

Staycation: A Domestic Wellness Tourism among Malaysian and Singaporean

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Abstract

One phenomenon observed during the pandemic was increased staycation in most countries. This study focuses on wellness tourism through staycation in Malaysia and Singapore. A self-administered online questionnaire was completed by 109 Malaysians and 60 Singaporeans. Using IBM SPSS and SmartPLS, the determinants examined were the sense of presence, experience quality, hedonic motivation, and psychological detachment and mediated by family involvement towards the gratification of wellness tourism. This study contributes to theory and practices for Malaysia and Singapore's domestic tourism and the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals 8 and 12 for mental well-being and responsible consumption.

Keywords: staycation, wellness tourism, use and gratification, domestic tourism

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1.0 Introduction

The tourism industry is one of the industries that contribute significantly to the country's social-economic development. However, since early 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic has tremendously impacted the tourism and hotel industry. Besides, this pandemic also affected millions of people's physical and personal well-being globally (Yan et al., 2022). In addition to the economic impact brought by the standstill of the pandemic, as a result, this condition raises public awareness to start to look for travel opportunities to relax and take a breath from the tiredness of facing the COVID-19 pandemic.

Wellness tourism is one of the leading sectors of the country's economy, and it is associated with the restoration of the health of the people from COVID-19 (Oborin, 2022). A staycation can be considered one of the indicators of wellness tourism as it provides immediate effects on perceived stress, recovery, and well-being (Miao et al., 2021). Moreover, it has become a part of a new normal of tourism in the COVID-19 era, where the tourist emphasises cleanliness and health and safety, such as social distancing while travelling, wearing face masks and sanitising hands (Valeriani et al., 2022). While recent studies have explored the positive impacts of staycation on the hospitality industry during the pandemic (Nair et al., 2022; Yan et al., 2022), little has been done to understand the association of staycation to wellness tourism during and after the COVID-19 pandemic (Lin et al., 2021). This exploratory study primarily contributes to theory by filling in the research gap of wellness tourism by examining the cultural and psychological underpinnings of a staycation in Malaysia and

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Singapore. Practically, the results of this study will serve as recommendations for hospitality and destination managers for future marketing strategies.

1.1 Study Objectives

As the COVID-19 pandemic caused a standstill to international travel, consumers, tourism and hospitality service looked inwards to keep the industry afloat during the global crisis. This study focuses on two countries - Malaysia and Singapore - to examine the socio-cultural underpinnings that drove the demand for a staycation during the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, this study, guided by theories of social presence, family systems theory, and uses and gratification theory, aims to explore how staycations can be a novel form of wellness tourism in Malaysia and Singapore.

2.0 Literature Review

Defined by the Cambridge Dictionary (2021), staycation refers to an overnight leisure trip or a vacation taken in one's home country. During the closure of international travel borders during the COVID-19 pandemic, staycations have become a viable travel behaviour adopted by many people. In Malaysia, the enforcement of the Movement Controlled Order (MCO) has led to both the federal and state governments taking initiatives to revive the tourism industry by encouraging domestic holidays (Tjiptono et al., 2022). Hotels in Malaysia started promoting staycation as a relaxing environment away from their daily routine without any disturbance. Moreover, hotels started providing insurance policies to ensure coverage during consumers' stays, giving their guests added confidence during their trips (Emmanuel, 2021). As a result, many bookings were made at Malaysia's top destinations (The Sun Daily, 2020).

On the other side of the causeway, staycation has been common in Singapore before the COVID-19 pandemic. However, it took a new position in keeping the hotel industry afloat when international borders were closed (Oh, 2020). After Singapore lifted its lockdown (Circuit Breaker from 7 April - 5 June 2020), the Singapore government introduced the "SingapoRediscover" campaign to stimulate domestic tourism, incentivising Singaporeans who have been working from home to seek travel experiences within Singapore through staycations (Oh, 2020). Even as international travel slowly recovers, most Singaporean travellers, especially young families with children, still choose to go on a staycation during school holidays in June and December with reasons culminating from the uncertainty of travelling during a pandemic and the rising airfares (Lee, 2022). Thus, looking at the current situation in both Malaysia and Singapore, staycation remains to be a viable and relevant contributor to the post-pandemic recovery of the hospitality industry.

As outlined in the study objectives, this study is guided by the Social Presence Theory, Uses and Gratification Theory (U>), and the Family Systems Theory to develop the hypotheses and research model of the study. Social Presence Theory has been mainly used to explain the presence of "being there" in the communication field. Nevertheless, the theory has expanded to explain social relationships and social processes in education and tourism (Yan et al., 2021). By extending this theory beyond digital communication research and incorporating it to understand socio-psychological interactions during a staycation, the study uses the Social Presence Theory to explain the sense of presence, experience quality, hedonic motivation, psychological detachment and its relationship with tourist satisfaction. Uses and Gratification Theory identifies the tourist's gratification towards wellness tourism, and the Family Systems Theory provides a framework to understand how the family as a whole could affect each other's involvement in wellness tourism.

2.1 Staycation – A Possible Form of Wellness Tourism

As remote work during the pandemic blurs the lines of work and leisure, staycations provide a clear distinction between leisure travel and a getaway from home, offer hedonistic emotional stimulation through consumption (e.g., shopping), a positive experience of relaxation, and privacy from work. During the pandemic, staycations bring significant, positive and immediate effects on perceived stress, recovery and well-being (Blank et al., 2018; Miao et al., 2021). Since wellness tourism is defined as "the sum of all the relationships resulting from a journey by people whose motive, in whole or in part, is to maintain or promote their health and well-being, and who stay at least one night at a facility that is specifically designed to enable and enhance people's physical, psychological, spiritual and/or social well-being" (Voigt et al., 2011, p. 17), a staycation can be considered as a form of domestic wellness tourism.

2.2.1 Sense of Presence

Presence refers to the representation of an individual "being" in an environment (Bouvier, 2009; Morelot et al., 2021). Having a sense of presence enables the staycation guests of the pandemic to experience the pre-pandemic tourism era presented with free choice, mobility, and access to tourism products (Yan et al. 2022). Drawing from the Social Presence Theory, the experience of being in the destination ultimately served as a crucial contributor to tourists' experience and satisfaction level (Wu & Lai, 2022). Similarly, a sense of presence has a direct effect on an individual's emotions, such as happiness and excitement, and the staycation guests' intention to visit a tourist destination (Oh et al., 2019; Tsai, 2022). Chang and Hsu (2016) and Wongkitrungrueng and Assarut (2020) found that social presence has a positive effect on the feelings of the individual's participation in social interactions with others. Thus, based on the support obtained from the literature on the sense of presence in tourism, the researchers propose:

H1: Sense of presence has a significant relationship towards family involvement.

H2: Sense of presence has a significant relationship towards the gratification of wellness tourism.

2.2.2 Experience Quality

Experience quality is defined as an individual's perception of the expectations of the consumption process (Chan & Baum, 2007). In this study, experience quality is where the tourists assess their inner feeling about the staycation experiences in a destination. Thus, it is crucial to understand tourists' experiences in a destination. Tourist experience quality is greatly influenced by the products offered by the stakeholders in tourist destinations (Chi et al. 2020). There are two factors that could influence the tourist's experience quality, the physical environment and social interaction, such as personal and social relationships with friends and family during the trip (Alnawas & Hemsley-Brown, 2019). Yan et al. (2022) mentioned that the experience quality of staycation is influenced by hygiene, fun, novelty, and social interactions of the guests. Other studies also highlighted that the tourist's experience quality has a strong influence on behaviour intentions, image, perceived value, and tourist satisfaction (Sharma & Nayak 2020; Ghorbanzadeh et al. 2021). Furthermore, previous literature has verified that an enjoyable tourism experience could increase the tourist's social interaction with others, which in turn will lead to a higher participation level in tourism activities (Chang & Hsu, 2016; Deng et al., 2019). With the literature discussed above, this study hypothesised that:

H3: Experience quality has a significant relationship towards family involvement.

H4: Experience quality has a significant relationship towards the gratification of wellness tourism.

2.2.3 Hedonic Motivation

Hedonic motivation, also known as perceived enjoyment, is an individual's affection, which includes fun, pleasure, and enjoyment towards an object (Lopez et al. 2006; Venkatesh et al. 2012). The evaluation of hedonic benefits in tourism will influence the type of emotions that the tourists express and has been proven to have a positive influence on tourist's emotions, interactions, behaviour, and intention to visit a tourist destination (Liu et al., 2020; Ribeiro et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2021). In other words, the intention of getting away from the hectic and stressful environment is likely to trigger the emotions of the tourists to have a staycation, and it, in turn, improves the tourist's well-being. Moreover, Payini et al. (2022) identify hedonic motivation will affect the excitement and social interaction level in tourism activity and, in turn, influence the tourists' experience value in a tourist destination. The relationship between hedonic motivation, family involvement, and gratification of wellness tourism can be explained by the Social Presence Theory. Social presence could foster an individual's emotions, such as feelings and relationships with others, and it serves as an important predictor of an individual's learning experiences (Whiteside, 2017). In this context, hedonic motivation is the tourist's driving force towards staycation to improve their well-being. It is necessary to understand the tourist's motivation towards staycation after the COVID-19 pandemic. Hence, this study hypothesises:

H5: Hedonic motivation has a significant relationship towards family involvement.

H6: Hedonic motivation has a significant relationship towards the gratification of wellness tourism.

2.2.4 Psychological Detachment

When the COVID-19 pandemic first happened, it was extremely difficult for individuals to cope with it, and it naturally caused stress, anxiety, grief, and worry (Jo et al., 2021; Liu et al., 2021). As a result, psychological detachment is one of the ways to help individuals reduce the negative impacts created by the COVID-19 pandemic. Psychological detachment refers to one's sense of being away from negative situations, such as frustration and low motivation to work (Etzion et al., 1998; Park et al., 2011). Employees who felt stress at work would regain control and self-efficacy when they were psychologically detached from the work (Meng et al., 2022). Similarly, Kilroy et al. (2020) and Sonnentag et al. (2010) noted that psychological detachment could enhance both work and family-related issues, such as a high level of motivation to work, higher work performance, better physical and mental health, and a greater sense of joy. As such, a high level of psychological detachment could reduce an individual's emotional exhaustion from work and family-related matters. These findings are in line with the findings by Jin et al. (2019), who confirmed that motivational forces such as getting away from troubles and difficulties increase the level of participation in tourism activities and, in turn, will have a positive impact on tourist satisfaction. Guided by the Social Presence Theory, the psychological detachment of an individual, such as the feeling and emotion of being present in an environment, will influence their participation, knowledge, and experiences (Kreijns et al., 2022). Based on the above, the following hypotheses were formulated.

H7: Psychological detachment has a significant relationship towards family involvement.

H8: Psychological detachment has a significant relationship towards the gratification of wellness tourism.

2.2.5 Gratification of Wellness Tourism

The Uses and Gratification (U>) Theory is used to explain the individual's motivation and satisfaction towards social and psychological needs (Dolan et al., 2019; Silaban et al., 2022). U> allows the present study to investigate why tourists are satisfied with their staycation in a tourist destination. In the tourism and hospitality context, tourism gratification is affected by tourists' perception of the experience and benefits of the tourism event (Nisar et al., 2022). This is further explained by Cheng (2014), who mentioned that tourists' gratification is achieved when there is hospitality excellence, such as service innovation and process innovation in the tourist destination. Tourists who experience superior service will affect consumer satisfaction and, in turn, will influence consumer behaviour (Cheng et al. 2020). Moreover, Wu and Chang (2021) contended that experiential motivation has a positive relationship with experiential satisfaction in the tourism

industry. Hence, the gratification of wellness tourism is constructed as the outcome of this study to understand the satisfaction of tourists derived from staycation for wellness tourism.

2.2.6 Family Involvement

Family members and their interpersonal interaction in tourism can be seen as one of the factors that influence an individual's travel experience (Chen et al., 2021). Involvement has been defined as the connection that exists between individual participation in tourism activities and tourist behaviour during their vacation (Di-Clemente et al., 2020). Hence, family involvement is defined as individual participation in leisure tourism activities during their staycation with the family. The psychological well-being of an individual increases immediately during vacation, especially when the individual spends time with the family in activities (Dirzyte et al., 2022; Izenstark et al., 2021). This concurs with the findings by Wang (1999), who believed that tourists could achieve positive experiences with their family members during a trip. Congruent with the Family Systems Theory, a family member's behaviour can influence another family member's behaviour (Bowen, 1878; Haefner, 2014). Furthermore, Wu et al. (2020) found that involvement in activity affects an individual's feeling toward environmental stimuli such as tourism activity. Similar studies have claimed that the main purpose of attending festivals is to experience new things, gain unique experiences, socialise, and entertainment (Getz, 2019; Kitterlin & Yoo, 2014). Given these aspects, investigating the relationship between family involvement and gratification of wellness tourism and its relationship with the predictors of gratification of wellness tourism, family involvement is introduced as a mediator in this study. Therefore, the following hypotheses were developed:

- H9: Family involvement has a significant relationship towards the gratification of wellness tourism.
- H10: Family involvement mediates the relationship between a sense of presence and gratification of wellness tourism.
- H11: Family involvement mediates the relationship between experience quality and gratification of wellness tourism.
- H12: Family involvement mediates the relationship between hedonic motivation and gratification of wellness tourism.
- H13: Family involvement mediates the relationship between psychological detachment and gratification of wellness tourism.

Based on the above scholarly review guided by existing theories and empirical evidence, this study proposes the following research model with its direct effect pathways (Figure 1).

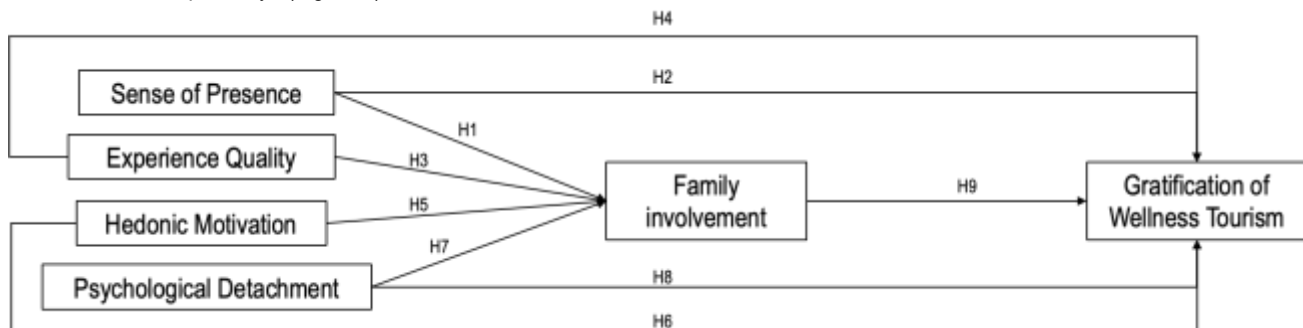


Fig. 1: Research Framework
(Source: Author)

3.0 Methodology

Two hundred respondents were given the self-administered questionnaire through google form with 169 valid responses; 109 were from Malaysia, and 60 were from Singapore. The sample size is proportional to the population of Malaysia and Singapore, respectively. A pilot test was conducted, and Cronbach Alpha showed that all the instruments were acceptable, ranging from 0.724 to 0.881. PLS-SEM analysis was used to analyse the data. As in table 1, six constructs were identified, which were the sense of presence, experience quality, hedonic motivation, psychological detachment, family involvement and gratification of wellness tourism.

Table 1. Constructs and their related studies

Constructs	Studies
i) Sense of Presence	Yan, Shen & Hu, (2021); Nowak & Biocca, (2003); Wu & Lai, (2021)
ii) Experience Quality	Larsen, (2007); Yan et al., (2021)
iii) Hedonic Motivation	Alnawas & Hemsley-Brown, (2019)
iv) Psychological Detachment	Park, Fritz & Jex (2011); Sonnentag & Fritz, (2015); Hobfoll, (2002); Yan, et al., (2021)
v) Family Involvement	Kalista (2019)
vi) The Gratification Wellness Tourism	Diener, et al., (2009)

(Source: Author)

3.1 Demographic Profile

In Table 2, for Malaysia, the proportion of the respondents between gender is similar. However, in Singapore, 70% of the respondents were female. Most of the respondents come from millennials aged 21-30 years old, and they worked in the private sector students were the second largest respondents in Malaysia. In terms of income, most of the respondents come from an income level of RM1001-RM2000

(41.3 %) and in Singapore, SGD 3001 to SGD 6000 (68.3%). Most of the respondents went on staycation within a year which reported 68.3% and 67%, respectively, in Malaysia and Singapore.

Table 2. Demographic profile for Malaysia and Singapore

Variables	Malaysia Frequency (%)	Singapore Frequency (%)
1) Gender: (n=109 and 60)		
Male	51 (46.8)	18 (30)
Female	58 (53.2)	42 (70)
2) Age: (n=109 and 60)		
21-30	48 (44)	22 (36.7)
31-40	41 (37.6)	31 (51.7)
41-50	6 (5.5)	6 (10)
51-60	3 (2.8)	1 (1.7)
61 and above	11 (10.1)	-
3) Occupational status: (n=109 and 60)		
Work in the private sector	38 (34.9)	36 (60)
Work in the public sector	15 (13.8)	16 (26.7)
Freelancer	1 (0.9)	3 (5)
Student	34 (31.2)	1 (1.7)
Self-employed	13 (11.9)	2 (3.3)
Housemaker	2 (1.8)	2 (3.3)
Retired	1 (0.9)	-
Unemployed	5 (4.6)	-
Not looking for a job.	-	-
4) Income Level: (n=109 and 60)		
RM1001-RM2000/SGD1001-SGD2000	45 (41.3)	4 (6.7)
RM2001-RM3000/ SGD2001-SGD3000	10 (9.2)	1 (1.7)
RM3001-RM4000/ SGD3001-SGD4000	10 (9.2)	11 (18.3)
RM4001-RM5000/ SGD4001-SGD5000	15 (13.8)	17 (28.3)
RM5001-RM6000/ SGD5001-SGD6000	5 (4.6)	13 (21.7)
RM6001-RM7000/ SGD6001-SGD7000	7 (6.4)	4 (6.7)
RM7001-RM8000/ SGD7001-SGD8000	4 (3.7)	2 (3.3)
RM8001-RM9000/ SGD8001-SGD9000	2 (1.8)	2 (3.3)
RM9001-RM10,000/ SGD9001-SGD10,000	-	3 (5)
RM10,001 and above/ SGD10,000 and above	11 (10.1)	3 (5)
5) Marital Status: (n=109 and 60)		
Single, not in a relationship	50 (45.9)	19 (31.7)
Single but in a relationship	22 (20.2)	16 (26.7)
Married with a child	28 (25.7)	14 (23.3)
Married without a child	8 (7.3)	-
Separated	1 (0.9)	11 (18.3)
Divorced	-	-
Widowed	-	-
6) Nationality: (n=109 and 60)		
Malaysian/ Singaporean Citizen	98 (89.9)	51 (85)
Non-Malaysian/ Singapore PR	11 (10.1)	9 (15)
7) Ethnicity: (n=109 and 60)		
Malay	31 (28.4)	2 (3.3)
Chinese	59 (54.1)	58 (96.7)
Indian	15 (13.8)	-
Others	4 (3.7)	-
8) I'm currently staying in (n=109 and 60)		
Kuala Lumpur / Singapore	18 (16.5)	60 (100)
Labuan	-	-
Putrajaya	-	-
Selangor	17 (15.6)	-
Johor	30 (27.5)	-
Penang	-	-
Melaka	2 (1.8)	-
Sabah	1 (0.9)	-
Sarawak	30 (27.5)	-
Kedah	1 (0.9)	-
Kelantan	-	-
Terengganu	3 (2.8)	-
Perlis	-	-
Negeri Sembilan	-	-
Perak	4 (3.7)	-
Pahang	3 (2.8)	-

(Source: Author)

4.0 Findings

As depicted in Table 3, the combined data from both countries showed that all the items except one have good loadings ranging from 0.538 to 0.898 with composite reliability of 0.667 to 0.917 for the constructs. The average variance extracted (AVE) of the constructs is higher than 0.40, showing an acceptable validity for the constructs.

Table 3. Results of measurement items

Model Construct	Measurement Item	Loading	CR	AVE
Sense of Presence	1. I feel positive when I am in a new environment.	MAL:0.680 SGP:0.777 Com: -0.310	MAL: 0.825 SGP: 0.794 Com: 0.667	MAL: 0.486 SGP: 0.463 Com: 0.403
	2. I feel happy when I am with others.	MAL: 0.696 SGP:0.666 Com: 0.662		
	3. I feel better if I know the staycation place well.	MAL: 0.645 SGP: 0.220 Com: 0.588		
	4. I believe that a staycation will improve my well-being.	MAL: 0.766 SGP: 0.835 Com: 0.730		
	5. I feel good when I can post my staycation online and share it with my friends and family.	MAL: 0.695 SGP: 0.720 Com: 0.775		
Experience Quality	1. Taking a staycation is a refreshing experience for me.	MAL: 0.846 SGP:0.822 Com: 0.674	MAL: 0.804 SGP: 0.868 Com: 0.831	MAL: 0.460 SGP: 0.570 Com: 0.502
	2. There are relaxing activities and unique scenes during the staycation.	MAL: 0.801 SGP: 0.793 Com: 0.853		
	3. I have more chances to interact with my family members or friends during the staycation.	MAL: 0.516 SGP: 0.750 Com: 0.778		
	4. I have more me-time during the staycation.	MAL:0.554 SGP: 0.646 Com: 0.656		
	5. I enjoy my staycation as there are hotel staff to do the housekeeping.	MAL: 0.608 SGP: 0.753 Com: 0.538		
Hedonic Motivation	1. I will have fun during the staycation.	MAL: 0.864 SGP: 0.899 Com: 0.651	MAL: 0.889 SGP: 0.915 Com: 0.885	MAL: 0.617 SGP: 0.688 Com: 0.609
	2. I will really enjoy the staycation.	MAL: 0.880 SGP: 0.943 Com: 0.898		
	3. I will look for entertainment during my staycation.	MAL: 0.702 SGP: 0.594 Com: 0.778		
	4. Staycation will give me a lot of pleasure.	MAL: 0.693 SGP: 0.876 Com: 0.796		
	5. Staycation encourages me to look for betterment in life.	MAL: 0.770 SGP: 0.787 Com: 0.758		
Psychological Detachment	1. I can put away my work during my staycation.	MAL: 0.736 SGP: 0.838 Com: 0.757	MAL: 0.896 SGP: 0.936 Com: 0.908	MAL: 0.633 SGP: 0.745 Com: 0.664
	2. I do not think about my personal problem during my staycation.	MAL: 0.850 SGP: 0.830 Com: 0.824		
	3. I perform better at work after my staycation.	MAL: 0.749 SGP: 0.904 Com: 0.859		

	4. I get a break from the demands of my life during my staycation.	MAL: 0.836 SGP: 0.868 Com: 0.770		
	5. I can quickly recover from stress after my staycation.	MAL: 0.801 SGP: 0.874 Com: 0.860		
Family Involvement	1. While on staycation, I am more willing to try new activities with my family.	MAL: 0.853 SGP: 0.875 Com: 0.781		
	2. While on staycation, I use more verbal communication rather than technology to communicate with my family.	MAL: 0.835 SGP: 0.834 Com: 0.860		
	3. I experience a positive change during my staycation in the sense of my family companion.	MAL: 0.832 SGP: 0.869 Com: 0.865	MAL: 0.906 SGP: 0.929 Com: 0.917	MAL: 0.660 SGP: 0.725 Com: 0.690
	4. While playing with my family during my staycation, I feel more relaxed with each others.	MAL: 0.740 SGP: 0.904 Com: 0.869		
	5. I made more choices based on my family's interests during my staycation.	MAL: 0.796 SGP: 0.768 Com: 0.773		
The Gratification of Wellness Tourism	1. Staycation is a purposeful and meaningful life activity.	MAL: 0.792 SGP: 0.828 Com: 0.772	MAL: 0.893 SGP: 0.904 Com: 0.896	MAL: 0.626 SGP: 0.655 Com: 0.632
	2. I am satisfied with my staycation, which improves my social relationships.	MAL: 0.814 SGP: 0.881 Com: 0.821		
	3. I feel relaxed while I am engaged and interested in the staycation activities.	MAL: 0.765 SGP: 0.843 Com: 0.833		
	4. During my staycation, I actively contribute to the happiness and well-being of others.	MAL: 0.784 SGP: 0.795 Com: 0.778		
	5. After my staycation, I am optimistic about my future.	MAL: 0.800 SGP: 0.685 Com: 0.769		

(Source: Author)

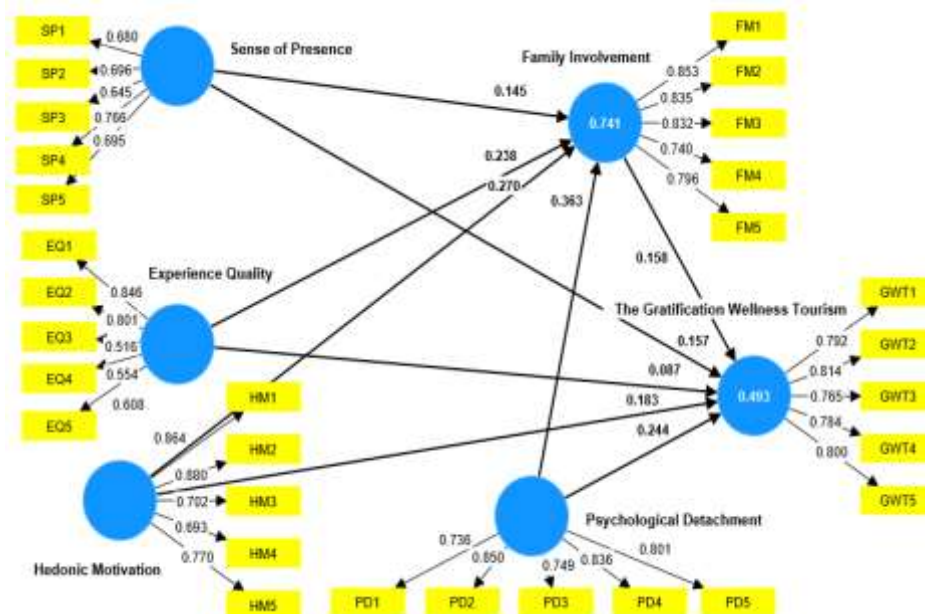


Fig. 2: Results of the path analysis: Malaysia
(Source: Author)

In Figure 2, the path model for Malaysia shows a high R^2 of 0.741 for family involvement and in Figure 4, 0.587 for Singapore. The direct effect explained by the independent variables is 0.493 for Malaysia and 0.799 for Singapore. In Figure 6, the R^2 is affected by Singapore's, where it drops to 0.697 on the Family Involvement, and the total effect is 0.710, showing a high statistical measure of fit in the model.

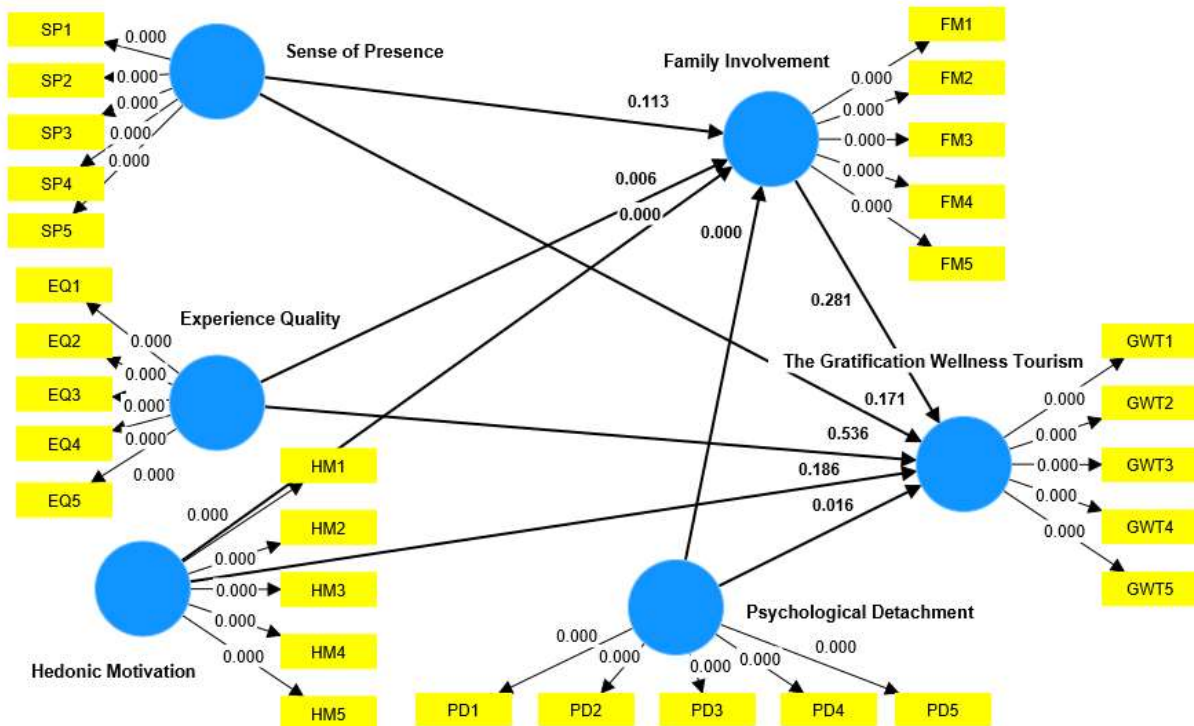


Fig. 3: Results of Bootstrapping: Malaysia
(Source: Author)

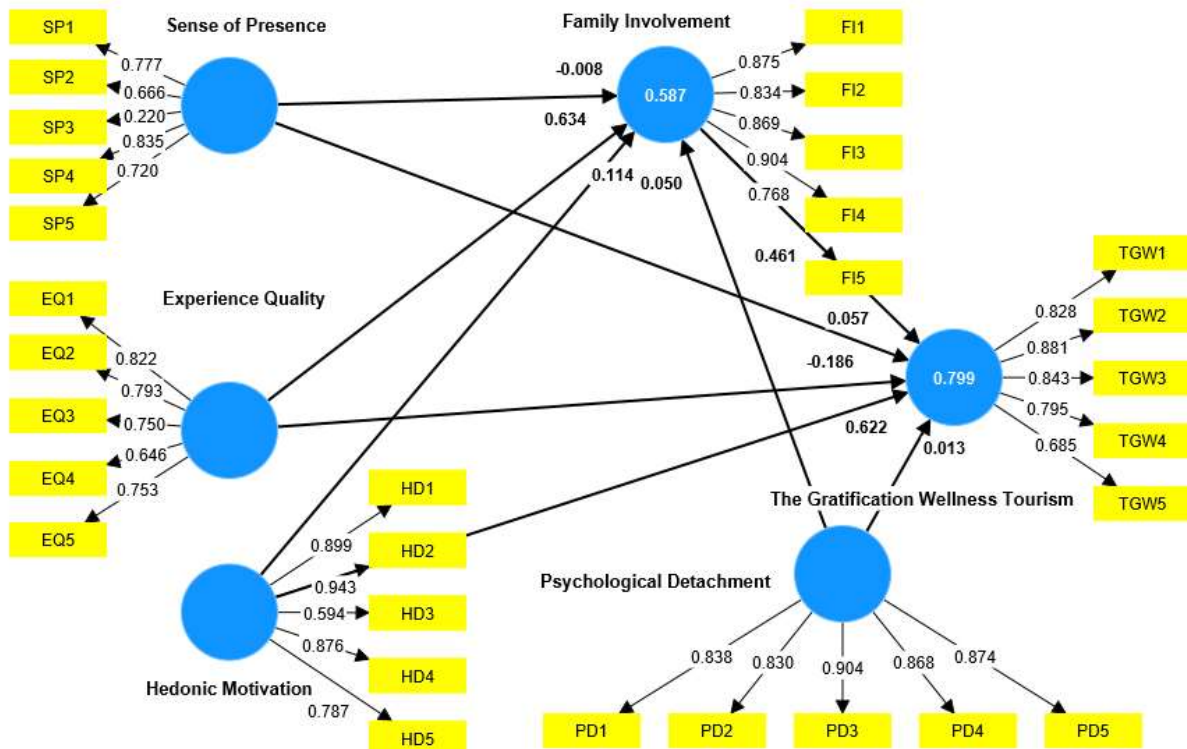


Fig. 4: Results of the path analysis: Singapore
(Source: Author)

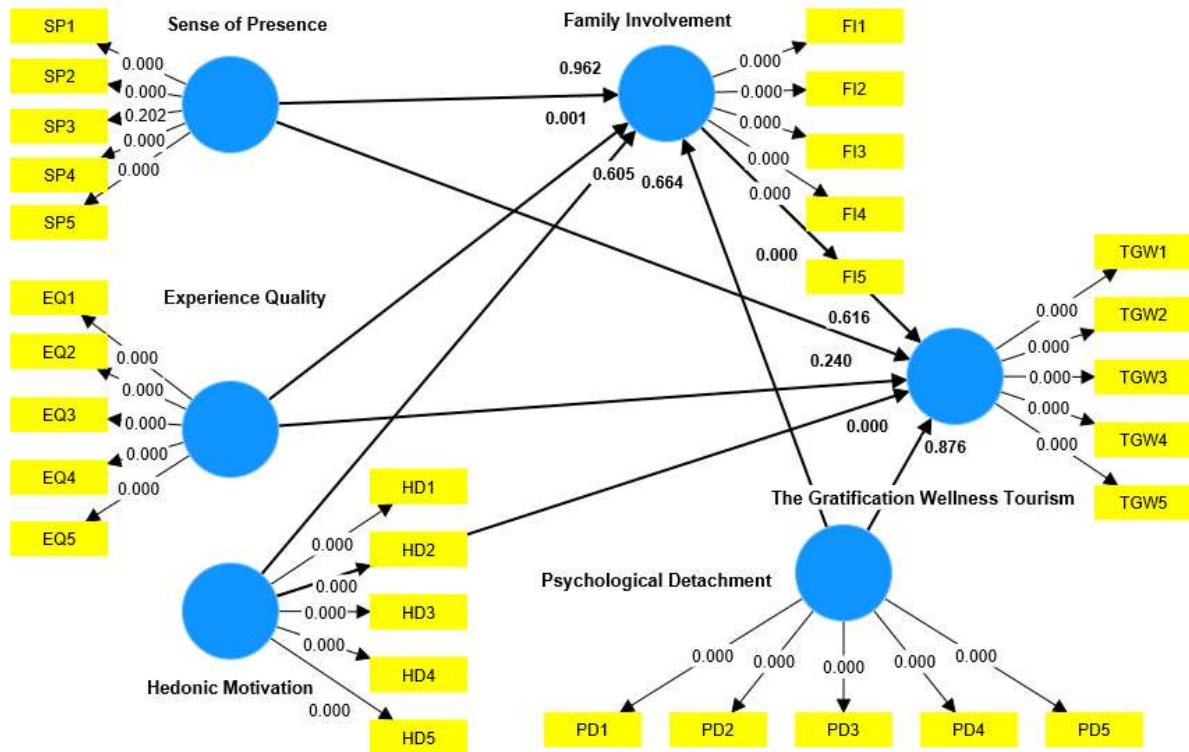


Fig. 5: Results of Bootstrapping: Singapore
(Source: Author)

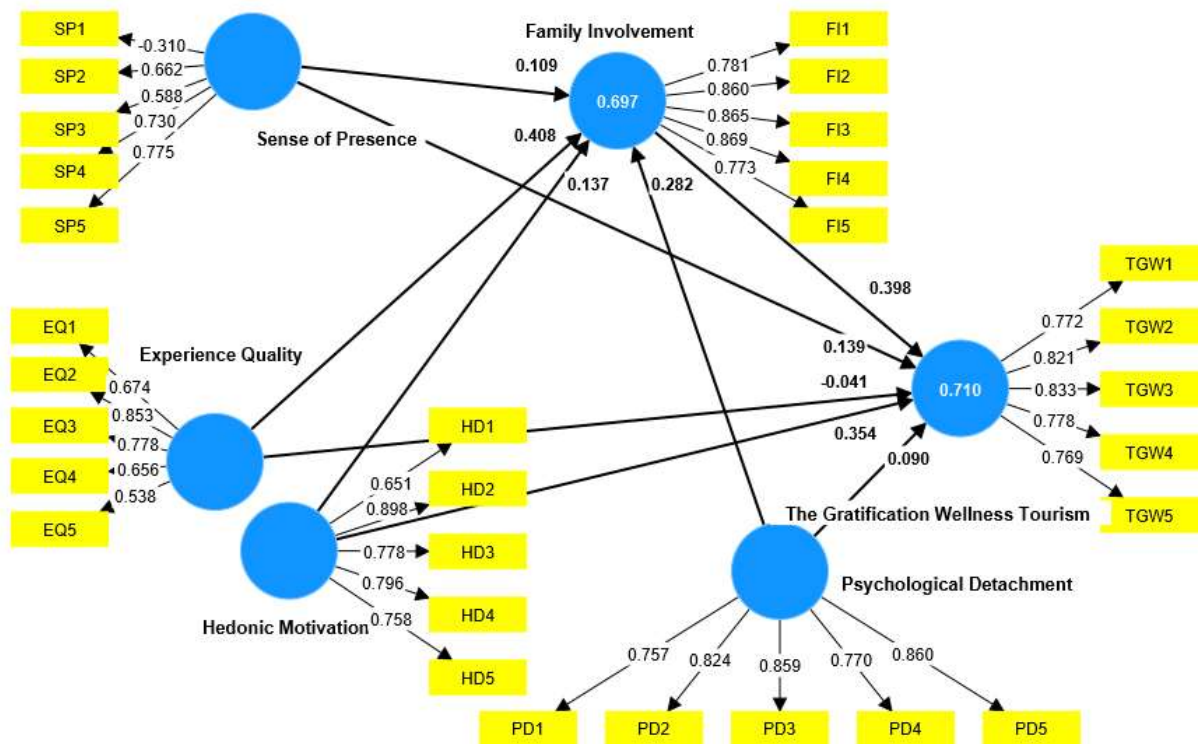


Fig. 6: Results of the path analysis: Combined
(Source: Author)

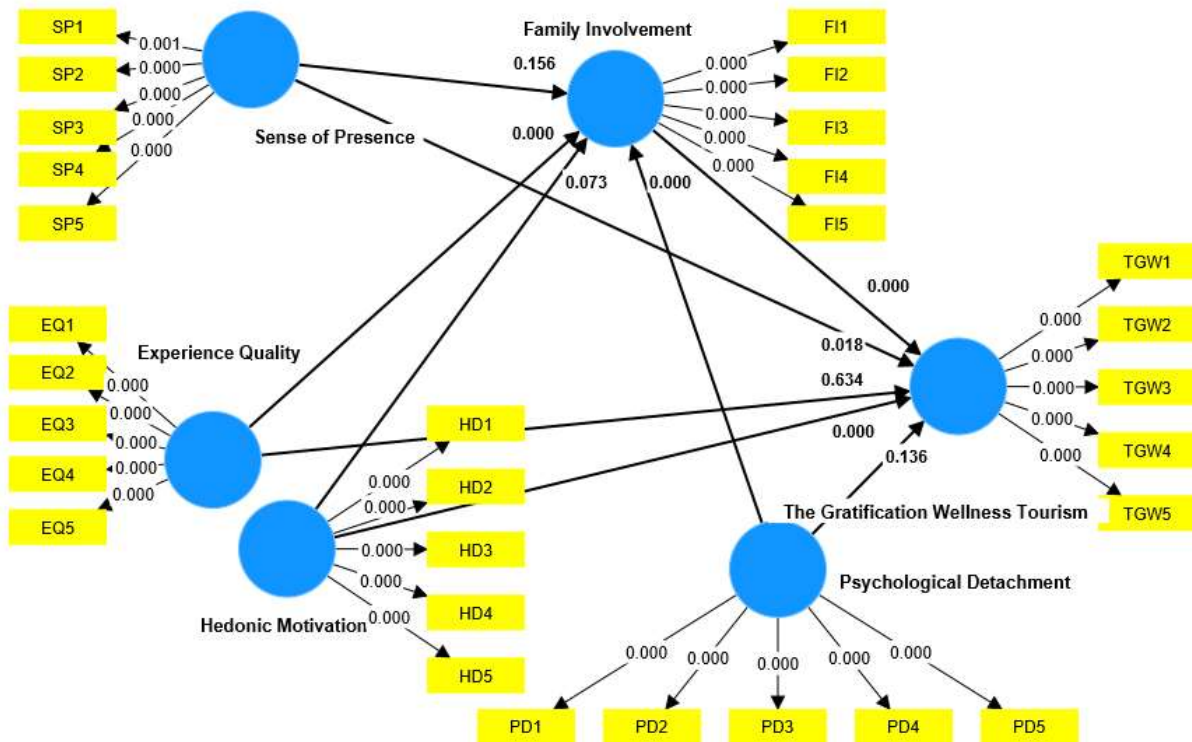


Fig. 7: Results of Bootstrapping: Combined (Source: Author)

In Figure 3, the experience quality, hedonic motivation, and psychological detachment have shown a significant relationship towards family involvement for Malaysians. Psychological detachment also has a significant relationship with the gratification of wellness tourism. In Figure 5, for Singaporeans, only experience quality shows a significant relationship towards family involvement, and family involvement shows a significant direct relationship towards the gratification of wellness tourism. On the mediating effect, experience quality is mediated by family involvement towards the gratification of wellness tourism. In Figure 7, the combination of both countries presented different findings towards the relationship between the independent variables and dependent variables. Sense of presence, hedonic motivation, psychological detachment, and family involvement show significant relationships towards the gratification of wellness tourism. Experience quality and hedonic motivation have demonstrated significant relationships towards family involvement. Experience quality and psychological detachment are mediated by family involvement towards the gratification of wellness tourism in the combined results.

Table 4. Results of hypothesis testing for Malaysia, Singapore and both countries (combined)

Hypothesis	Relationship	Coefficient	T statistics	P-values	Results
H1	Sense of Presence -> Family involvement	MAL: 0.145 SGP: -0.008 Com.: 0.109	MAL: 1.585 SGP: 0.048 Com.: 1.419	MAL: 0.113 SGP: 0.962 Com.: 0.156	MAL: Rejected SGP: Rejected Com.: Rejected
H2	Sense of Presence -> The Gratification Wellness Tourism	MAL: 0.157 SGP: 0.057 Com.: 0.139	MAL: 1.368 SGP: 0.502 Com.: 2.370	MAL: 0.171 SGP: 0.616 Com.: 0.018	MAL: Rejected SGP: Rejected Com.: Accepted
H3	Experience Quality -> Family involvement	MAL: 0.238 SGP: 0.634 Com.: 0.408	MAL: 2.729 SGP: 3.347 Com.: 5.672	MAL: 0.006 SGP: 0.001 Com.: 0.000	MAL: Accepted SGP: Accepted Com.: Accepted
H4	Experience Quality -> The Gratification Wellness Tourism	MAL: 0.087 SGP: -0.186 Com.: -0.041	MAL: 0.619 SGP: 1.174 Com.: 0.476	MAL: 0.536 SGP: 0.240 Com.: 0.634	MAL: Rejected SGP: Rejected Com.: Rejected
H5	Hedonic motivation -> Family involvement	MAL: 0.270 SGP: 0.114 Com.: 0.137	MAL: 3.629 SGP: 0.517 Com.: 5.112	MAL: 0.000 SGP: 0.605 Com.: 0.000	MAL: Accepted SGP: Rejected Com.: Accepted
H6	Hedonic motivation -> The Gratification Wellness Tourism	MAL: 0.183 SGP: 0.622 Com.: 0.354	MAL: 1.323 SGP: 3.662 Com.: 4.152	MAL: 0.186 SGP: 0.000 Com.: 0.000	MAL: Rejected SGP: Accepted Com.: Accepted
H7	Psychological Detachment -> Family involvement	MAL: 0.363	MAL: 4.300	MAL: 0.000	MAL: Accepted

		SGP: 0.05 Com.: 0.282	SGP: 0.435 Com.: 1.490	SGP: 0.664 Com.: 0.136	SGP: Rejected Com.: Rejected
H8	Psychological detachment -> The Gratification Wellness Tourism	MAL: 0.244 SGP: 0.013 Com.: 0.090	MAL: 2.407 SGP: 0.156 Com.: 4.044	MAL: 0.016 SGP: 0.876 Com.: 0.000	MAL: Accepted SGP: Rejected Com.: Accepted
H9	Family involvement -> The Gratification Wellness Tourism	MAL: 0.158 SGP: 0.461 Com.: 0.398	MAL: 1.078 SGP: 4.841 Com.: 5.112	MAL: 0.281 SGP: 0.000 Com.: 0.000	MAL: Rejected SGP: Accepted Com.: Accepted
H10	Experience Quality -> Family Involvement -> The Gratification Wellness Tourism	MAL: 0.038 SGP: 0.292 Com.: 0.162	MAL: 1.006 SGP: 2.664 Com.: 3.755	MAL: 0.315 SGP: 0.008 Com.: 0.000	MAL: Rejected SGP: Accepted Com.: Accepted
H11	Hedonic Motivation -> Family Involvement -> The Gratification Wellness Tourism	MAL: 0.043 SGP: 0.053 Com.: 0.055	MAL: 0.977 SGP: 0.514 Com.: 1.603	MAL: 0.329 SGP: 0.607 Com.: 0.109	MAL: Rejected SGP: Rejected Com.: Rejected
H12	Psychological detachment -> Family Involvement -> The Gratification Wellness Tourism.	MAL: 0.057 SGP: 0.023 Com.: 0.113	MAL: 1.034 SGP: 0.421 Com.: 3.308	MAL: 0.301 SGP: 0.674 Com.: 0.001	MAL: Rejected SGP: Rejected Com.: Accepted
H13	Sense of Presence -> Family Involvement -> The Gratification Wellness Tourism	MAL: 0.023 SGP: -0.004 Com.: 0.043	MAL: 0.723 SGP: 0.047 Com.: 1.341	MAL: 0.470 SGP: 0.963 Com.: 0.180	MAL: Rejected SGP: Rejected Com.: Rejected

(Source: Author)

5.0 Discussion

Based on the findings in Table 4, experience quality has a significant effect on family involvement (H3) in the combined sample, whereas the direct effect is non-significant towards the gratification of wellness tourism (H4). Nonetheless, experience quality, when mediated by family involvement, shows a significant relationship towards the gratification of wellness tourism (H10) in the combined scenario. This finding is supported by Alnawas & Hemsley-Brown (2019), where experience quality will be influenced by the physical environment and social interaction during the staycation. For the sense of presence, the relationships are all statistically non-significant (H1, H2, H13) towards family involvement and the gratification of wellness tourism. It differs from the literature stating that a sense of presence is important in tourists' experience.

The findings also indicated that experience quality and family involvement are crucial determinants towards the gratification of wellness tourism, which can enhance the staycation experience. This finding corroborates with Sharma and Nayak (2020), whereby a tourist's experience quality has a strong influence on behaviour intentions, tourist satisfaction and other aspects. It is worth noting that hedonic motivation will not be enhanced by family involvement during staycation (H11), and this also implies that the pleasure-seeking motive for staycation has mixed effects for different nationalities (H5, H6). This finding is different from Liu et al. (2020), who stated that happiness and a fun environment release stress for tourists. Similar findings of hedonic motivation can be seen in psychological detachment, as proposed by Jin et al. (2019), where both countries show contradicting results towards family involvement and the gratification of wellness tourism (H7, H8). However, psychological detachment can possibly be mediated by family involvement if the sample size is bigger and it shows a significant relationship towards the gratification of wellness tourism (combined results in H12). This finding concurs with Dirzyte et al. (2022) and Izenstark et al. (2021), whereby an individual's psychological well-being instantly increases during vacation while spending time with the family in the activities.

6.0 Conclusion and Implications

This paper contributes to both theory and practice. In theory, this study extends current research streams on domestic tourism and wellness tourism by providing the perspective of staycation as a viable domestic wellness tourism. Guided by the social presence theory and the Uses and Gratification theory, it is identified that the sense of presence, hedonic motivation and psychological detachment as direct determinants of gratification of domestic wellness tourism through staycations in the combined sample. Also, this study extended the current literature by introducing family involvement as a mediator. Postulated under the Family Systems Theory, family involvement directly predicts gratification of wellness tourism and demonstrated significant mediating effects for experience quality and psychological detachment in the combined sample.

This study also has practical implications and recommendations for various stakeholders, such as hotel managers. For example, the identification of family involvement as a significant predictor and mediator in the relationships towards the gratification of wellness tourism indicates that a staycation with family is likely to enhance tourists' quality experience and satisfaction towards the staycation. Similarly, a staycation with family would allow individuals to psychologically detach from their daily lives, thereby feeling more satisfied with their staycation experience. Thus, future marketing communication strategies could target families with promotional advertisements or value-adding services that allow tourists to feel different from "being at home".

7.0 Suggestion for Future Research

As this is exploratory research on staycation as a form of wellness tourism, future developments should encourage more respondents from various backgrounds, and if possible, a qualitative approach could be used for in-depth findings with key stakeholders such as domestic hospitality providers and online travel agents or employing market research firms for a greater sample to validate the research model and multi-national comparison. Other future considerations could include external factors such as peer pressure, social status, access to information and financial influences to solidify the findings of this research which are now based solely on personal factors.

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