

# An Analysis of the Development of Elderly Wellness Tourism Market

## Taking Shandong Province as an Example

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**Abstract**—Wellness tourism is the organic combination of tourism and health. It has a great effect on health promotion. The elderly is a huge source of wellness tourism, and its wellness tourism market has great potential. This article explores the keeping in good health in the elderly tourism market supply, demand status and characteristics of surrounding travel motivation, core appeal, expense, the condition of tourism project selection and participation in various analyses. It puts forward some countermeasures to the elderly wellness tourism development in China, so as to provide the basis for the elderly wellness tourism product design and using for reference.

**Keywords**—Wellness tourism; The elderly wellness tourism market; Development countermeasures of wellness tourism

### I. INTRODUCTION

Tourism is beneficial to people's physical and mental health. It is an out-of-town leisure activity combining "body" with "heart". The harmonious movement of tourism is the best health and fitness activities with hand, foot, brain combined with the whole heart. Wellness tourism is a kind of tourism with the main purpose of promoting physical health, which is deeply loved by the elderly. China has entered an aging society, and the aging rate is extremely rapid with the dramatically increasing absolute number of the elderly population, therefore, the elderly tourism market and tourism consumption potential are huge. How to develop elderly wellness tourism is of great practical significance to the health promotion of the elderly.

### II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Wellness tourism is the sum of all kinds of relationships and phenomena caused by the spatial movement of health as the main demand motivation. It is a kind of tourism activity combining traditional concept of health and modern leisure [1]. It is a kind of "health". The theme of leisure tourism is the wellness tourism that highlights the characteristics of health care.

Tourism is conducive to people's physical and mental health, is a combination of "body" and "heart" of off-site leisure activities, and it can give tourists a free and pleasant experience of physical and mental freedom. Tourism activities can achieve the ideal effect of healing and health, and it is not only the harmonious movement of the hands, feet, and brain

combined with the whole body, but also the best health and wellness activity. Especially for the elderly, it is also possible to eliminate sub-health status through tourism activities [2]. Through long-term observations, Parlett et al. quantitatively analyzed the relationship between outdoor leisure activities and health and longevity of the elderly [3]. Dimauro et al. believes that leisure and health care can help the elderly overcome depression, improve their health, and prolong their lives [4]. Tourism has a positive effect on the elderly. There are also research results showing that travel can help the elderly reduce the risk of 30% to 40% of appliance daily life disability and daily living self-care ability, avoid the risk of 50% to 60% of cognitive dysfunction, reduce 25% to 40% of self-assessments on poor life satisfaction, loneliness, and feeling about non-use. At the same time, traveling can reduce the risk of 3-year mortality by 19% to 36%. It can be seen that tourism affects the elderly. The beneficial effects of longevity and health are direct, and can improve the health level while pleasing body and mind, effectively improving the living quality and quality of life of the elderly [5].

The aging of China's population is developing at an unprecedented rate and the elderly population is rapidly increasing. In responding to the challenge that this large aging group brings to Chinese society, old age health is undoubtedly an important content [6-7], because the health status of the elderly has multiple effects on the elderly, including the way of cares for the elderly, mode of living and medical care [8], which affect all aspects of society. Healthy aging is the key to alleviate the pressure of population aging [9]. The health of the elderly has become the focus of attention of the whole society. Health is the first appeal of the elderly, and the beneficial effects of tourism on the health and longevity of the elderly are direct. While enjoying physical and mental health, it can improve the health level and effectively improve the living quality and quality of life of the elderly [10-11]. At the same time, the elderly group has great consumption power and demand [12-13] and a strong desire to travel, [14] and it's also one of the major tourism consumer groups that cannot be ignored. According to their physical condition, they are more suitable for wellness tourism [15].

As a representative province of an aging society, there is a large proportion of the elderly and a huge pressure of the elderly care in Shandong Province. The elderly are a high-risk

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group of various chronic diseases and face many health problems, which will directly or indirectly affect their quality of life and happiness index. Taking Shandong Province as an example, this article researched and analyzed the elderly wellness tourism market, and designed and developed wellness tourism products from the perspective of health promotion. It can not only enriches the theoretical system of wellness tourism research, but also has the practical significance of promoting the sustainable development of the elderly tourism industry, and at the same time enriches the supply-side products for the elderly care and tourism.

### III. METHOD

In this study, Jinan City, Qingdao City, and Yantai City, the representative cities for elderly wellness tourism in Shandong Province, were selected as survey cities. 750 questionnaires were distributed between April and June 2017, and 707 valid questionnaires were retrieved, which investigated the motives, core demands, expenditures, selection and participation of tourism projects of elderly people. In addition, 21 tourism companies and elderly health management companies in Jinan, Yantai, and Qingdao with better economic conditions in Shandong Province were selected for more in-depth interviews. The interviews included the market conditions, the forecast and types and projects of wellness tourism and so on. After the integration analysis of the interviews' content, the current situation and existing problems of wellness tourism for the elderly in Shandong Province were found out from another perspective.

### IV. RESULT

#### *A. The Awareness Rate of Wellness Tourism for the Elderly Is Not High, The Participation Is Small but the Willingness to Participate Is Strong.*

As a new type of tourism, fewer elderly people (76.9%) know about wellness tourism. The vast majority of elderly people (88.1%) do not experience it, indicating that the development of wellness tourism is still in its infancy in China, and this has a certain relationship with wellness tourism products. However, 58% older people have a stronger attitude towards learning health knowledge and skills. There are fewer uninterested people (4%). 31% elderly people who take a "general" attitude toward participating have a wait-and-see attitude. If there are good wellness tourism products, they are also very willing to participate. This shows that older people are more willing to participate in wellness tourism, the reason why some are reluctant to participate in wellness tourism for the elderly, is mainly that they are skeptical about whether such activities can achieve the goal of health care. Besides, there are some objective reasons like high cost or physical conditions making them can't come.

#### *B. Diversified Motives for Wellness Tourism for the Elderly, Affected by Education and Health Status*

The motives for the elderly to participate in wellness tourism are mainly longevity (24%), relaxation (19.2%), physical fitness (17.7%), self-cultivation (16.3%), rehabilitation (10.2%), etc., which shows a variety of characteristics. Older people pay

attention to their own health and hope to come through longevity and self-cultivation and physical fitness through wellness tourism. The motivation of wellness tourism for elderly people with different educational backgrounds is evenly distributed, and the difference is not obvious. In addition, highly educated seniors have a higher demand for "relaxation", indicating that they like to take the initiative and relaxed health care. At the same time, the survey found that the physical health of the elderly has a certain influence on their wellness tourism motivation. Older people with poor physical condition are mainly motivated by health promotion, rehabilitation and longevity, etc.; and those with better physical conditions are mainly motivated by longevity, self-cultivation, relaxation, and return to nature. Regardless of physical health, longevity is the most important motive for the elderly to participate in wellness tourism. Other wellness tourism motives present certain differences according to different health conditions.

#### *C. The Willingness of the Elderly to Consume Wellness Tourism Is Conservative, Which is Significantly Related to Disposable Income*

The wellness tourism cost that can be accepted is not high, mainly below 4,000 yuan. The majority of the urban elderly have a stable salary, and many children will also give a certain amount of funding. Most elderly people have strong spending power and are willing to spend money for their own needs. However, in the survey, it was found that many elderly people are not willing to spend much on travel costs because they have been deeply rooted in the poverty-stricken life for a longer period of time, and now they are deeply entrenched in the concept of a hardworking family. Therefore, how to stimulate more elderly people to participate in tourism and participate in wellness tourism that is conducive to physical and mental health needs scientific guidance and some inspiring methods. The use of SPSS 20 analysis (Table I) found that disposable income and wellness tourism consumption levels are significantly related at the 0.01 level (bilateral), which means that the consumer's economic income is closely related to the level of tourism consumption, that means, the higher disposable income they have, the higher consumption level of the wellness tourism he can accept. At present, the elderly with higher income levels are an important source of wellness tourism.

#### *D. The Elderly Prefer Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) Health Products and a Beautiful Natural Environment*

The choice of health care projects was mainly "TCM health, physical and mental conditioning" and "Medicine, diet and health feast", followed by "Health Exercises" and "Health Talks". It can be seen that the elderly are more interested in traditional TCM health and diet in China. This is the first aspect that should be considered in the design of wellness tourism products. The wellness tourism environment favored by the elderly is mainly rural wellness tourism, followed by seashore wellness tourism and hot spring wellness tourism. This shows that older people prefer idyllic scenery, preferring to pristine natural environments, and not favoring the bustle of

cities, and the relatively low choice of mountain wellness tourism may be inextricably linked to their physical condition.

TABLE I. CORRELATION ANALYSIS OF THE ELDERLY DISPOSABLE INCOME AND THE CONSUMPTION LEVEL OF WELLNESS TOURISM

		Disposable income	Acceptable level of health tourism consumption
disposable income	Pearson correlation	1	.240**
	significance(bilateral)		.000
	N	707	707
consumption level of wellness tourism	Pearson correlation	.240**	1
	significance(bilateral)	.000	
	N	707	707

\*\* . Significant correlation at .01 level (bilateral)

#### *E. Wellness Tourism Products Are Relatively Monotonous and Their Themes Are More Concentrated*

In interviews with travel agencies and health management companies, we found that in the supply of wellness tourism products, the proportion of hot springs and forest health care is relatively high, and people's perception and acceptance are higher; health bases are gradually being recognized by the public, but some of the so-called "health bases" are mostly scenic spots. With a bit of local specialties, their wellness tourism products, health products, and health activities are relatively simple. Tourists only live at the base for a period of time. There is no corresponding design of more products with health connotation. In addition, the theme of wellness tourism includes healthy meals, religious culture, checking physical conditions, and learning about the culture of life, discussing longevity tips with centenarians, Tai Chi sports, and hot springs. Among them, eating healthy meals is the highest frequency of wellness tourism products, followed by physical examination and sports Tai Chi; while the proportion of cultural health topics is relatively small, which may be related to the low education level of this generation of old people (the subject of wellness tourism). At the same time, we measured the forecast of the health product prospects of travel agencies and health management companies. The average score of 21 travel agencies and health management companies on the outlook of health products was 4.2 points. This shows that most travel agencies and health management companies are very optimistic about the development prospects of wellness tourism products, indicating that the design of wellness tourism products is implementable.

Based on the results of the above research and analysis, this study has targeted the development of elderly wellness tourism market in Shandong Province from the perspective of both the enterprise and the government.

### V. DISCUSSION

#### *A. Tourism and Related Enterprises' Wellness Tourism Development Countermeasures*

1) *Define core product features and positioning:* The core function and positioning of wellness tourism products is to promote health, and product design must closely focus on this

core. The author believes that currently available wellness tourism products are: Firstly, relying on natural beauty or tourism landscape design wellness tourism base, this type of base wellness tourism design resources are rich, and can be used as the main wellness tourism products. From the perspective of the connotation of old-age health care, we design a series of old-age tourism products from various aspects such as food, shelter, entertainment, participation and experience, making the old people live and study for a certain period of time at this base. The second is relying on the "Specialty Collection of Tourists at Sunset" train, and designing the "Specialty Collection of Sunsets" as a supplementary product. You can make full use of the long and precious time on the trains of the old people to carry out certain old-age tourism activities, such as designing some larger screens, playing some brand-name health programs, and eating or talking with experts such as Chinese medicine or sports to explain some of the knowledge.

2) *Multiply construct elderly wellness tourism base:* Paying attention to the health of the elderly is the common responsibility of the whole society. Therefore, the establishment of a wellness tourism base requires multiple parties to participate in planning, development and construction in order to form a joint and high-quality accomplishment of this great goal. In this process, the government is required to take the lead, local tourism departments should take the guide, tourism companies or pension enterprises should be the mainstay, and tourism areas should assist. we should rely on natural beauty or tourist attractions, select appropriate regions to plan and design, and gradually promote and improve it, eventually form several well-developed wellness tourism bases with distinctive features, significant elderly care functions, and strong health culture in Shandong province, which will play a leading role in demonstrating and promoting the wellness tourism in Shandong to develop rapidly.

3) *Develop and lay out of elderly wellness tourism routes:* Shandong Province boasts abundant wellness tourism resources. It is not necessary to stick to a small area to create wellness tourism bases. It is also possible to develop and lay out several high-quality wellness tourism routes. Its principle is outstanding characteristics and a clear orientation. For example, a) Ring peninsula coastline wellness tourism route: Rizhao - Qingdao - Weihai - Yantai - Weifang - Dongying, around the Shandong Peninsula, every city has a wellness tourism base to support .you can stay in each city for a few days and in turn participate in the experience of marine culture and health culture in these coastal cities. You can taste delicious seafood and participate in suitable marine tourism projects. b) Western Water Culture and Health Tour: Weishan Lake (Zaozhuang) - Grand Canal (Jining) - Liaocheng, Shuicheng City, using water as a medium, boat on water, pick lotus root and enjoy the local fish feast. c) The Midwest Culture of Confucianism and Culture (One mountain, one water, one sage): Taishan - Qufu - Jinan - Laiwu, you can enjoy the sight of Mountain Tai ,taste the "Three Beauties", walk down the sage footprints to study Confucius health

culture, enjoy spring water and travel at Daming Lake to experience a spring feast ,and walk through a snow-covered lake.d) Central Qi Culture and Health Tour: Zibo - Weifang - Linyi, stroll around Zhoucun Ancient Street, learn pottery making, enter Yangjiabu to learn woodcraft, fly kites, and tour the mountains and lakes of Yimeng and experience the red culture. According to the wellness tourism resources in different cities and neighboring cities in Shandong Province, the design and development will gradually cultivate several high-quality wellness tourism brands, form the characteristics of Shandong Province' wellness tourism, and promote the rapid development of wellness tourism in Shandong.

4) *Actively carry out brand promotion and marketing innovation:* The brand promotion and marketing objects of the health tourism product are divided into two parts. The first is for the elderly themselves. They are the subject of health tourism and participate in the experience. According to the characteristics of the use of the elderly media, they choose the media for health tourism information and advertising; elderly people are most concerned about the physical safety of the tourism process, and they must emphasize the problem of being equipped with the doctors accompanying the team; most elderly people do not understand health tourism and need to clearly describe the features and functions of health tourism and attract older people to join in. The second is the promotion and marketing of the children of the elderly. The children of the elderly are often the burden and decision-makers of the elderly's health tourism. The safety of activities, the care of the elderly, and the value of the activities themselves should be outstanding. The general culture of their children is at a higher level, it is necessary to learn more about the connotation of rich activities and allow them to introduce their products to their parents in more detail, so as to improve the efficiency of promotion and marketing.

5) *Prevent the market risk of elderly tourism:* The elderly are most concerned about health problems whether themselves or their families, or organizers. Wellness tourism also needs to guard against the market risks of elderly tourism. First of all, for the old people participating in elderly care and tourism to carry out pre-tournament health risks, we must ask the elderly to carry out physical examinations before the visit, to find out the basic health of old people, so that in the course of tourism activities, we can arrange the type of activities according to the physical condition of the elderly as the team's monitoring focus of the medical staff. Secondly, wellness tourism activities must be arranged with the team doctors or medical staff. Wellness tourism activities need the medical staff of the team who know the health care knowledge and skills. This will improve the effect and quality of guiding elderly health activities. Wellness tourism itself is a joyful physical and mental health activity. Therefore, according to the differences in the specific health conditions of the elderly, different health activities can be arranged in different ways: For elderly people who are in very good physical condition, they can have some joyful activities, which can adjust their moods. As for some elderly people with certain chronic diseases, prevention of disease can be the main focus, focusing on learning and

guidance from the perspective of diet, , exercise, health care, etc.; Those elderly people who have chronic diseases with mild sequelae can rely mainly on rehabilitation training and guidance.

#### *B. Government Tourism Administration Department Wellness Tourism Development Countermeasures*

1) *Rationally plan and utilize the existing old-age resources:* Carry out census statistics of existing health resources, a comprehensive analysis of its health value, as far as possible to make the most of its current role, to further improve. However, it must be remembered that we should not superfluous and respect the reality. We can rationally and appropriately plan lightly so that existing tourism resources can play a potential health-care function. For example, tangible resources such as green mountains and blue waters, ocean lakes, hot spring forests, spring water canals, and ecological agricultural bases must be used reasonably and fully to maximize their role in wellness tourism. Shandong Province is a culturally-prosperous province, it's also a big province of health and old-age care. It is necessary to dig out and develop humanistic health resources, such as the Confucian health culture, traditional Chinese medicine health culture, filial piety culture, Shandong cuisine culture, marine health culture, etc. These valuable resources for health care and old-age care must be inherited, developed, carried forward, and contribute to wellness tourism.

2) *Improve the construction of tourism infrastructure:* In view of the special nature of the group's participation and purpose of wellness tourism activities, the requirements for the infrastructure of the wellness tourism base are higher. The elderly are the mainstay of the wellness tourism population. The existing tourism facilities need to be further improved according to the "adequate ageing" ,that means it should be completed or supplemented to meet the needs of the elderly in terms of physiology, life, and safety, especially for the elderly travel. For example, the staircase of the place of residence should be replaced by an elevator. Even if the floor is not high or the steps are not large, the non-slip design must be carried out, and at the same time, there must be a strong handrail. The room also has a soft and low light design at night, which is convenient for the elderly to get up at night. The bathroom lights should be eye-catching, the floor should put non-slip mats; toilets should have warm water, etc., to facilitate the elderly grooming; room, bathroom must have easy- reach, easy- use call facilities; the font size of the text logo of living locations should be large, clear , Color eye-catching, etc.; where they may need to fill out forms should have presbyopic glasses, magnifying glasses, it is best to have someone guide to fill in or help fill in; the halls and hallways should have non-slip design, and so on. Tourism and transportation should take into account the special characteristics of the elderly's decline in physical skills. For example, the chassis to get on and off the car should be low, the steps to get on and off the car should not be too high, and the car should be able to provide hot water, preferably with a bathroom. In short, the infrastructure of wellness tourism must be further improved or

additional construction. It is necessary for the government tourism authority to issue relevant requirements or guidance to complete this work.

3) *Give policy support and preferential support:* Wellness tourism is a relatively new form of tourism. It is currently still in a process of exploration. However, it is a top priority for the health and quality of life of every old person in every society. It requires governments at all levels to issue relevant policies to support and give substantial benefits. For example, support for preferential policies related to the land and construction and development of wellness tourism bases, support for preferential policies for the operation of health and tourism bases, and policy guidance and support for the cultivation of wellness tourism talents, etc., so as to make this seedling of wellness tourism survive, grow up, and even thrive, benefit the elderly and contribute to the rapid development of an aging society.

#### VI. CONCLUSION

Health is the first task of the elderly people. The elderly have higher willingness for wellness tourism, and the majority of the old man also has a certain ability of travel expenses, but wellness tourism product suitable for the old people's is unitary, as well as the connotation of wellness tourism product is thin. The travel and health management company, and the government department in charge of tourism should take high awareness of the problems, actively developing wellness tourism market, designing suitable and distinctive wellness tourism products for the elderly, so as to meet the needs of the elderly to develop tourism products, to better promote the health of the elderly to improve the quality of life.

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