HEALTH TOURISM IN THE UNITED STATES: CONSUMER BEHAVIOR, MARKET TRENDS, AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

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Abstract. Wellness tourism in the United States has grown into a $120 billion market, reflecting a broader global industry worth nearly $900 billion. At the same time, Americans are reporting record levels of stress: according to Gallup, almost half of adults experience it daily, and the American Psychological Association has described the current climate as one of "collective trauma."

Consequently, the observed growth in wellness tourism may be attributed to a heightened consumer demand for destinations and experiences that facilitate comprehensive physical and psychological restoration. This article analyzes the motivational structure of demand, consumer segmentation, service formats, and regional market differentiation, as well as the operational determinants of client satisfaction with wellness programs.

Methods of analyzing and systematizing secondary data were applied, based on materials from the Global Wellness Institute (2023–2025), the American Psychological Association, Gallup, and industry analytical organizations, as well as comparative operational data from three tourism companies for the years 2017–2021. Five demand factors were identified, with the inability of habitual stress-coping mechanisms to ensure recovery being the leading one. Four consumer segments with distinct demands, six service formats, and regional market clusters are described. The scientific novelty lies in the introduction of an operational measure of customer satisfaction into the market analysis: it was found that preparing the client for the program reduces the proportion of complaints due to unmet expectations by 57–70%. These findings are systematized in the author's original contribution: the Expectation Alignment Framework, which identifies expectation gaps as the primary complaint driver in wellness tourism, and the Operational Satisfaction Model, which links structured pre-departure preparation to measurable client outcomes.

Keywords: health tourism, United States of America, consumer behavior, mental health, longevity programs, quality management of tourism services, regional tourism development..

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Introduction

In November 2025, the Global Wellness Institute released data showing that the global wellness tourism market had reached $893.9 billion – a 13.8% increase over 2023 - reflecting an average annual growth rate of 6.4% since 2019 [1]. The United States accounts for approximately $120 billion of this total. Per capita spending on wellness in North America is $6,029 per year – 13 times higher than in Asia and 10 times higher than in Latin America [2]. These figures warrant further analysis.

The Gallup Global Emotions Report 2023 found that 49% of American adults regularly experience significant daily stress [3]. In a study from the same year, the American Psychological Association described the state of society as "collective trauma" and cited specific figures: among people aged 35 to 44, the prevalence of chronic illnesses rose from 48% in 2019 to 58% in 2023, and the number of mental health diagnoses in that same group increased from 31% to 45% [4]. 77% of Americans experience physical symptoms of stress regularly [4]. These may help to explain why the health tourism market is growing steadily even amid general economic uncertainty.

Scientific analysis of the American wellness tourism market lags behind practice. Mueller and Kaufmann [5] and Smith and Puczkó [6] laid the conceptual foundations of the discipline; however, a comprehensive examination of the American market that accounts for post-pandemic changes, regional structure, and operational factors of customer satisfaction is absent in the peer-reviewed literature. Industry reports [1; 7; 8] document trends but do not explain the mechanisms of demand. This gap is the subject of this article.

The aim of the study is to systematize the factors of demand, consumer structure, supply formats, and regional specifics of wellness tourism in the United States, as well as to identify the factors of customer satisfaction with wellness programs. To achieve this objective, the following tasks were addressed: the motivational structure of demand was analyzed; consumer segments were characterized; market formats and regional hubs were described; the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on consumer behavior was established; and operational factors of customer satisfaction were identified.

Literature Review

Health tourism as a scientific category was defined in the work of Mueller and Kaufmann [5] as "the set of relationships and phenomena arising from the travel and stay of individuals who aim to maintain or improve their health and well-being, provided that the destination is not their primary or permanent place of residence or work." This distinguishes health tourism from medical tourism, where the goal is to treat a specific illness, and from recreational tourism, where health improvement is a secondary rather than a primary effect.

Smith and Puczkó [6] proposed a classification of consumers into primary – those who travel exclusively for health improvement – and secondary, who include health elements in a trip with another primary purpose. The authors found that there are more secondary tourists, but primary tourists spend significantly more money on their trips. This classification has become the basis for further research and industry reports [1; 7].

Since 2013, the Global Wellness Institute has published the "Global Wellness Economy Monitor" annually [1; 2; 7]. The 2023 report highlighted a key disparity: wellness tourism accounts for 7.8% of global tourist trips but generates 18.7% of total tourism spending [7]. The Global Wellness Summit 2024 report highlighted psychological recovery, medical protocols for longevity, and the personalization of programs based on health data as leading trends [8].

Determinants of tourism demand in the U.S. following the COVID-19 pandemic were studied by the American Psychological Association [4] and Gallup [3]. The Association documented the phenomenon of "collective trauma" and the rise of chronic diseases among the middle-aged population; Gallup quantitatively measured daily stress levels. A shift in consumer demand from relaxation to psychological recovery and medical prevention was noted by Straits Research [9] and Dimension Market Research [10].

Market forecasts are provided by The Business Research Company [11] and Grand View Research [12]: according to The Business Research Company's estimates, the market size for out-of-town wellness programs will grow from $248 billion in 2025 to $399 billion in 2030 [11]. The regional structure of the U.S. is partially revealed by data from Global Growth Insights [13], which estimates the California market at approximately $30 billion, the Arizona and Colorado markets at $10 billion, and the Florida market at $20 billion.

The operational dimension of customer satisfaction with wellness programs remains overlooked in the scientific literature. Oznobishyna M. V. [14; 15], based on operational data from three travel companies (ranging from 900 to 1,200 tourists per year each), found that the main cause of complaints is the gap between customer expectations and actual experience, rather than the quality of the program itself. Systematic preparation of the client for the trip, based on the results of three documented implementations, reduces the proportion of such complaints by 57–70% [14]. This pattern is particularly significant for wellness tourism, where the client often lacks prior experience with similar programs.

Thus, industry reports detail market trends but do not provide a systematic explanation of consumer motivations, regional market logic, and the link between operational decisions made by tourism establishments and customer satisfaction. This article addresses precisely these issues.

Annual reports [1; 2; 7] show that the U.S. wellness tourism market is growing, but leave several analytically significant questions unaddressed. Specifically, the mechanisms sustaining demand growth under conditions of prolonged socioeconomic stress remain underexplored, as do the structural shifts in demand patterns attributable to the COVID-19 pandemic and the extent to which program design and communication influence client satisfaction outcomes.

Addressing these gaps carries practical implications for both service operators and regional policymakers seeking to align supply-side strategies with evolving client expectations.

To this end, the present study integrates demand-side behavioral analysis with market trend data, examining how post-pandemic shifts in consumer motivation interact with program-level variables to shape perceived outcomes. This framework allows the component analyses – consumer behavior, market dynamics, and regional development potential – to be interpreted as interconnected rather than discrete dimensions of the same phenomenon.

Materials and Methods

This descriptive-analytical study was conducted using methods of systematic analysis, synthesis, comparative analysis, and data systematization, applied across two complementary data layers: secondary industry and market data, and operational data from travel companies. The source base consists of: Global Wellness Institute reports "Global Wellness Economy Monitor" for 2023, 2024, and 2025 [1; 2; 7]; the Global Wellness Summit report "Future of Wellness 2024" [8]; the American Psychological Association study "Stress in America 2023" [4]; the Gallup Global Emotions Report 2023 [3]; analytical reviews by The Business Research Company [11], Grand View Research [12], Straits Research [9], Dimension Market Research [10], and Global Growth Insights [13]. The analytical horizon covers 2023–2026; data starting from 2019 was used to assess post-pandemic changes.

The secondary data layer was used to identify macro-level demand patterns and market dynamics, while the operational data layer served to examine micro-level factors influencing client satisfaction outcomes. Integrating these two levels allows for a more comprehensive picture: market trends establish the structural context, and company-level evidence tests their manifestation in practice.

To examine operational determinants of client satisfaction, the analysis draws on previously published empirical data derived from CRM audits, quality assessments, and post-trip surveys [14; 15], documented across three Ukrainian travel companies – Aventur Travel (Dnipro), Travel Cleopatra (Kyiv), and Visa & Family Travel (Lviv) –each serving 900 to 1,200 tourists annually, covering operational cycles of 2017–2021. Complaint and satisfaction metrics were recorded before and after the implementation of a client preparation system, providing comparative data [14].

A limitation of the study is its predominant reliance on industry sources rather than peer-reviewed academic sources. This reflects the structural characteristic of the sector: market dynamics in health tourism evolve at a pace that peer-reviewed publication cycles are generally unable to match.

Results and Discussion

Factors Driving Demand for Wellness Tourism in the U.S.

49% of American adults experience significant stress on a daily basis [3]. This figure arguably provides a more direct indication of demand for wellness travel than aggregate market projections alone. Chronic stress is poorly alleviated by rest in one’s usual environment: at home, a person remains surrounded by the same triggers – work messages, household obligations, and habitual behavioral patterns. A change of location, pace, and surroundings provides a restorative effect that a staycation cannot offer. Based on an analysis of operational data from three travel companies, Oznobishyna M. V. confirmed that the inability of habitual coping mechanisms to handle accumulated stress is the primary driver for wellness travel [14].

Digital overload intensifies this need. Americans spend more than seven hours a day in front of a screen [4], and complete disconnection from the information flow remains socially and professionally constrained for most individuals. A technology-free wellness program addresses precisely this barrier: absence from the digital realm becomes part of the program, rather than a deviation from the norm. A break from digital technology has emerged as a distinct format within the tourism offering [9].

In the post-pandemic period, consumer orientation toward wellness travel has shifted from aesthetic and recreational motivations toward explicitly health-related objectives, including sleep quality improvement, anxiety reduction, and management of ongoing physical conditions.

This shift in motivation has consequently repositioned wellness travel from a discretionary luxury to a functional health investment. Consumers increasingly approach wellness travel with outcome-oriented expectations and demonstrate a corresponding willingness to allocate greater expenditure relative to conventional tourism.

For a significant portion of the audience, primarily women with heavy household and work responsibilities, another motive is the social “permission” to focus on their own recovery [8]. Finally, there remains a largely unmet demand from diaspora communities with experiences of forced migration and psychological trauma. The American Psychological Association emphasizes that collective trauma requires specialized support formats [4]; for wellness tourism, this is an untapped niche.

Consumer Demographics

Most often, wellness trips are paid for by people aged 28 to 42 - the millennial generation. Their demand stems from burnout and the search for a balance between career demands and personal well-being [8]. When choosing a facility, this group pays attention to the authenticity of the program, whether the marketing promises are backed by real substance, and the facility’s commitment to the environment. Such consumers demonstrate a notably high sensitivity to discrepancies between marketed offerings and actual program content.

People aged 43 to 58, often called Generation X, usually turn to wellness tourism when health becomes a priority, often after changes in work or family life. They focus on long-term results and are more willing to invest in longer programs if they trust the specialists. This group makes up the core audience for medical wellness and longevity programs.

The baby boomer generation (ages 59–75) is the most financially capable category and primarily seeks rehabilitation and management of chronic conditions: joint and back pain, cardiovascular and metabolic disorders. They are the most sensitive to staff qualifications among all age groups. Generation Z (ages 22–27), with lower incomes, opts for shorter two- to three-day formats focused on mental health and spiritual practices, but returns more regularly than older groups [8]. The Global Wellness Summit, in its 2024 report, identified this audience as the primary driver of demand for programs addressing anxiety and social isolation.

Women account for 62% to 68% of all wellness tourism consumers in the U.S. [1]. The proportion of men is growing in the segments of longevity and corporate wellness programs. According to observations by Oznobishyna M. V., each of these segments has significantly different criteria for selecting a facility, and a single facility cannot serve all groups equally effectively without clear specialization [14]. Between 75% and 80% of wellness trips in the U.S. are domestic [1]; after 2020, some tourists who previously traveled to Asia and the Mediterranean did not return to their previous destinations.

To better understand how demand differs across age groups, the main consumer segments in U.S. wellness tourism are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Consumer Segmentation in Wellness Tourism (U.S.)

Age Group	Key Triggers	Priorities	Program Preferences
28–42 (Millennials)	Burnout, search for balance	Authenticity, real results, sustainability	Holistic wellness, fitness, detox, nature-based
43–58 (Generation X)	Health becomes a priority	Long-term results, trust in specialists	Medical wellness, longevity programs
59–75 (Baby Boomers)	Chronic conditions, rehabilitation	Staff qualifications, safety	Rehabilitation, chronic disease management
22–27 (Generation Z)	Mental health, self-development	Short formats, flexibility	2–3-day programs, mindfulness, spiritual practices

Service Formats and Regional Market Structure

Six formats of wellness tourism have emerged in the U.S. market. Medical and wellness tourism combines recovery with diagnostics, genetic testing, nutritional therapy, and protocols for maintaining active longevity. Canyon Ranch in Arizona and Massachusetts has included genetic testing and metabolic analysis in its standard assessment of every guest since 2021; the average cost of a trip is about $9,000 [13]. In 2017, Hyatt Hotels Corporation acquired the Miraval Group for an initial investment of $215 million, with anticipated additional investment of approximately $160 million - a decision made in the midst of pandemic restrictions [13]. The thermal and mineral springs market grew by 11.1% in 2024 [1]; Glenwood Springs in Colorado, the resorts of Arkansas, and the hot springs of New Mexico have mineral water compositions that cannot be artificially replicated.

Meditation and yoga programs often bring to mind places like the Kripalu Center for Yoga & Health in Massachusetts and the Esalen Institute in California, operating since 1962. Since 2020, silent retreats have drawn a wider audience. Disconnection from digital environments has itself become a primary program value rather than a secondary benefit.

Digital detox has turned into a separate format, where the day is built around walks in nature, simple activities, and silence rather than structured treatments. According to data from the Pinterest platform, search queries related to slow tourism among young people increased significantly in 2024 [18].

Among the trends gaining momentum: mindful time spent in nature as a therapeutic practice. The Japanese practice of shinrin-yoku, officially recognized as a therapeutic method in Japan, shows a reduction in cortisol levels after 20–30 minutes in a forest environment; American institutions are actively implementing similar programs [8]. Closely related to this is cold-water bathing - once considered marginal, it has since been integrated into standard offerings across a growing number of facilities [19].

Food wellness tourism revolves around plant-based cooking workshops, visits to organic farms, and personalized nutritional consultations. According to the International Food Information Council, 54% of Americans follow a specific diet, and the share of those who have intentionally increased their protein intake rose from 59% in 2022 to 71% in 2024 [20]. Corporate retreat programs have become a staple of HR strategies for tech companies and the financial sector; the global corporate segment shrank by 1.5% in 2024 due to the rise of remote work, yet group retreat programs remained in demand as they fulfill the need for shared physical presence [1]. Programs for psychological recovery - addressing anxiety, burnout, and post-traumatic stress - are growing the fastest; Miraval expanded these programs in March 2024 in response to real demand [13].

Collectively, these format shifts reflect a broader transition in consumer demand from passive relaxation toward outcome-oriented, evidence-informed wellness experiences.

Regionally, California's wellness market is estimated at approximately $30 billion [13]. The Esalen Institute in Big Sur and Silicon Valley tech companies form two distinct poles of demand: psychological seminars and somatic practices on one hand, and corporate and preventive programs on the other. Arizona, primarily Sedona and Scottsdale, together with Colorado, form a market of about $10 billion [13]; Scottsdale is home to leading medical and wellness facilities, while Sedona's landscapes have a documented anxiety-reducing effect. Hawaii has the longest average duration of wellness trips among all states – over ten days [1]. The Kripalu Center in Stockbridge, Massachusetts, welcomes guests and trains industry professionals, while the Berkshires and Vermont are developing farm-based programs: the combination of rural pace and regionally sourced cuisine has proven to attract a distinct and growing consumer segment. The expansion of Miraval Austin and Florida's $20 billion market indicate that demand for premium wellness programs is no longer concentrated in established destinations, but is dispersing across regions with sufficient infrastructure and consumer base [13].

The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic and Trends for 2023–2026

In 2020, the wellness tourism market shrank from $720 billion to $351 billion. $651 billion in 2022, $894 billion in 2024 - the recovery turned out to be much faster than predicted [1]. The Global Wellness Institute ranks wellness tourism among the four sectors with the highest growth rates in 2023–2024 and emphasizes: the market has not merely returned to pre-crisis levels, but has surpassed them [1]. The key reason is that the pandemic did not halt demand; it transformed it.

Demand for programs lasting ten days or more has grown significantly compared to short spa weekends [1]. Outdoor wellness formats have gained a new audience, some of whom have not returned to traditional indoor spas. The focus of inquiries has shifted: immune support and psychological support have replaced beauty and relaxation [7].

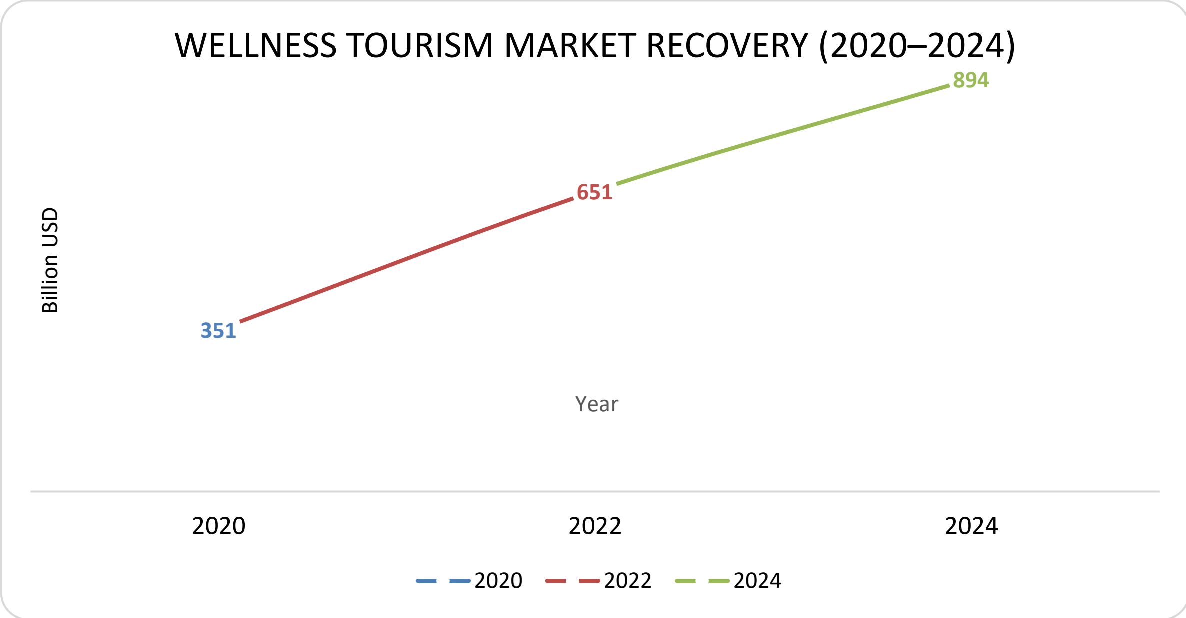

Figure 1. Recovery of the global wellness tourism market after COVID-19 (2020–2024)

After 2022, this was compounded by rising anxiety amid geopolitical instability and a shift in tourist demand from international destinations to the domestic market; North America reached 137% of its 2019 domestic wellness trip volume in 2024 [1].

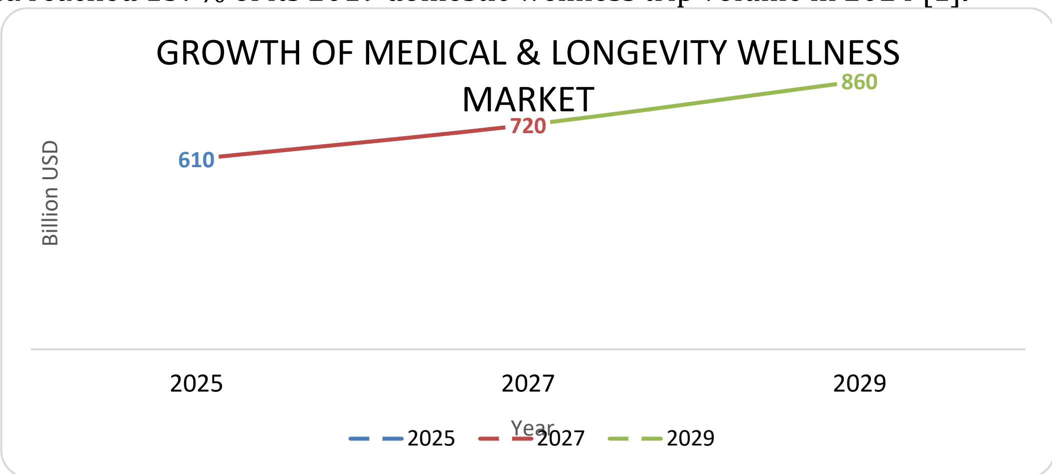

Figure 2. Growth of medical and longevity wellness segment (forecast to 2029)

The convergence of wellness and evidence-based medicine is the most notable trend of 2023–2026. Facilities that offered massages and dietary nutrition just ten years ago now include biomarker analysis, genetic testing, and nutritional therapy. The Global Wellness Institute forecasts annual growth of 10.8% in this segment through 2029; the longevity program market exceeded $610 billion in 2025 [8]. The Business Research Company forecasts that the market for out-of-town wellness programs will grow from $248 billion in 2025 to $399 billion in 2030 [11]. Personalization based on medical data has become the new standard in the high-end price segment: in March 2025, SHA Wellness Clinic launched a program that combines medical diagnostics with artificial intelligence algorithms to create personalized plans for nutrition, sleep, and stress management [9]. The cultural authenticity of programs has emerged as a competitive advantage: facilities are increasingly incorporating indigenous practices, regional herbal medicine, and local cuisine [9].

Factors Influencing Customer Satisfaction

While macro-level data illuminate demand patterns and market structure, the quality of the client experience at the operational level remains a critical determinant of market sustainability - an aspect that aggregate industry reports do not adequately capture. Observations by M. V. Oznobishyna, documented using operational data from three companies, revealed a pattern of direct relevance to wellness tourism: most customer complaints are not due to a poor program, but rather to the fact that the experience received did not meet the expectations formed prior to the trip [14]. In wellness tourism, this problem is particularly acute, as the client often has no prior experience with a detox course or meditation program and does not know what to expect.

Program personalization increases satisfaction by 34% compared to a standard package [14]. A client with clear goals before the trip is 2.4 times more likely to experience a successful outcome [7]. Staff qualifications are a basic requirement: in the high-end price segment, clients can tell the difference between a certified specialist and someone without verified qualifications. The quality of the facility's natural surroundings - the scenery, tranquility, and fresh air - directly influences the trip's evaluation, even among clients who do not explicitly state this. In the premium segment, organic and locally sourced food constitutes a baseline expectation; discrepancies between promotional materials and actual provision demonstrably undermine overall program credibility.

A systematic 60–90-minute pre-departure briefing - explaining the program's specifics, setting realistic expectations, and preparing for unexpected situations - reduces the rate of complaints due to unmet expectations by 57–70% [14]. Aventur Travel recorded a 77.78% reduction in booking errors and an increase in the share of repeat customers from 22% to 35%; Travel Cleopatra saw a 34% increase in revenue and a 57% reduction in complaints [15]. A post-trip plan and the ability to contact a specialist upon return significantly influence whether the changes achieved will be sustained and whether the customer will return. Taken together, these operational findings suggest that the long-term growth trajectory of the U.S. wellness tourism market depends not only on structural demand drivers, but equally on the capacity of service providers to manage client expectations and deliver measurable outcomes.

Economic Impact on Local Communities

A single large wellness resort provides between 500 and 800 jobs - mostly skilled positions: doctors, psychologists, nutritional therapists, and certified trainers [13]. The average wellness tourist spends about $2,847 per trip, compared to $1,290 for a regular tourist; in the premium segment, this amount reaches $7,000–$10,000 [13]. At the same time, wellness tourism places 40% less strain on infrastructure compared to mass tourism [13]: fewer people, longer stays, lower turnover. The region generates higher revenue from a smaller flow of visitors.

The economic effects of wellness tourism become clearer when key indicators are considered together; these are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Economic Impact of Wellness Tourism on Local Communities

Indicator	*Value*	*Interpretation*
Employment per resort	500–800 jobs	Primarily skilled positions (medical and wellness specialists)
Average spending per tourist	$2,847	More than double compared to mass tourism
Mass tourism spending	$1,290	Lower revenue per visitor
Premium segment spending	$7,000–$10,000	High-value niche segment
Infrastructure pressure	-40%	Lower strain due to fewer visitors and longer stays
Local sourcing	High reliance	Supports local producers and regional economy
Seasonality	More balanced flows	Reduces peak pressure on infrastructure

Long-term impact	Inflow of residents & investment	Growth in healthcare and education sectors

Local sourcing has evolved from an ancillary consideration to a substantive component of program identity. An increasing number of facilities establish partnerships with local farms, food producers, and regional brands as a means of grounding the wellness experience in its geographic context.

In destinations such as Sedona, the Berkshires, and parts of Colorado, wellness tourism generates visitor flows whose peak periods are temporally offset from those of mass tourism, thereby reducing concentrated pressure on local infrastructure.

Over time, sustained wellness tourism activity in these areas has contributed to broader regional development, including the inflow of permanent residents and targeted investment in healthcare and education infrastructure. Empirical evidence suggests that organic reputational growth has proven a more effective driver of regional demand than formally directed investment initiatives.

Conclusions

The U.S. wellness tourism market reached $120 billion in 2024, with global market size of $893.9 billion – a 13.8% increase over 2023, reflecting an average annual growth rate of 6.4% since 2019 [1]. Per capita spending on wellness in North America – $6,029 per year – is the highest in the world [2]. This trajectory reflects a structural realignment of consumer priorities rather than a cyclical market fluctuation.

The central demand-side finding is that wellness travel addresses a recovery deficit that conventional rest cannot resolve. The convergence of stress-related drivers, post-pandemic priority shifts, and the social normalization of proactive health management collectively account for the sustained growth in demand [3; 4; 14].

The market is heterogeneous in terms of audience: Millennials, Generation X, Baby Boomers, and Generation Z approach wellness tourism with different needs and varying criteria for choosing a facility [1; 8]. Women make up the majority of consumers, though the male audience is growing in the longevity and corporate wellness segments. A single facility cannot effectively satisfy all groups equally without clear specialization [14].

Regionally, the market is clearly differentiated: California leads in total volume ($30 billion), Arizona and Colorado specialize in medical and spiritual wellness, Hawaii stands out for the longest duration of stays, and New England is developing nature-based and agritourism wellness [13]. Each region has turned specific natural and cultural resources into a competitive advantage.

The post-pandemic period produced lasting structural changes in demand: shorter spa formats declined in relative share, longer immersive stays became prevalent, and outdoor and mental health-oriented programs emerged as primary rather than supplementary offerings.

A separate finding with practical significance: customer satisfaction with wellness programs depends significantly on how the facility prepares the guest for the trip. A 60–90-minute pre-trip orientation reduces the rate of complaints due to unmet expectations by 57–70% [14]. Program personalization increases satisfaction by 34% [14], and having clear goals before the trip increases the likelihood of experiencing a successful outcome by 2.4 times [7]. These relationships are predictable and reproducible, making them relevant for all wellness tourism facilities, regardless of size or price segment.

Future research would benefit from examining trauma-informed wellness demand among diaspora communities, conducting controlled comparisons of personalized versus standardized program outcomes, and assessing the role of AI-driven health data in consumer decision-making within the wellness tourism sector.

Author's Original Contribution

What was developed. This study introduces two interrelated conceptual tools developed by the author on the basis of operational data from three Ukrainian travel companies (2017–2021). The first is the Expectation Alignment Framework – a model identifying the gap between pre-trip client expectations and actual program experience as the primary structural driver of complaints in wellness tourism, distinct from program quality deficiencies. The second is the Operational Satisfaction Model – a causal framework linking the implementation of a structured pre-departure preparation session to measurable reductions in dissatisfaction, complaint rates, and documentation errors. Both tools are operationalized through the CXC-360 Visitor Preparation Framework, a structured 60–90-minute pre-departure methodology with a 22-point checklist and standardized staff communication scripts.

Novelty. Existing wellness tourism research examines demand patterns, consumer segmentation, and program formats, but does not address the operational stage between booking and arrival as a determinant of satisfaction outcomes. The contribution of this study is to demonstrate, through multi-company comparative data, that pre-departure preparation functions as a measurable quality management lever – one that is both low-cost and reproducible across different organizational contexts.

How it differs from a standard briefing. Standard pre-departure client communication in travel agencies covers logistics, documentation, and insurance. The CXC-360 framework additionally incorporates wellness-specific expectation calibration: the client is prepared for what a detox course, silent retreat, or medical protocol will actually feel like, not just what it will include. This distinction is analytically significant because unmet expectations – not poor service delivery – were identified as the dominant complaint category across all three agencies studied.

Practical significance. The implementation of the CXC-360 framework produced the following outcomes across three independent agencies: complaints due to unmet expectations decreased by 57–70%; booking and documentation errors fell from 6.3% to 1.4% of total bookings at one agency; the share of repeat clients increased from 21–25% to 35–44%. These results were consistent across agencies operating in different Ukrainian cities, indicating the methodology is not context-dependent and can be transferred to wellness tourism operators in other markets. The model is particularly applicable in formats where clients lack prior experience – detox programs, medical wellness protocols, silent retreats – and where expectation misalignment risk is highest.

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