2022), when our country is in the new normal after the pandemic, the number of visitors to Medi Thien Son is 535,400. It is expected that by the end of 2022, Medi Thien Son tourist attraction will attract about 1.2 million visitors [11]. The cost of a

tourist to a tourist destination ranges from VND 1,000,000 to VND 1,500,000 per day (including transportation, accommodation and expenses at the tourist destination). The total revenue of Medi Thien Son tourist site (excluding transportation costs) from tourists in the first half of 2022 is 4.2 billion VND [11].

- Tourism products: The current wellness tourism products being exploited in Ba Vi National Park mainly focus on two product groups: one-day tours and specialized healing tours. With the product “A day of healthy living”, tourists mainly participate in the experience of the landscape, the fresh air of the national park, the experience of a healthy and nutritious diet, and the meditation activities to avoid away from disease, practice yoga for supple body. The product “Special healing” focuses on customers who want to improve their health when they have an illness with folk remedies, using medicinal herbs of the national park and traditional remedies. The use time of this product for one visitor is from one week to one month, the longest is three months [10-11].

- Tourist attraction: Ba Vi National Park is famous for its natural landscapes, wild nature, large and quiet space, and cool atmosphere. The system of streams, waterfalls, swimming pools in Ha Son area has Tam Level waterfall, to Trung Son area there is a wave pool with water flowing through cool ravines, both modern and close to nature. course. The primeval forest ecosystem, rich vegetation, freshwater lake area on the mountain create a close, harmonious landscape, attracting tourists [11].

Wellness tourism activities: in Ba Vi National Park, health tourism activities focus on the following three groups of activities:

- Activities to visit, enjoy and enjoy the natural landscape Unspoiled, majestic, somewhat quiet nature of Ba Vi mountain area. The main attractions such as Ha Son area lake, pine forest, waterfall, and primeval forest...

- Experience health care and entertainment services: palpation, acupuncture to find out the pathology and be consulted on the treatment directions by medicines using precious medicinal herbs of the region; activities to heal mental illness by yoga, meditation; learn the remedies of the Dao and Muong people such as herbal baths, foot baths, saunas, etc. Additional recreational activities such as swimming, boating, zipline swinging across the lake, cycling, and archery... helps tourists have a meaningful experience time in the national park [11].

- Enjoy healthy cuisine: using macrobiotic dishes and organic food combined with healthy eating methods is one of the tourist attractions. The food supply for tourists' meals here is mainly food produced in the direction of organic, ensuring food safety and health. A macrobiotic diet is applied in meals to help maintain physical and mental balance, this is a healthy lifestyle for everyone.

2.2.3. Tourist demand for wellness tourism in Ba Vi National Park

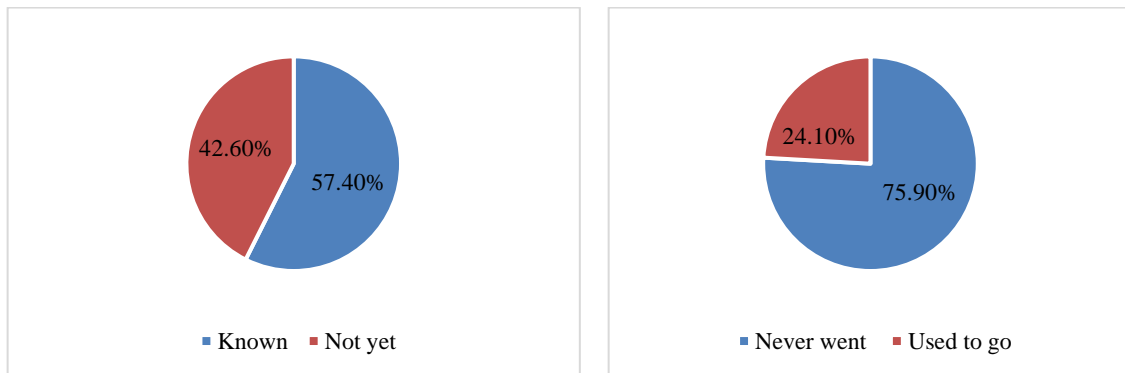


Figure 1. Graph showing tourists' awareness of wellness tourism (Source: Author's summary)

This study was conducted by surveying 118 tourists through the online form. The results show that wellness tourism is the preferred type of tourism, the choice trend of tourists after the impact of the Covid-19 epidemic. The survey results show that tourists' demand for tourism high level of wellness tourism.

Wellness tourism is a new type of tourism in Vietnam, according to the survey results of the research team, the number of tourists who know about it is not much compared to other types of tourism (resort tourism has 100 % of tourists know and participate, community-based tourism has 99.2% of people know and 82.1% participate directly). For wellness tourism, the number of known tourists accounted for 57.4%, unknown 42.6% and the number of direct participants was only 24.1%. The number of tourists who know about wellness tourism is mainly in the age group from 20 to 40 years old (67.2%), the age over 40 to under 60 years old (12.8%), people from 61 15.6% or older, the rest are people under 20 years old. Thus, within the scope of this research, the type of wellness tourism is that people who have income, have free time and care a lot about their own health will have the knowledge and desire to participate in tourism health care schedule. It can be seen that the market for developing and exploiting wellness tourism is still very large and especially after the Covid-19 pandemic, the number of people focusing on ensuring health increased. Besides, Ba Vi National Park has favorable resources for the development of this type of tourism.

This research also showed that the need for the time that tourists can use to participate in the type of wellness tourism from 1 to 2 days accounted for 81,2% of the respondents with people under 20 years old, 44,2% of respondents aged between 20 and 40 years old. Travel time per week is mainly over 61 years old, accounting for 25,5%% of respondents (Table 3). This shows that tourists already have an awareness of wellness tourism, and understand that making a wellness tourism trip takes a long time (on average, one healthcare tour from one week or more to be effective).

Table 3. Length of wellness trip by age

Age	Travel time					
	1-2 day	3-5 day	7 day	8 – 20 day	30 day	Over 30 day
Under 20 years old	81,2%	12,3%	6,5%	0%	0%	0%
20 – 40 years old	44,2%	45,3%	9,3%	1,2%	0%	0%
41- 60 years old	21,6%	54,9%	17,8%	5,2%	0,5%	0%
Over 60 years old	22,3%	40,9%	25,5%	7,9%	2,2%	1,2%

(Source: Author's summary)

The choice of travel time depends on the leisure time of tourists. At different ages, the need for healthcare travel time is also different. With the age of 60 and over, tourists tend to choose long travel time because this is the age when they have free time, have a certain income and care about their health. Travel time of this age group from 7 days or more accounted for the largest proportion of the groups (36.8%). However, according to the survey of the author group, with the age of over 60 years old, the number of people who choose to go on a long-term trip are those with a fairly high income, on average from 10 million to 15 million VND/month. Next comes the age group from 41 to 60 years old, this is the age group with high income (average over 15 million VND/month), having a certain position in society, and being able to take the initiative in time and time. The long trip is also selected (Table 3).

The level of willingness to pay for services when participating in wellness holidays varies widely. This depends on the duration of the trip and the tourist's income.

According to the survey results, the level of payment is mainly from 3 to 5 million VND (accounting for 3 to 5 million VND). 41% of respondents), travel time is mainly less than 5 days (less than 5 days with age under 20 years old is 93.5%, age 20-40 years old is 89.5%, age from 41 to 60 years old is 76.5%, from 60 years old and above is 63.2%) (Table 3).

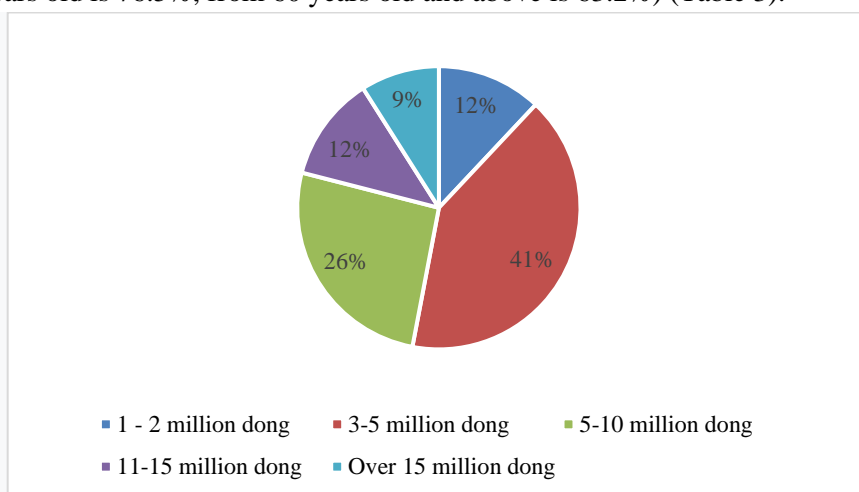


Figure 2. The expenditure for wellness tourism

(Source: Author's summary)

With this level of pay, when designing tourism products and services, it is necessary to match the needs of customers. The places that tourists choose to make their trip are usually tourist destinations close to nature, with beautiful landscapes, cool fresh air. Besides, the service quality requirements of tourists are also at an appropriate level. Tourist attractions with convenient locations such as near the city center and easily accessible average distance from 1 hour to 2 hours are mainly chosen by tourists. With the type of wellness tourism, elements of natural landscapes and fresh air are important factors to attract tourists. Among 118 people surveyed, 85.2% of people choose a place with unspoiled natural scenery as an attractive destination for their trip. The second criterion chosen by tourists is the place that is able to fully meet the criteria for health care and mental improvement (the number of tourists interested in this criterion accounts for 36.7% of the total respondents). Tourist destinations that are capable of performing activities such as meditation, yoga, cycling, jogging, and enjoying a quiet and fresh space are chosen by tourists.

Table 4. Tourist demand for wellness tourism destination and wellness tourism products

Tourism products	Ratio %	Features of tourist attractions	Ratio %
Enjoy the beauty of nature	32,6%	Convenient location for transportation	15,7%
Have wellness activities (physical and mental)	49,5%	Has an attractive natural landscape	85,2%
Enjoy natural beauty and wellness activities (physical and mental)	69,5%	Clean air	23,8%
Have healthy food	21,7%	Full-service place	10,4%

(Source: Author's summary)

The main tourism products chosen by tourists mainly focus on products related to physical and mental health, with unspoiled natural space (accounting for 69.5% of the respondents). Health products and services such as meditation, yoga, foot bath with traditional Chinese medicine, acupuncture and acupressure were interested in 49.5% of respondents. Followed by activities to enjoy the natural landscape and quiet space were selected by 32.6% of the respondents. Tourists are also interested in healthy food. The usual entertainment venues are not of interest to tourists.

3. Conclusion

Currently, the wellness tourism products in Ba Vi National Park are not known by many tourists, the products are still monotonous, and the number of tourists participating in this type of tourism is not high. However, the survey results show that tourists' demand for healthcare tourism in Ba Vi National Park is quite large, especially after the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, tourists are more interested in different types of tourism. Safe travel, avoid crowds and noise. When people travel, they want to have time to rest, relax, and have health recovery activities. Ba Vi National Park has many favorable conditions to exploit the type of wellness tourism because this place meets the requirements of wellness tourism such as the distance to the center of Hanoi is suitable, the landscape, and the fresh climate suitable to carry out health care activities. To develop the type of healthcare tourism in Ba Vi National Park, it is necessary to perform the following tasks:

- First of all, it is necessary for state management agencies in tourism to conduct research on the potential and current status of wellness tourism in Ba Vi National Park in a comprehensive and systematic manner.

- With existing tourism products, it is necessary to improve the quality of the wellness tourism service system, ensuring the standards and criteria of health safety for tourists.

- To build a new system of wellness tourism products and services suitable to each customer market segment (by age, culture...), with its own characteristics of Ba Vi National Park, competitive with other healthcare tourism destinations.

- It is necessary to ensure the health and safety of tourists in the context of many global epidemic problems.

- Having policies for the development of wellness tourism, the state management agency in charge of tourism is the focal point, creating conditions for effective cooperation between medical examination and treatment establishments and tourism service establishments. to form healthcare product packages with competitive prices, ensuring quality for tourists.

***Note:** This research is funded by Phenikaa University under grant number 1-05.2021.01

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