

# Motivations and Segmentation of Young Wellness Tourists in Chengdu: A Case Study in the Post-COVID-19 Era

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## Abstract

This study explores the push and pull motivations and preferences of young wellness tourists in Chengdu, focusing on their travel motivations, satisfaction levels, and future intentions. The research collected data through a questionnaire survey, with a sample size of 445 respondents. Quantitative research methods, including factor analysis, cluster analysis, and t-test were employed to analyze the data. The findings reveal that the motivations of young wellness tourists can be categorized into four key factors: “Social, Cultural, and Environmental Wellness”, “Personal Well-being and Fitness”, “Service and Facility-Related Wellness”, and “Escape”. Cluster analysis identified two distinct clusters within the sample. Significant differences were observed between the two clusters in terms of overall satisfaction and future intentions. The results of this study provide valuable insights into the motivations and preferences of young wellness tourists in Chengdu.

**Keywords:** Wellness Tourism, Youth Tourists, Motivation, Market Segmentation, Satisfaction and Future Intention

## Introduction

Wellness tourism, defined as travel aimed at enhancing personal well-being, has been experiencing rapid growth in recent years, becoming a popular trend among travelers seeking relaxation, rejuvenation, and overall well-being. However, the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic had a profound impact on the industry, disrupting travel plans and leading to the closure of wellness hotels, resorts, and destinations due to the high risk of virus transmission during wellness treatments and activities (GWI, 2021). The consequences were far-reaching, resulting in a significant decline in the wellness economy, plummeting from \$720 billion in 2019 to \$436 billion in 2020, along with a sharp decrease in wellness trips from 936 million to 601 million (GWI, 2021).

The pandemic did not only affect the industry’s economic aspects but also significantly influenced tourists’ travel psychology and preferences. With travel restrictions and safety concerns, travelers’ intentions and needs underwent shifts during the pandemic. Tourists started prioritizing destinations that offered a sense of safety and seclusion, leading to an increased interest in non-mass regions and a preference for unique experiences that were not overcrowded (Rogerson & Rogerson, 2021). Almeida and Silva (2020) pointed out that in the post-COVID-19 era, tourists may increasingly

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seek places with a focus on social and environmental sustainability, closer proximity to nature, and accommodations provided by small hotel units and resorts that offer a more personalized and familiar approach.

The stringent lockdown measures and movement restrictions implemented during the pandemic, particularly in China, exerted unparalleled strain on economic activities, public well-being, and commercial enterprises (Lu et al., 2020). Prolonged periods of residing in high-stress, constrained settings led to heightened physical and mental fatigue, fostering a heightened recognition of the significance of both physical and psychological health. Consequently, a discernible inclination has emerged toward practices centered on relaxation, revitalization, and the holistic preservation of overall well-being (Tran & Silverstri-Elmore, 2021).

As the industry looks towards recovery, there is an opportunity for businesses in wellness tourism to adapt their offerings to meet the changing demands and preferences of tourists. Ensuring health and safety measures are in place to provide a secure environment for guests remains paramount (Lu et al., 2020). Additionally, emphasizing the benefits of natural and secluded locations, and promoting sustainable practices, will likely attract more travelers seeking rejuvenation and unique experiences in the post-pandemic era.

In this context, youth travelers play a significant role in the wellness tourism segment, driven by various factors such as changing socio-economic conditions and increased leisure time (Khoshpakyants & Vidishcheva, 2010; Saikia, 2018). Young tourists are known to travel more frequently, explore off-the-beaten-path destinations, and stay for longer durations (UNWTO & WYSE Travel Confederation, 2011). As they transition from youth to adulthood, they become an emerging market segment for wellness services (Hosker et al., 2019). In recent years, the spa industry, in particular, has witnessed a rise in young individuals seeking wellness experiences (Hanks & Mattila, 2011). Moreover, young people are actively interested in weight management, seeking information on healthy eating and weight loss strategies (Razak et al., 2020). However, there is a lack of differentiation between young tourists and the general tourist population, limiting our understanding of their specific needs and preferences within the wellness tourism context (Saikia, 2018).

Wellness tourism, being a niche market within special interest tourism, faces challenges in identifying consistent travel motivators due to its relatively short research history (Lee & Kim, 2023). Market segmentation, a crucial marketing tool, is underutilized in wellness tourism research, limiting the understanding of customer motivations and behaviors (Pesonen et al., 2011; Lee & Kim, 2023). Therefore, further research is imperative to explore the motivations and segment of young wellness tourists, particularly in the post-COVID-19 era, to develop targeted strategies that contribute to the industry's recovery and growth.

Chengdu, the capital of Sichuan province, offers a wealth of resources, a thriving economy, and a healthy natural ecosystem. With its rich historical and cultural heritage, Chengdu presents a unique setting for wellness activities suitable for individuals of all ages (Liu et al., 2017; Wang et al., 2022). The city is particularly known for its geothermal heat, hot springs, and traditional Chinese medicine, making it an ideal destination for wellness tourism. Given Chengdu's favorable wellness preservation environment, well-established market, and diverse range of wellness projects, it serves as an appropriate case study destination to explore young wellness tourists.

Despite the growing significance of young tourists in the wellness tourism industry, research specifically focusing on their motivations and behaviors, especially in the post-COVID-19 context, remains limited (Saikia & Goswami, 2019). Understanding the diverse

motivations of young wellness tourists is crucial for developing effective strategies that cater to their specific motivations and enhance their overall satisfaction and their interactions with wellness offerings.

## **Research Objectives**

The primary objectives of the study are delineated as follows:

1. To identify the travel behavior and motivational patterns exhibited by young wellness tourists in Chengdu.
2. To methodically segment the cohort of young wellness tourists in accordance with their distinct motivational dimensions.
3. To compare the overall satisfaction levels and future intentions between the discerned clusters of young wellness tourists.

## **Literature Review**

### **Wellness Tourism**

Wellness tourism is driven by the desire of health-conscious individuals to achieve a state of overall well-being and longevity (Koncul, 2012). According to Voigt et al. (2011), wellness tourism refers to the pursuit of physical and mental well-being by individuals who travel from their place of residence to wellness-related leisure destinations during their free time. This concept encompasses various dimensions of wellness, including social, psychological, emotional, spiritual, and physical health. The process of engaging in wellness tourism begins with an individual's aspiration to enhance their physical, spiritual, or mental health. Specific wellness programs and treatments are designed to address and eliminate negative physical factors such as toxins and stress, while promoting a healthy lifestyle through activities such as exercise and a nutritious diet (Chen, 2007).

One of the key objectives of wellness tourism is to improve individuals' health within a natural environment (Dunets et al., 2020). This includes the intention to establish wellness centers surrounded by nature, as well as the utilization of eco-friendly products and alternative procedures. By integrating nature and eco-conscious practices, wellness tourism not only benefits the well-being of individuals but also contributes to the preservation of natural resources such as forests, natural hot springs, and wildlife.

### **Push and Pull Travel Motivation**

In the tourism field, motivation has been widely demonstrated to play a crucial role in guiding the dynamic process of tourist behavior, enhancing the understanding of how and why people make travel decisions (Baloglu & Uysal, 1996). They have highlighted the significance of travel motivation research based on the push-pull motivation theory. The push factors focus on the internal desires and lack of fulfillment that drive individuals to travel, while the pull factors pertain to the attractions and appealing aspects of tourist destinations. Studies exploring travelers' attitudes towards healthy living have indicated that push motivation is linked to emotional factors that enhance individuals' inclination to travel.

Among wellness tourists, the primary motivations identified are social engagement and self-centeredness (Dimitrovski & Todorovi, 2015). Kim et al. (2017) have identified four dimensions of motivation for wellness tourists, namely prestige and luxury, novelty and knowledge, self-

development, relaxation and escape. Adam and Amuquandoh (2019) have recognized push motivation factors such as knowledge enhancement, seeking self-realization, social interaction, and escape. Rančić, Pavić, and Mijatov (2014) have identified diverse push and pull motivations, including recreation, relaxation, improved quality of life, health consciousness, social activity, curiosity, nature experiences, multi-activity pursuits, meditation, and effortless activity. Recently, Gan et al. (2023) categorized health and wellness tourists' motivation into push and pull factors. In their study, push motivation includes escape and consumption motivation, while pull motivation consists of attractive, natural environments and interpersonal motivation. The study revealed that push motivation has a stronger direct influence on overall satisfaction and tourists' behavioral intention in health and wellness tourism compared to pull motivation.

For young travelers, exploration is a fundamental aspect of their identity and a means of learning, meeting new people, and experiencing different cultures. They view travel as an opportunity for personal and career development (Saikia & Goswami, 2019). Richards and Wilson (2003) have identified the primary motivations of young travelers as the desire to explore new cultures, seek excitement, and enhance knowledge. Youth and student travelers are typically seeking unique experiences, aiming to create memorable moments, build a travel-related career, and broaden their horizons by venturing into challenging destinations. Furthermore, a study on the motivation of Generation Y healthy travelers revealed that key motivations for this group include healthy menus, clean accommodations, and access to quality natural resources (Hritz et al., 2014). Young tourists are highly motivated to improve their overall well-being through wellness education, esthetic experiences, and escape activities. They actively engage in learning about wellness through workshops and classes, show interest in beauty treatments and spa services, and seek out escape experiences to temporarily disconnect and relax. These preferences indicate their prioritization of personal growth, relaxation, and a desire for experiences that contribute to their well-being (Liu et al., 2023).

Existing literature reveals a lack of consensus among scholars regarding a universally applicable set of motivations to measure tourists' intentions to visit destinations or attractions. This suggests that motivations are specific to each destination. Additionally, it is important to acknowledge that motivations and preferences can vary among different target groups and may also change over time.

### **Segmentation of the Wellness Travelers**

Segmentation of wellness travelers plays a crucial role in the wellness tourism industry as it allows for a better understanding of diverse market segments and enables wellness service providers to deliver tailored experiences that satisfy customer needs (Lee and Kim, 2023). Researchers have identified distinct segments within the wellness travel market based on socio-demographic, behavioral, and psychological factors. For example, Dryglas and Salamaga (2018) identified segments such as wellness and treatment seekers, as well as tourism, treatment, and wellness seekers in spa resort settings. Huh et al. (2019) proposed sub-segments including pleasure pursuers, healing pursuers, and relaxation pursuers. Damijanac (2020) clustered wellness tourists into high wellness, immaterial wellness, and low wellness clusters based on their motivations. Additionally, Lee and Kim (2023) categorized the wellness market into four segments: novelty-seekers, comprehensive motivation-seekers, neutral wellness-seekers, and exploratory wellness-seekers.

Insufficient research exists on the segmentation of young wellness tourists, thereby emphasizing the importance of effectively identifying and categorizing diverse market segments. Undertaking the segmentation of young wellness travelers is of utmost importance as it enables service providers to comprehensively comprehend the distinct characteristics and motivations prevalent among various segments. Such understanding facilitates the provision of tailored services, resulting in heightened customer satisfaction and a significant competitive edge within the market.

### **Satisfaction and Behavioral Intention**

The nexus between satisfaction and behavioral intention in tourism is a pivotal aspect of understanding the dynamics of travelers' experiences. Tourism satisfaction, capturing the emotional or cognitive responses of tourists to their travel encounters, signifies the extent of contentment derived from travel-related products or services (Bigne et al., 2001). In consumer behavior studies, satisfaction is frequently scrutinized independently, often in tandem with behavioral intention and influence (Bayih and Singh, 2020). Behavioral intention, predicting consumers' future actions, holds paramount importance in tourism studies, encompassing loyalty, revisit intention, and positive word of mouth as integral components (Kim et al., 2010; Bayih & Singh, 2020).

Practitioners and academics underscore the significance of investigating satisfaction and behavioral intention in tourism studies (Acharya et al., 2023). Research within the tourism domain focuses on cultivating positive behaviors, as evident in studies like those conducted by Bayih and Singh (2020), seeking to validate influential relationships associated with motivational factors impacting behavioral intentions. A noteworthy contribution from Lee and Kim (2023) sheds light on substantial differences in satisfaction and behavioral intention within various segments of the wellness tourism industry.

In conclusion, the literature highlights the destination-specific nature of motivations and the significant influence of nuanced variations among diverse target groups on satisfaction and behavioral intentions. Our study contributes by focusing on the segmentation of young wellness tourists based on their travel motivations, aiming to compare overall satisfaction levels and behavioral intentions across distinct clusters.

## **Methodology**

Quantitative research methods are employed in this study to gather and analyze data on wellness travel motivation among youth tourists visiting wellness destinations in Chengdu. The research objectives are achieved through a questionnaire survey conducted online. The study focuses on youth tourists, defined as individuals between the ages of 18 and 40 (Saikia, 2018). The online questionnaire was designed to measure various variables related to the research framework, including demographics, travel motivation, satisfaction, and future intention. The measurement of young Chinese wellness travel motivation consists of two categories with a total of 21 items, comprising 12 push motivation items and 9 pull motivation items, benchmarked from Aleksijevits (2019). The measurement scale used is a five-point rating scale ranging from 1 (Not at all important) to 5 (Extremely important). Overall satisfaction and future intention, including the likelihood of revisiting and recommending Chengdu as a wellness destination to others, are measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Very satisfied/Likely) to 5 (Very dissatisfied/Unlikely).

To ensure the questionnaire’s validity, IOC was conducted by asking three experienced professors from Prince of Songkhla University. Their valuable feedback and suggestions were incorporated into the questionnaire after careful consideration. Subsequently, a pilot test was conducted, involving 30 wellness travelers who were asked to complete the questionnaire. The analysis revealed that the attribute score for push motivation in wellness tourism was 0.876, and the attribute score for pull motivation in wellness tourism was 0.847, indicating a strong consensus among respondents regarding factors that attract them to wellness tourism and met the required acceptance level.

The questionnaire was created using an online platform, and the link to the questionnaire was distributed to the target respondents via WeChat or QQ during the period of January - February 2023. The targeted respondents were required to confirm that they were within the age range of 18-40 and had visited wellness destinations in Chengdu within the past two years. Only those who answered “Yes” to both questions were allowed to proceed with the main part of the questionnaire. A total of 445 usable questionnaires were collected. The collected data were analyzed using SPSS (20th Edition) to calculate and analyze the valid data.

**Research Results**

Based on the data presented in Table 1, several key characteristics of the 445 respondents have been outlined. The majority of the respondents were female, comprising 71% of the sample. In terms of age distribution, 63% of the respondents were in the age range of 21-30, 30% were 20 years or younger, and only 6% were in the age range of 31-40. The majority of the respondents, 90%, were single. In regards to educational background, 42% had a bachelor’s degree, 39% had a technical school diploma, and 13% had a postgraduate degree.

**Table 1** Demographic Characteristics

<b>List</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Gender		
Male	128	29
Female	317	71
Age		
18-20	134	30
21-30	280	63
31-40	31	7
Marital Status		
Single	400	90
Married	21	5
Divorced/Widow	24	5
Education		
High school or lower	24	6
Technical school	175	39
Bachelor Degree	187	42
Higher than Bachelor Degree	59	13

**Table 2** Travel Behaviors

List	Frequency	Percentage
Travel Time		
Winter and summer vacations	229	52
Public holidays	108	24
Workday	47	11
Weekends	61	14
Transportation		
High-speed rail	177	40
Airplane	103	23
Self-driving	75	17
Train	46	10
Bus	44	10
Length of stay in Chengdu		
2-3days	224	52
4-5days	88	21
6-7 days	73	17
More than a week	44	10
Travel party		
Friend	193	43
Alone	89	20
Spouse/partner	80	18
Family	65	15
Others	18	4

According to the data in Table 2, a significant proportion of the respondents exhibited distinct preferences regarding their travel behavior. A majority, comprising 52% of the participants, favored embarking on journeys during winter and summer vacations. In contrast, 24% opted for traveling during public holidays. Only a small fraction, approximately 10%, displayed a preference for undertaking trips on weekdays, whereas 14% indicated a propensity for weekend travel.

Regarding domestic travel to Chengdu, the preferred mode of transportation varied among the respondents. Notably, 40% of the participants favored utilizing the high-speed rail service, while 23% opted for air travel. A notable proportion, approximately 17%, indicated a preference for self-driving, whereas 10% each selected the train and public bus as their preferred means of travel to Chengdu.

The study brought attention to the diverse lengths of stay among the respondents, with 429 out of 445 addressing this question. Half of the participants, representing 52% of the sample, reported spending 2-3 days per trip, while 38% opted for a duration ranging from 4 days to a week. Furthermore, 10% of the respondents indicated extending their stays beyond a week during their visits.

Furthermore, the data revealed diverse travel companions among the participants. A significant proportion, accounting for 43% of the respondents, preferred traveling with friends.

A considerable number, comprising 20% of the participants, embarked on their travels alone. In contrast, 18% of the respondents chose to travel with a spouse or partner, while 15% indicated that they traveled with family members. A small fraction, approximately 4%, opted for other companions, such as business partners or tour groups.

To identify the underlying motivation dimensions for young wellness tourists, an exploratory factor analysis was conducted using the 12 push and 9 pull motivational items. Prior to the analysis, the Measure of Sampling Adequacy (MSA) was calculated, yielding a Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of 0.935, indicating the interrelatedness and common underlying dimensions of the 21 push and pull motivations. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity further confirmed the suitability of factor analysis, with a test statistic value of 6091.333 and a significance level of 0.000, indicating significant correlations between the variables.

**Table 3** Descriptive Statistics and Results of Explanatory Factor Analysis of Young Wellness Tourists' Push and Pull Travel Motivation to Chengdu

Variables	Mean	S.D.	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4
Push 2: Reward yourself	4.05	.903	.625	-	-	-
Push 4: physical rest and relaxation	4.20	.875	.780	-	-	-
Push 5: Accompany friends and family	4.10	.912	.600	-	-	-
Push 10: Cleaned physically and spiritually	4.03	.856	.651	-	-	-
Pull1: Local cuisine	3.92	.913	.521	-	-	-
Pull2: Cultural heritage and cultural activities	3.98	.858	.693	-	-	-
Pull4: Sights of tourist destinations	4.05	.833	.795	-	-	-
Pull8: Hygiene and cleanliness	4.11	.882	.802	-	-	-
Pull9: Safe and easy access	4.18	.884	.794	-	-	-
Push 6: Meet new people	3.53	1.012	-	.740	-	-
Push 8: Improve fitness levels	3.94	.938	-	.586	-	-
Push 9: Lose weight and improve appearance	3.50	1.034	-	.682	-	-
Push 11: Learn something new	3.91	.945	-	.740	-	-
Push 12: Show a higher life style	3.56	1.026	-	.727	-	-
Pull3: Affordability	3.63	.924	-	-	.657	-
Pull5: Brand of spa/hotel/resort	3.45	.973	-	-	.780	-
Pull6: TCM physiotherapy wellness services	3.38	.989	-	-	.771	-
Pull7: Wellness facilities at the destination	3.59	1.000	-	-	.727	-
Push 1: Escape from daily routine	3.48	1.054	-	-	-	.785
Push 3: Being pampered	3.34	.991	-	-	-	.539
Push 7: Find thrills and excitement	3.55	1.004	-	-	-	.544

**Table 3** Descriptive Statistics and Results of Explanatory Factor Analysis of Young Wellness Tourists’ Push and Pull Travel Motivation to Chengdu (Con.)

Variables	Mean	S.D.	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4
Eigenvalues	-	-	46.589	9.228	6.259	5.158
Percentage of variance	-	-	25.455	17.076	15.664	9.039
Percentage of cumulative variance	-	-	25.455	42.530	58.194	67.233
Cronbach’s $\alpha$	-	-	.923	.850	.878	.654

Remark: n = 445

The results presented in Table 3 indicate that the 21 motivational items were successfully grouped into four distinct factors, each with eigenvalues greater than one, suggesting their significance in explaining the underlying motivations of young wellness tourists in Chengdu. Collectively, these four factors accounted for a substantial portion (67.233%) of the variance, indicating that they captured a significant portion of the diverse motivations driving wellness travel in this context. Most of the factor loadings, which measure the strength of the relationship between each variable and its corresponding factor, were greater than 0.60, further supporting the robustness of the factor structure. This suggests that the variables within each factor shared a common underlying dimension and contributed significantly to the interpretation of that factor.

The first factor, termed “Social, Cultural, and Environmental Wellness”, emerged as the most significant factor, explaining 25.45% of the variance. This factor encompasses experiences such as engaging with local cuisine, immersing in cultural heritage, and visiting tourist destinations. The second factor, labeled “Personal Well-being and Fitness”, accounted for 17.08% of the variance. It includes motivations such as improving fitness levels, weight loss, and enhancing appearance. The third factor, “Service and Facility-Related Wellness”, explained 15.66% of the variance. This factor represents motivations related to the availability of wellness facilities and services, including hygiene, cleanliness, and safe and convenient access. Lastly, the “Escape” factor accounted for 9.04% of the variance and captures motivations associated with the desire to escape from daily routines, indulge in pampering experiences, and seek thrills and excitement.

**Table 4** Comparison of the Cluster Motivations

Factors	Clusters		t-ratio	p-value
	1	2		
Factor 1: Social, Cultural and Environmental Wellness	-.39590	.73342	14.369**	0.000
Factor 2: Personal Well-being and Fitness	.03477	-.06442	.925	.356
Factor 3: Service and Facility-Related Wellness	.21993	-.40743	6.147**	0.000
Factor 4: Escape	.38402	-.71142	12.924**	0.000
<b>n</b>	<b>289</b>	<b>156</b>	-	-
<b>%</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>35</b>	-	-

\*\* p-value <0.001

The results of the cluster analysis, as summarized in Table 4, revealed the presence of two distinct clusters among young wellness tourists. Cluster I consisted of 289 cases, representing 65% of the respondents, while Cluster 2 comprised 156 cases, accounting for 35% of the respondents. The statistical significance of the cluster analysis was confirmed ( $p < 0.001$ ). The analysis identified three significant motivational factors that differentiated the two clusters. These factors were “Social, Cultural, and Environmental Wellness”, “Service and Facility-Related Wellness”, and “Escape”.

Figure 1 compares the important level of travel motivators between 2 clusters. The respondents in cluster 1 prioritize factors related to “Escape”, and “Service and Facility-Related Wellness” in their travel motivations. These factors hold greater significance for the respondents in this cluster, suggesting that they are more motivated by the desire to escape from their daily routine and seek wellness experiences that offer quality services and facilities. This cluster was labeled “Escape and Service-Driven Wellness Seekers”.

On the other hand, in Cluster 2, the respondents place the greatest value on the “Social, Cultural, and Environmental Wellness” factor. This indicates that they are primarily motivated by the opportunity to explore and engage in cultural experiences, as well as to connect with the natural environment during their wellness travels. This cluster was named “Social, Cultural, and Environmental Wellness Explorer”.

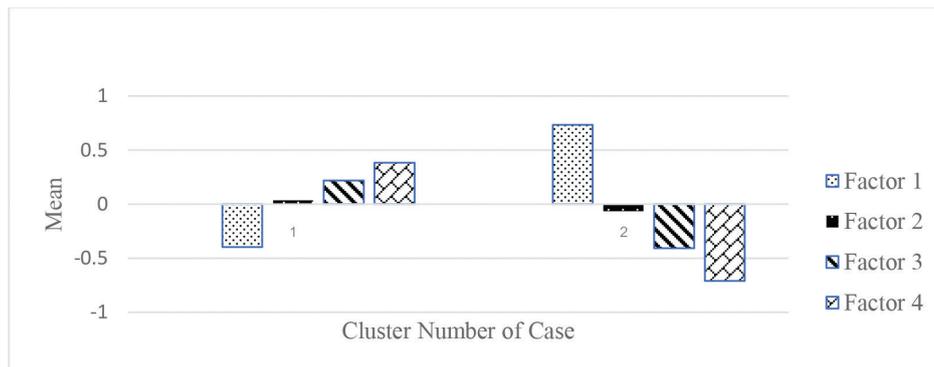


Figure 1 Comparing Motivation Mean Scores among Clusters

Table 5 shows that there were significant differences in overall satisfaction and future intention between Cluster 1 (Escape and Service-Driven Wellness Seekers) and Cluster 2 (Social, Cultural, and Environmental Wellness Explorers). Young wellness tourists in Cluster 2 reported higher levels of satisfaction towards their wellness trip to Chengdu compared to those in Cluster 1 (3.61 vs 3.40). Additionally, Cluster 2 had higher intentions to revisit Chengdu (3.85 vs 3.59) and a greater likelihood to recommend Chengdu as a potential wellness tourism destination to their friends and family (3.81 vs 3.55).

**Table 5** Independent Sample T-test for Overall Satisfaction and Future Intention

Variables	Mean		t-value	p-value
	Cluster 1	Cluster 2		
Overall Satisfaction	3.40	3.61	-2.382*	.018
Revisit Intention	3.59	3.85	-3.025**	.003
Likelihood to Recommendation	3.55	3.81	-3.032**	.003

\*\* p-value < .01, \* p-value < .05

## Discussion

Based on the research findings, the study sheds light on the distinct characteristics and motivations of young wellness tourists visiting Chengdu. The demographic analysis revealed a predominantly female sample, primarily aged between 20 to 30 years, with a significant proportion holding a bachelor's degree or a technical school diploma. Notably, the majority of respondents preferred to travel during winter and summer vacations, utilizing high-speed rail as the most favored mode of transportation. These demographic patterns align with the broader understanding of the typical profile of young wellness tourists, as outlined in previous research (Saikia, 2018; Liu et al., 2023).

Furthermore, this study explored the motivational factors for young wellness tourists in Chengdu, China. Through factor analysis and cluster analysis, four distinct motivational factors were identified: "Social, Cultural, and Environmental Wellness", "Personal Well-being and Fitness", "Service and Facility-Related Wellness", and "Escape". This finding is consistent with the push and pull motivation theory, emphasizing the importance of social engagement, cultural experiences, and environmental well-being as significant drivers for young wellness tourists (Kim et al., 2017; Saikia & Goswami, 2019; Razak et al., 2020), emphasizes the role of service quality and convenience in shaping tourists' decisions (Hosker et al., 2019), and identified the desire for adventure, thrill-seeking, and a sense of freedom among young travelers (Hanks & Mattila, 2012).

Moreover, the findings align with previous literature in the field and contribute to a deeper understanding of this specific tourist segment. The segmentation analysis revealed two distinct clusters. Cluster 1, labeled "Escape and Service-Driven Wellness Seekers", prioritized factors related to escape and the quality of services and facilities. This finding is consistent with previous studies that highlight the desire for relaxation and pampering experiences among wellness travelers (Dryglas & Salamaga, 2018). On the other hand, Cluster 2, named "Social, Cultural, and Environmental Wellness Explorers", placed greater importance on social, cultural, and environmental factors. This finding supports the notion that young wellness tourists seek opportunities to engage in cultural experiences and connect with the natural environment (Saikia & Goswami, 2019; Dryglas & Salamaga, 2018; Richards and Wilson, 2003).

The analysis of overall satisfaction and future intentions demonstrated that young wellness tourists in the "Social, Cultural, and Environmental Wellness Explorers" cluster exhibited higher levels of satisfaction, stronger intentions to revisit Chengdu, and a greater likelihood to recommend the city as a wellness tourism destination compared to the "Escape and Service-Driven Wellness Seekers" cluster. This finding supported Gan et al. (2023) which highlights the positive impact

of cultural and environmental experiences on tourist satisfaction and behavioral intention. These findings underscore the critical role of social, cultural, and environmental experiences in shaping the overall satisfaction and future intentions of young wellness tourists in Chengdu.

Overall, the study's findings underscore the importance of understanding and catering to the specific motivations and preferences of young wellness tourists in Chengdu. The results provide valuable insights for businesses and stakeholders in the wellness tourism industry to develop targeted marketing strategies and customized services that align with the distinct clusters identified. By emphasizing cultural immersion and environmental experiences, businesses can enhance the appeal of Chengdu as a wellness tourism destination for young travelers, contributing to the sustainable growth and development of the industry in the region (Liu et al., 2017; Wang et al., 2022).

## **Suggestions**

Through the identification and delineation of distinct clusters based on prioritized motivational factors, this study significantly contributes to the theoretical framework, demonstrating the application of segmentation theory in discerning and addressing diverse needs and preferences within wellness tourism. The recognition of specific motivational factors, including “Social, Cultural, and Environmental Wellness”, “Personal Well-being and Fitness”, “Service and Facility-Related Wellness”, and “Escape”, enriches motivational theory within the wellness tourism domain. By categorizing respondents into meaningful clusters based on their motivational profiles, the research yields valuable insights into different market segments, their unique characteristics, and preferences. The identification of clusters such as “Social, Cultural, and Environmental Wellness” and “Escape and Service-Driven Wellness Seekers” not only enhances our understanding of young wellness tourists' motivations but also contributes theoretical insights into their distinct preferences. This, in turn, fosters a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing satisfaction, repeat visitation, and positive word-of-mouth recommendations within these segments.

The practical implications derived from this study are pivotal for stakeholders in the wellness tourism sector, particularly those operating within Chengdu. By recognizing the distinct motivational factors of young wellness tourists, businesses can strategically tailor their marketing efforts and product development to align with the emphasis on social, cultural, and environmental wellness experiences. This targeted approach enables businesses to effectively engage the “Social, Cultural, and Environmental Wellness Explorers” cluster, fostering increased visitor engagement and satisfaction.

Furthermore, the emphasis on superior service and facility offerings, as highlighted by the “Escape and Service-Driven Wellness Seekers” cluster, underscores the importance of investing in service quality and facility enhancement. By prioritizing top-tier hospitality, advanced wellness facilities, and comprehensive service provision, businesses can elevate visitor satisfaction, thereby cultivating a loyal customer base and fostering repeat visitation.

Additionally, the recognition of the significance of cultural and environmental wellness experiences accentuates the need for destination management authorities to prioritize the preservation and promotion of local heritage, cultural activities, and natural landscapes. By integrating sustainable practices and offering authentic cultural experiences, Chengdu can establish itself as a leading wellness tourism destination, catering to the preferences of young wellness tourists seeking immersive and culturally enriching experiences.

Moreover, the implementation of educational and training initiatives for hospitality and wellness professionals can further enhance the visitor experience. By focusing on cultural awareness, service excellence, and sustainable practices, these initiatives can elevate the standard of service delivery, ensuring an authentic and enriching wellness tourism experience for visitors.

Overall, these implications emphasize the necessity of a comprehensive approach that integrates cultural, environmental, and service-oriented elements to meet the diverse motivational factors of young wellness tourists. Leveraging these insights can contribute to the development of a thriving and sustainable wellness tourism landscape in Chengdu, promoting visitor satisfaction, fostering repeat visitation, and stimulating the long-term growth and development of the region's wellness tourism industry.

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