

Research Exploration on the Emotional Healing Value of Wellness Tourism from a Silver Economy Perspective

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Abstract: With the continuous deepening of the aging population, the silver economy has become a driving force for the economic restructuring and upgrading of China. Wellness tourism is based on the new silver economy and, with the addition of recreational wellness and mental health support, has moved beyond traditional elderly care models. At present, older adults are often in a bad mood, lonely and anxious; therefore, poor mental health is one of the reasons why their lives are not good. This paper will examine the main emotional healing functions of wellness tourism in the background of the development of the silver economy, investigate how it can improve the mental health of older people, analyze the mechanism through which they reduce emotional stress and gain social support, identify existing deficiencies in the current emotional care services for older people in silver wellness tourism, and put forward relevant improvement suggestions. The purpose of this study is to demonstrate the psychological service value of wellness tourism, promote high-quality development of the silver wellness industry, and provide theoretical basis and practical suggestions for improving the mental health and quality of life for older people.

Keywords: Silver Economy; Wellness Tourism; Emotional Healing; Elderly Mental Health; Senior Care Industry

1. Introduction

China's aging population is increasing steadily and the number of older people is continuously rising. With the changes in consumption, health and spiritual needs of this group of people, a considerable silver economy market has appeared. The old model of caring for elderly people in China has been concerned with material and physical needs but ignored psychological well-being. As a result of issues

such as social isolation, changes in lifestyle, and living alone after retirement, most older people have experienced various levels of negative emotions and are facing more problems with their mental health. Wellness tourism combines several functions, such as health maintenance, leisure travel, mental support and cultural experience; thus, it is a new type of elderly care system that meets the all-around needs of older adults and will drive the upgrading of the silver economy. Wellness tourism aims to provide people with good health through immersion and various types of care. Through nature, leisure activities and social interaction, it can help reduce negative emotions and promote the development of healthy emotions and good mental health. In the background of the professional and high-quality development of the silver economy, a comprehensive exploration of the emotional healing value of wellness tourism, its mechanisms and development problems should be carried out to improve elderly care services, diversify economic forms and enhance the mental health of older adults.

2. The Intrinsic Connection Between Wellness Tourism and Emotional

The basic concept of the Silver Economy is people-centric, and therefore, not only basic material needs for older adults will be met but also high-quality spiritual care will be provided. Emotional health is required for the good life of older people and, therefore, will help them live happily and healthily. Wellness tourism is a new-era industry of the silver economy and has always aligned with older people's demand for emotional healing; thus, it will also prosper. From the demand side, after leaving the pressure of work life, older people may be in a depressed mood, feel isolated and anxious. Traditional home-based care cannot meet the need for emotional release, spiritual nourishment and socialisation of older adults. Wellness tourism can use the natural environment, healing activities and all sorts of social scenes to help

people calm their emotions and satisfy their need for spirit. In addition to the conventional health status of the body, the supply side has also extended to mental and emotional health, and therefore emotional therapy and psychological care have been added to the list of value-added services. Wellness tourism is not a type of sight-seeing tour but rather an all-round life that respects the needs of older people. In the three dimensions of environmental healing, activity-based recovery and social participation, it can effectively alleviate people's negative emotions and create a happy state; thus, it has become a high-quality industry that benefits society and the economy.

3. The Core Value of Health and Wellness Tourism in Emotional Healing for the Elderly Population

3.1 Natural Environmental Immersion Alleviates Emotional Anxiety and Psychological Stress

Most of the wellness tourism areas have good ecological conditions, fresh air and a pleasant climate; they are generally in the countryside, mountains and forests, hot spring areas, etc., far from the noise and restrictions of urban life. Allowing the old people to experience nature will help them relax physically and mentally. Older adults living at home for a long time often have fewer life experiences and a narrow view of the world; thus, they may develop rigid thinking patterns and experience negative emotions such as anxiety, irritability and depression. The natural environment of wellness tourism can reduce stress on the nerves and regulate the body and mind; beautiful scenery and a good climate are pleasant for us, so we can reduce psychological tension and stress, improve emotional health physically, help older people relieve negative emotions, and achieve a state of relaxation in mind and body.

3.2 Multi-dimensional Experiential Empowerment Reshapes Positive Psychological Cognition

Wellness tourism has a variety of forms, including health therapy, cultural experience, leisure sports and handicrafts, etc., which can break the monotony of daily life for older people and enhance their spiritual life and positive psychological state. Some older people are in a bad mood after retirement and feel that they are

no longer useful. However, low-intensity activities in wellness tourism, such as Tai Chi therapy, traditional Chinese medicine treatment, folk culture experience, wellness education, etc., are suitable for the physical condition of older adults. To take part in these activities, older people will feel a sense of accomplishment and excitement; thus, they no longer feel that life after retirement is empty. In addition, the relaxed pace of wellness tourism allows older people to relax after a long day's work, take good care of their health, live happily, and thus improve their quality of life.

3.3 Creating Social Scenarios to Alleviate Feelings of Loneliness and Negativity

Loneliness is the most common negative emotion among older people, and the reasons and problems of this are the empty nest syndrome, living alone, and a small number of friends. Wellness tourism provides older people with an open and relaxed social environment; most of the participants are the same age and have the same life views, so it is easier for them to communicate. Through group stays, wellness activities and other forms of socialisation, older adults can leave the loneliness of life at home, increase their social circles, stay in touch with others more often, and reduce negative emotions such as loneliness and boredom. Stable peer social relationships give people a sense of belonging and happiness, so they are good for emotional health.

4. Existing Issues in the Development of Emotional Wellness Services for Silver-Haired Health and Wellness Tourism

4.1 Severe Product Homogenization and Insufficient Targeting in Emotional Healing

China's senior wellness tourism market is growing rapidly, but most cultural and tourism enterprises have not formed an excellent operation system and are therefore highly uniform. Most of the wellness tourism services offered are physical in nature, such as hot spring therapy, ecological tours and basic physiotherapy; they do not address the basic emotional healing needs of older tourists, and special products for psychological counselling, emotional support and spiritual well-being are also missing. Currently, most of the products are at the basic level of "tourism plus simple wellness" and do not offer personalised

therapeutic services according to the emotional characteristics and psychological needs of older adults; thus, they fail to provide in-depth emotional healing and cannot meet the demand for high-quality senior care services.

4.2 Shortage of Professional Service Personnel and Weak Professionalism in Therapeutic Services

Emotional healing-oriented wellness tourism needs professional support from people who are skilled in wellness care, psychology and elderly services, but currently, there is a lack of such specialists in the industry. Most practitioners in this area have only basic reception and nursing skills and lack professional abilities in elderly psychological counselling, emotional regulation and psychological companionship. Therefore, it cannot be known whether the older person is happy or unhappy at present. In addition, there is no all-encompassing talent development and assessment system in the industry, and thus the professional healing service capacity to fully utilize the value of emotional healing in wellness tourism is constrained.

4.3 Low Degree of Industrial Integration and an Incomplete Integrated Physical-Mental Wellness System

At present, there is a lack of harmony between the physical health and psychological recovery of the elderly in China; most wellness programs emphasize physical health over mental health and have failed to create an all-round physical and mental health service system. The three main areas are not well connected, and there is no regular system or application for emotional recovery services, standards, etc. Emotional healing is frequently added as an optional extra service rather than included in the main wellness plan, so it loses some relevance to wellness tourism and cannot be standardised or professionally managed in a particular way.

5. Pathways for Enhancing the Emotional Healing Value of Wellness Tourism in the Silver Economy

5.1 Deeply Explore Niche Market Demands to Develop a Distinctive Therapeutic and Wellness Product Portfolio

To meet the various emotional needs of older people, we will strengthen the improvement and differentiation of wellness tourism products and

no longer follow a one-size-fits-all model. Targeting different psychological problems in various groups, such as loneliness and anxiety among empty-nest seniors, a loss of purpose among retired people, and emotional sensitivity in older adults, we have developed personalised emotional healing products and created a diversified product line that includes natural therapy, social participation programmes, cultural activities, mental health care services, etc. With the help of resources such as traditional Chinese medicine-based wellness care, eco-friendly residential programmes and cultural immersion experiences, we have added special services, such as "wellness + psychological companionship" and "residential stay + emotional support", to strengthen the emotional healing power of our services and meet the mental health needs of older adults all the time.

5.2 Strengthen Talent Development and Establish a Professional Service Team

Build an all-round training system for wellness and therapeutic care staff, add the essentials of geriatric psychology, emotional counselling techniques and elderly service etiquette to the main training plan to improve their psychological service abilities. Universities and vocational schools should be encouraged to set up special majors in the field of wellness tourism and geriatric psychological services to cultivate multi-disciplinary talents. In addition, we will establish an industry evaluation and certification system to standardise service requirements and set up a special service team with combined expertise in wellness nursing and psychological healing to provide strong talent support for the implementation of emotional therapy services in wellness tourism.

5.3 Deepen Industrial Integration and Improve the Integrated Physical-Mental Wellness System

Promote the in-depth integration of the wellness industry, the tourism industry and the psychological service industry to build an integrated service model of "physical wellness + emotional healing", and add services such as emotional assessment, emotional guidance, psychological support, spiritual healing and so on to the core service framework of wellness tourism, creating an all-encompassing system that covers physical and mental evaluation,

personalised plan development, continuous therapeutic accompaniment, etc. Digital technology can be used to build an emotional monitoring and service platform for older people travelling abroad, detect changes in their emotions accurately, adjust the plan of therapeutic services flexibly, and thus improve the emotional healing effect of wellness tourism.

6. Conclusion

With the development of the silver economy in recent years, wellness tourism has expanded beyond the former scope of physical health and leisure. Given that it has good emotional healing properties, it is now required in the construction of modern elderly care and the improvement of the elderly care service system. Through contact with nature and various experiences, socialising, etc., wellness tourism can help reduce the negative emotions of older adults, such as anxiety, loneliness and depression, boost their spirits, and thus improve their mental health. At present, the problems are that the products are too similar, there are not enough specialized professionals, and there is a lack of synergy between physical and mental health. In the future, we need to increase our efforts to meet the high-quality development requirements of the silver economy through product innovation, talent cultivation and industrial synergy. This will continue to improve the framework of

emotional healing services, maximise the social and economic value of wellness tourism, drive the transformation of the industry from isolated physiological care to holistic physical-mental wellness, and ultimately help build an active aging society.

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