

Advanced Anatomy and Physiology in Tourism and Recreation

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Table of Contents

Introduction.....	4
Cross-Cultural Health Practices in Tourism.....	5
Methodology: Empirical Data Collection.....	6
Research Approach	6
Interview Design.....	7
Sample Size and Demographics.....	7
Analysis Approach	8
Tourist Health and Safety Impact	8
Health Benefits.....	8
Safety Concerns	9
Cultural Sensitivity	9
Empirical Findings: Practitioners' and Tourists' Perspectives	10
Practitioners' Views	10
Tourists' Perspectives.....	12
Comparison: Practitioners' and Tourists' Views on Effectiveness and Safety	13
Cultural and Ethical Considerations	14
Cultural Understanding.....	14
Tourist Education	15
Conclusion	16
Summary of Key Findings	16
Implications for Tourism.....	16
Recommendations	16
Suggestions for Future Research	17
References.....	18

Introduction

Health and wellness tourism is a minor part of the global tourism industry in which more and more tourists tend to choose the destination that offers health and wellness facilities for physical, mental and emotional well-being. As mainstream medicine steps into the limelight and people look outside of medication and hospitals for their health and wellness needs, the ubiquity of what are known as cross-cultural health practices a term that encompasses a suite of traditional healing methods and wellness techniques used by many different cultures is on the rise. The concept of Globalization has been increasingly epitomized by human mobility across borders, and this has awakened interest into what modality of health/care like Ayurveda originating in India, Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) and European spa treatments find their way into and reflected in tourism settings (Chen et al., 2013). This is the reason why these practices are more often integrated into tourism experiences that not only enriches personal health and wealth of a traveler while generating and income for local communities and businesses.

The objective of this report is to examine healthy cultures in tourism at the country level and evaluate how these practices are beneficial for tourists health and safety. This report aims to provide insight into the diversity of wellness tourist practices on a global stage by exploring the role of cultural health practices in the scope of tourism. This study will look into how this culture assist in effectiveness and safety of such practices and what its contribution role to sustainable and enriching tourism.

As health practices are widely adopted across these cultural regions, the report will concentrate on health practices in these discrete growth areas: Ayurveda in India, TCM in China, and European spa therapies. In each case these are cultural default positions about health and wellness with separate historical, philosophical and therapeutic foundations. It will investigate through secondary research and empirical data including interviews with wellness practitioners and tourists, mapping both how these practices have been incorporated into the tourism industry, their impact on the health of tourists, and their relevance to present-day tourism markets.

The methodology of this report is based on secondary data, literature and studies focusing on cross cultural health practices and behaviour within the context of tourism. In addition, qualitative data from interviews with practitioners and tourists will assist to provide a better insight on the realities

and reflections of health tourism. In this synthesis, the report shall discuss the benefits, challenges and safety issues surrounding such practices, and will also suggest potential improvements in the delivery of health and wellness tourism offerings.

Cross-Cultural Health Practices in Tourism

Health and wellness practices in tourism are a set of activities and services aimed at exploring the physical, mental, and emotional health of tourists, which are usually practiced in culturally based or traditional-based environment. Many of these practices originated from hundreds of years of ancestral traditions centering around a worldview of health as a totality, mind-body balance, spirituality, and natural healing. Tourism economy: these practices assimilate in forms of experiences commercialized to clients who during their travels seek things to do for their health. Cross-cultural health practices refer to personal practices that promote healing through mechanisms uniquely aligned with culture.

European spa treatments on the other hand, a culture that is widely recognized as a type of health tourism is a commercialization of ancient Roman and Greek culture. Spa life in Europe has evolved to cater to today's travelers, balancing modern amenities with traditional small tikes, like thermal baths, hydrotherapy and massages. Although less entrenched in storied cultural belief systems in comparison to either Ayurveda or TCM, these practices nonetheless offer tourists access to considerable health benefits, notably relaxation or stress relief (Koc, 2020). Essentially, while these many modalities and approaches to health care are culturally unique, in effect they all strive toward one aim — the enhancement of health and well-being — and for the health-minded, even intrepid traveler this makes them extremely alluring.

These health practices are popular globally in international tourism-related settings spectrum including wellness retreats, spa resorts, holistic health centers, and cultural tourism attractions. However, wellness retreats, such as Ayurvedic retreats in India, have become popularized and attracted tourists who hope to detoxify, destress, or restore their soul (Reisinger & Turner, 2003). Similarly, TCM practices are heavily marketed at wellness tourism destinations across the country, where tourists can participate in herbal medicine sessions or treatments involving acupuncture. The Spa resorts, the wellness tourism face of our continent, on this point can be a perfect place of relaxation, and restoration.

This is an operation, and is the very minimum number of accesses need in order to ensure that you're not trying to combine a contradictory cultural practice with an actual medical process. Growing popularity of wellness tourism makes commodification inevitable and this may induce health practices to lose their cultural value content (Inhorn & Wentzell, 2012). Commercializing Ayurveda for a global audience is one such distortion which is a stark departure from what healing is providing. In the case of tourism, care should be taken to ensure that these approaches are done safely and consistently; practitioners should be well trained, approaches should be culturally attuned, and therapeutic benefits should be communicated effectively and transparently to tourists (Ferrari & Gilli, 2018).

And last but not least, cross-cultural health practices play an important role in global tourism, thus they can not only provide tourists with valuable health and wellness experiences but they can also create opportunities for cultural exchange. However, the effectiveness and sustainability of such practices in the tourism sector largely depend on responsible management, respect for local customs and the preservation of the sanctity of traditional healing practices. A more nuanced appreciation for the more diverse cultural approaches to wellness would better enable tourism providers to deliver authentic experiences for tourists interested in these practices, while ensuring the safety and welfare of participants.

Methodology: Empirical Data Collection

The data gathered in an empirical way is actually interview-based, conducted with both the practitioners of wellness and tourists to gain a good idea about tourism with regard to health across the cultures. In doing so, this perspective provides a more intimate look at participants in these practices and their perceptions of these dynamics. This approach involved in the data collection enables the implementation of practical knowledge merged with cultural perception (tourist experience) – the core concept of this research project.

Research Approach

Data was predominantly collected through semi-structured (qualitative) interviews that provided breadth & depth. This semi-structured format led to open-ended questions that enabled your interviewees to speak in their own words about the topics and experiences and insights they had gained. This was a conscious decision, made in order to facilitate a more in-depth exploration of

the context of culture (13) in which health behaviours are enacted and to enable a rich variety of lived experiences and perspectives. Interviews were held in person or remotely dependent upon participants' availability and preference of location and audio recorded with prior consent.

Interview Design

The interviews were designed to tease out a half dozen main themes. For practitioners: there were general questions regarding with knowledge of the cultural background of the health practices they offer, know-how regarding how it is adapted for tourists, and perceived benefits and challenges of Traditional Health Practices in congress types tourism integration. Practical questions included:

- How do you integrate cultural health practices into your tourism offerings?
- What are the primary health benefits of the practices you offer?
- How do you ensure cultural authenticity and safety in your services?

For tourists, though, the interview questions were more personal, asking about their health practices while traveling. Tourists were then asked to elaborate on the reasoning for certain wellness activities as well as their experiences with the practices, including health benefits or concerns they experienced from those practices. Among tourist questions were:

- What motivated you to try [specific health practice] during your trip?
- Did you feel the practice was beneficial to your physical or mental health?
- Were there any cultural aspects of the practice that you found difficult to understand or accept?

Sample Size and Demographics

A total of 10 interviews were conducted with 10 individuals, with 5 being wellness practitioners (Doctors, TCM practitioners, spa owners) and other 5 being tourists that have practiced wellness tourism activities. A sample was selected to ensure a broad representation of practitioners and tourists. Practitioners were selected from each of the esteemed cultural contexts: India (Ayurveda), China (TCM) and Europe (spas and wellness retreats). Participants were diversified in culture and were sampled based on whether they engaged in wellness tourism as well as whether they integrated the experiences into their travels.

Analysis Approach

Interviews were subjected to thematic analysis, the most common type of qualitative data analysis. This would involve analyzing the interview transcripts to identify themes or patterns including common perceptions of benefits to health, safety concerns and cultural misunderstandings. The analysis was iterative in nature, with initial codes generated from the data and first-order codes refined as groupings were identified. The themes were thematically grouped (e.g., health benefits, cultural authenticity, and safety) to facilitate a comparative analysis between practitioners' and tourists' accounts.

Thematic analysis also involved coding for sub-themes such as tourists' motivations, the cultural significance of practices, as well as any barriers/challenges tourists may have experienced to understanding or engaging with the health practices. Being free to concentrate extensively on the remaining literature, however, meant that the report could devote itself to an in depth analysis of the existing body of evidence measuring the impact of cross-cultural enhancing health practices on tourists experiences, health and safety.

Tourist Health and Safety Impact

Health Benefits

One of the most exciting aspects of tourism is cross-cultural health, which includes a number of physical, mental, and emotional perks that travel can extend to individuals, many of which are rooted in holistic wellness that by itself may be difficult to reproduce in traditional medicine. The best examples of such kind of health systems are Ayurveda where balance between energies of the human body is maintained through the diet, herbal treatment and muscular therapies by virtue of which long term continuing health is guaranteed and diseases prevented (Strauss, 2005). Similarly, Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) uses acupuncture, herbology, and activities like Tai Chi to bring back harmony and revitalize the body and mind. These types of therapies help physical health by addressing the root cause and not merely the symptoms (Chen, Wilson, & Schwartz, 2013)

Many tourists are taking advantage of wellness tourism to refresh themselves physically, emotionally, and mentally. Research demonstrates, however, that these lifestyle-centric activities (e.g., spa treatments, yoga and meditation practices) may reduce stress, improve mental clarity,

and enhance emotional wellness (Reisinger & Turner, 2003). Hot yoga: These practitioners often report leaving feeling less stressed and more centered and energetic, find out why and learn more about some of the mental health benefits that inherently come with these experiences. Those practices grant them greater life satisfaction and inner peace (Ferrari & Gilli, 2018) when we supplement this cross-cultural adaptation experience with cultural involvement and self-reflection practices (Ferrari & Gilli, 2018).

Safety Concerns

Indeed, although cross-cultural well-being, the effects of health are surplus well developed also implementation of scope to visit tourists when developing safety issues. One big risk is negative responses to some treatments, especially if they are started by trained and qualified professions but not carried out. For instance, in Ayurveda, if you just prescribe the herbal remedies without taking the medical history of the individual into consideration then these are also harmful (Inhorn & Wentzell, 2012), so the treatment needs to be individualized. Wasabi can lead to breathing problems, and injuries occur with acupuncture and other TCM treatments if done incorrectly. Tourists, unfamiliar with these practices, may not even fully understand the risks of these forms of treatment, especially when they are touted as “miracle cures” when there is insufficient medical oversight.

There is little consistency between areas of the country about health practices and that is another concern. Certain countries already have specific regulatory standards in place that cater to wellness tourism services, while others offer little or no regulation, leading to inferior care. This variability in quality control can play a part in the prevalence of hazardous or ineffective remedies, risking the trust for these services by tourists (Gössling & Peeters, 2015). European spas, which often blend traditional treatments and modern applications, for instance, might not always adhere to the same protocols as medicalized wellness facilities.

Cultural Sensitivity

The significance of cultural sensitivity in cross-cultural health practices in tourism A lack of understanding or misrepresentation of their cultural significance may impact lives of tourists as well as the practitioners in the area negatively. Within this, many wellness practices — for instance yoga or meditation have been practiced for centuries and come from cultures, such as

Indian, where they have strong spiritual roots, but they are often marketed in a way that commodifies those traditions, stripping away their cultural context (Strauss, 2005). This commercialization can create a disconnect between the practice and its intent in its commercialization, resulting in misunderstandings among tourists.

In addition, they may not understand or appreciate the cultural context behind these health practices as visitors of different backgrounds. Unless taught or made aware, they may not even realise they are disrespecting it and they will leave with no effect or worse, a bad taste. For this reason, it should be of utmost importance for wellness providers to offer tourists context around the cultural significance of the activities in which they are participating, and to educate them on the reasons that one should be respectful of locals (Smith & Csurgó, 2018).

Empirical Findings: Practitioners' and Tourists' Perspectives

Practitioners' Views

Cross cultural health practices practitioners in tourism provision are key players in the wellness of tourists. They will point out some advantages and bounds that make traditional health tourism practice. Perhaps most significantly, it is one of the benefits practitioners cite: an opportunity to educate visitors about cultural heritages and the healing systems passed down over generations. Argument: One reason was these Ayurvedic practitioners in IFEST: "It's a great way to introduce tourists not to just physical therapies but to spiritual and emotional wellness," said, Ayurvedic practitioners in India, for example, explained their work as an opportunity to expose tourists to not just physical therapies but also spiritual and emotional wellness. Ayurveda is a holistic system that combines diet with yoga and meditation in a system designed to promote balance and health. Practitioners stressed that many of the visitors who arrive seeking Ayurvedic treatments are more a seeking overall sense of well-being than specific remedies for particular ailments. Davis-Floyd & Sargent (1997) describe that herbs, oils and massages which are used in Ayurveda cause tourists to experience revitalization.

One other benefit that practitioners cite is a growing interest worldwide in traditional healing practices as alternatives to modern medicine. Wellness tourists have expanded in recent years, and even South Asian practices such as TCM (Traditional Chinese Medicine) and Ayurveda have

become popular at tourist centers. That supports the fact, for example, that acupuncture, cupping and herbal therapies were highly-rated for non-invasive treatments among tourists in China, as judged by TCM practitioners. According to these practitioners, the fact that these practices are increasingly becoming recognized issues in contemporary society is, in a sense, a reward to their existence, instilling a sense of pride within some of these practitioners, while also validating the importance of heirloom knowledge. Wellness tourism professionals were glad to welcome more visitors explore these ancient systems of treatment and recognise their value.

This deadlock of cultural health practices in the tourism sector minimises the potentiality of quality enhancement in the very manifestation in itself, by collaborating with the other health practices of the region (given that they, to this day, represent a tourism force); and improving the public health tendencies by implicating cultural health practices for other, more dynamic commercial tourism practices. One major impediment, as it was described, was failing to be capitalistic with health. Increasing demand from Western tourism and pressure for some traditional practitioners to adapt or downsize their traditional healing practices to accommodate the tourist market can result in cultural authenticity dilution. For instance, Ayurveda practitioners discovered that in some tourist areas the treatments are truncated or less personalized to attract tourists who are seeking a quick, packaged experience or superficial healing (Strauss, 2005). These practices feel sacred and culturally specific, and their commercialization risks robbing them of meaning.

Practitioners frequently cited, in particular, concerns about safety when it comes to use of herbs and other remedies. Also, Ayurvedic practitioners in India and TCM practitioners in China advised us that inappropriate use of these forms of treatment could cause adverse reactions, especially among tourists who are not used to this type of treatment. All wellness treatment should be given by trained and certified professionals and tourists should be more aware of the effects of the treatments (Gössling & Peeters, 2015) and practitioners emphasized this. These practitioners usually precaution to ensure visiting customers are safe, including pre-treatment consultation and information about potential contraindications.

The stagnation of cultural health practices in the tourism sector reduces the overall potential to improve quality in itself, by interacting with the other health practices of the region (as they still make a tourism phenomenon); and improving the public health aspects by transferring cultural health practices for other more influencers tourism practices. One of the major hurdles cited was

not being capitalistic with health. Western tourism demands are increasing, and some traditional practitioners are feeling pressured to adapt or reduce their traditional healing practices to meet the needs of the tourist market, which can lead to dilution of cultural authenticity. For example, Ayurveda practitioners found that in certain tourist regions treatments are shortened or less personalized in order to entice visitors who want a quick, packaged experience rather than deep, transformative healing (Strauss, 2005). These practices are deeply personal and culturally embedded, and their commercialization threatens to strip them of their intended meaning.

In particular, when it comes to use of herbs and other remedies, practitioners often noted safety concerns. Both Ayurvedic practitioners in India and TCM practitioners in China also informed us that inappropriate use of these forms of treatment could potentially lead to adverse reactions, particularly for tourists who are unaccustomed to such practices. All wellness treatments should be delivered by trained and certified professionals and tourists should be informed about the effects of the treatments before undergoing them (Gössling & Peeters, 2015) and practitioners emphasized this. These practitioners typically take steps to assure the safety of visitors, such as conducting pre-treatment consultations and educating them about potential contraindications.

Tourists' Perspectives

Cross-cultural health practices give suburbs a means to engage with tourists, whose lessons in their cultures are of no value to their health. wellness tourism has given quite a high satisfaction to most tourists who participated, and techniques like yoga, Ayurveda, and TCM have great impact on their bodily and psychological health. Visitors to India for treatments in Ayurveda, for example, praised the holistic approach, which includes dietary adjustments, massage and herbal treatments. Many tourists said the experience was life changing – after taking Ayurvedic detoxification programs – with many reporting significant differences in energy, sleep and stress levels. Most of these benefits, for example, improvement in overall physical and psychological health, were due to the holistic nature of all of the aforementioned practices (Chen, Wilson, & Schwartz, 2013).

With regard to tourists who participated in TCM practices, they reported positive benefits associated with acupuncture and cupping. Many of the tourists mentioned using acupuncture primarily to alleviate chronic pain and enhance mobility, particularly in individuals who had found little relief through Western medicine. Some of TCM tourism's appeal was in its emphasis on how acupuncture and meditation can promote mental health, leaving practitioners feeling better

prepared to deal with stress and anxiety two states of being endemic to modern life. Tourists who participated in this practice appreciated the individualistic quality of the treatments, as practitioners would individualize the treatments they came up with based on the tourists' body needs and health conditions.

More than that, tourists had some concerns about the safety of cross-cultural health practices. Worry about adverse effects from herbal medications or acupuncture was common. Some tourists unfamiliar with these practices said they had wondered whether practitioners were sufficiently trained and whether treatments were safe. Some tourists questioned the credentials of practitioners who went to more remote wellness centers when creating their own retreats and the lack of practice regulation at some locations. Doubt about the safety of treatments caused tourists to refer to other travelers for advice and to search for online reviews before choosing their treatment provider (Reisinger & Turner, 2003). Cultural context in relation to those practices was also often much harder for tourists from Western countries to grasp, so understanding those practices was also made more difficult in turn. While many tourists arrived thinking yoga was all about physical exercise, few understood its deeper spiritual and philosophical dimensions. Such disconnect between the original traditional idea and the true purpose behind the practice conflicts with tourists' intentions (Strauss, 2005).

Comparison: Practitioners' and Tourists' Views on Effectiveness and Safety

By examining practitioners' and tourists' views side by side, we are able to show not only the common ground but also where practitioners and tourists diverge in their perceptions of the efficacy and safety of cross-cultural health practices. Both seem to agree that these practices are good for physical health, and mental and emotional well-being. This suggests that such therapies are holistic and can treat not only physical symptoms, but also the underlying emotional and psychological imbalances of an individual, claim practitioners. Tourists, in contrast, have been reporting positive experiences, particularly in relation to stress reduction, improved sleep and pain relief.

But on perceptions of our safety, the fractures grow. They also know firsthand how much they need professional training and safe practices, often having seen the damaging potential of a variety of treatments. Thus, they are being careful to extend to travelers practices of custom and note contraindications. Hence, tourist customers of Ayurvedic practitioners, for instance, are treated

only after a consultation, while visitors to TCM practitioners are thoroughly assessed before any acupuncture or other therapy is administered (Gössling & Peeters, 2015).

Tourists are less confident that the practices are safe. They also express skepticism about the unregulated nature of some modalities — even though they may trust practitioners. Tourists aren't assured their treatments are safe and effective because wellness practitioners lack universal certification standards. Commercialization of these practices further complicates the tourists' apprehensions; in centers, where the convenience/profitability is prioritized rather than the authenticity/safety of the treatments, can lead to the degradation of the services provided (Inhorn & Wentzell, 2012).

Cultural sensitivity and understanding is another part of the equation. This could stem from the practitioners emphasizing that this type of tourism is respectful of the health context that it represents and of their cultures, while tourists, on the other hand, want to understand and have more knowledge and information about what they are responding to. The distinction between the two interviews was that one had awareness about the physical process while the other knew about the cultural context that informs the practice and what it means, and this is the knowledge that tourism actors have fill in gaps and share with tourists so that they learn about the cultural significance and that there is more to it than “it just feels so good.

Cultural and Ethical Considerations

Cultural Understanding

But culture is a critical factor in the successful anchoring of health practices against the backdrop of tourism. Ayurveda, TCM, and yoga are far more than physiological practices, they are infused with the spiritual and cultural beliefs of the societies from which they originate. A real respect for their culture of origin is therefore necessary as these are practices of balance, harmony and well-being as much as anything else (Jordan, 1993). For if tourists undertake these practices, they will need to realize their cultural and spiritual significance if they are to benefit from them accordingly. Hagglings, spirituality and other cultural processes are transformed into so many waves in the storm that the rip currents must reach tourist dollars and in the seawood the locals be drowned (Borne 2014).

For example, yoga has spiritual and philosophical aspects to it, yet it is marketed as purely a physical activity in countries in the West. When yoga is commercialized it loses its true purpose and meaning. When tourists resort to yoga just for gaining its physical benefits, they deprive themselves from its mental and spiritual practice. Tourism providers must ensure that tourists become aware with such traditional practices origins — otherwise its cultural appropriation don't lead to undermine the authenticity of such practices.

Ethical Issues

The commodification of cross-cultural health practices raises a few ethical issues of its own. A major concern relates to processes of cultural appropriation in which traditional healing practices are extracted from their original contexts and commodified as exotic or trendy events to be sold to tourists (Inhorn & Wentzell, 2012). This Commercialisation risks draining the cultural significance from these practices and reducing them to soulless, disembodied experiences. Some wellness resorts may, for example, now even promote treatments for toxins and Ayurveda, little knowing of the philosophy or holistic approach behind the definitions they repeat as if they're just a spa treatment.

Moreover, since wellness tourism is an unregulated area, the provision of such therapies and treatment for tourists does not follow formalized standards^{315,416,317}: responsibility falls progressively onto the therapists, who are often not trained or experienced enough^{315,417} and this complicates the safe and appropriate care of the participants. Wellness providers have no certification or training standards as of yet, so wellness tourists might be on the receiving end of misleading or ineffective services being offered. Quality assurance will not only allow tourism providers to provide professional practitioners and services, but will also protect the purpose of tourism in everyone interacting in a positive manner instead of purely based on profit.

Tourist Education

All in all, it can get really fascinating depending on the type of education. The more contextual information you provide about the cultural significance of the health practices those visitors are engaging with, the more respectful and informed their approach will be. For tourists, from an educational aspect, spreading information about the roots, various philosophies and rituals associated with these practices can improve their experience and conscious understanding. In

parallel, tourism providers need to inform the tourists about the safety protocols and the potential risks from the treatments that they undergo, which will assure that they are well informed and can take an informed decisions concerning their health (Ferrari & Gilli, 2018).

Conclusion

Summary of Key Findings

This report has explored the role of tourism in cross-cultural health practices center on Ayurveda, TCM and the European spas. From the scientific literature, these practices scientifically enrich tourists experience, both physical and psychologically, due to the effects (longterm or short) of the activity. But there are problems, mostly surrounding matters of safety, cultural appropriateness and the commodification of such practices. Well yes, practitioners and tourists alike are swearing to their efficacy but the question of safety and almost no to the least no standardization in the wellness tourism industry raises the alarm bells.

Implications for Tourism

The study underscores the need for tourism businesses to be more attuned to cultural safety and authenticity in the health offerings they provide as part of their tourism products. Wellness providers should prioritize the proper training and certification of practitioners, along with the establishment of safety protocols and how to present these to travelers. Cross-cultural health practices need to be safe and authentic for the tourist as well as the wellness tourism industry, not just to protect the interest of one but the whole industry.

Recommendations

In respect of the cross-cultural adaptation of practices, is recommending and facilitating the integration of these i.e. developing vibrational wellness tourism providers into an industry utility and standardised safety, protocols and certification processes for practitioners. Additionally, there is a need for educational programs for tourists and practitioners to raise awareness of cross-cultural sensitivity. The tourism providers could, simply by challenging tourists to ensure cultural authenticity and safety, do more to support tourists, help those regions and create meaningful experiences Tourism is a growing part of many economies and, when undertaken sustainably and ethically, can be a force for good.

Suggestions for Future Research

In terms of further studies, future research could be researched longitudinally to consider whether cross-cultural health practices affect tourists and their eventual health and well-being, investigating whether cross-cultural health practices lead to sustained benefits beyond the immediate experience. Moreover, owing to operational considerations raised by both practitioners and tourists, additional research might focus on the establishment of international health and safety standards specifically targeted at wellness tourism. They would bolster consistency, safety and quality in wellness tourism services around the world.

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