

DOES TOURISTS' EMOTIONAL EXPERIENCE INFLUENCE DESTINATION, IMAGE, SATISFACTION, AND BEHAVIORAL INTENTION IN SPA TOURISM?

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ABSTRACT

Purpose - This study intends to investigate a theoretical model looking at how particular tourist emotions, such as "joy," "love," and "positive surprise," might predict their behavior by looking at how satisfied they are with their whole experience when visiting spas, and to examine the relationship of emotional experience, destination image, satisfaction, and behavioural intention towards spa tourism.

Design/methodology/approach- A sample of 345 individuals who traveled to Alleppey as domestic tourists participated in the research study. A non-probability (purposive) sampling method in this study. The structural model was analyzed using SEM, and the path coefficients were examined to test the hypotheses.

Findings – The results supported the hypotheses, indicating that specific emotions, image of the destination, and satisfaction significantly impacted tourists' intentions to revisit Alleppey as a spa tourism destination. This study demonstrated that “emotions of joy, love, and positive surprise” have a considerable influence on the image of the destination and satisfaction. The findings reveal a substantial correlation between satisfaction and behavioral intention (“Intention to revisit and intention to recommend”). The research suggests that a higher degree of satisfaction would encourage visitors to revisit and recommend the location.

Research limitations/implications – The research suggests that a higher degree of satisfaction would encourage visitors to revisit the location. This research offers vital information for developing, planning, and putting into practice tourism policies in the spa tourism sector. This article focuses on domestic travelers who travel to Alleppey, so the conclusions may not be relevant to research utilizing foreign tourists.

Originality/value - According to the literature study, and to the authors' knowledge, only limited number of studies that look at spa tourism from a wellness perspective. Additionally, Alleppey is used in the study as the study's setting, providing insight into the visitor experiences of this expanding spa tourism business. This study gives understanding about how emotional experience predicts behavioral intentions.

Keywords: Wellness Tourism; Spa; Spa Tourism; Destination; Tourism; Behavioral Intentions.

INTRODUCTION

Wellness involves being in harmony with one's body, mind, soul, and surroundings (Dunn, 1959). It incorporates lifestyle choices, mental, physical, and spiritual health, as well as how individuals interact with one another, and the environment (M. Smith & Puczkó, 2008). Wellness is becoming more widely acknowledged as an important aspect of tourism (DiPietro et al., 2020; Stara, Jana; Peterson, 2017). The worldwide tourism industry has benefited from people traveling abroad to improve their health and well-being because of the growing desire for well-being (Bushell and Sheldon, 2009; Chen, Chang, et al., 2014). It is a

growing sector of the tourist industry where people go alone or in groups to high-end hotels and other destinations to maintain their physical and emotional well-being (Kazakov & Oyner, 2021; Perelygina et al., 2022), and has been a widespread and recurrent research area for the last 75 years. The Institute of Global Wellness forecasts that the wellness industry will resume its rapid growth as we get out of the pandemic. The wellness sector is anticipated to grow at an average annual rate of 9.9% and reach about \$7.0 trillion in 2025 (Glob. Wellness Inst., 2022). This industry has recently become more popular in most Asian countries (Feng et al., 2021; Pang et al., 2022). A recent study has recognized wellness travel is a fast-growing industry at a global level in addition to the current unfavorable economic climate for the tourism industry (M. K. Smith & Dryglas, 2020). Arguably, wellness tourism is playing a significant part in achieving some new stress-reduction, personal growth, introspection, connection, and purpose functions that are often difficult to achieve in daily life (Kelly, 2010). It offers a wide range of activities for the maintenance, growth, and improvement of the physical, mental, and spiritual people (M. Smith & Kelly, 2006).

It is recognized as a comprehensive mode of transportation that combines the need for bodily well-being, and connections based on aesthetics, spirituality, and religion (Steiner & Reisinger, 2006). It is intended for healthy individuals who are dedicated to maintaining and enhancing their health (So et al., 2014), and based on places, the therapy forms (Meera & Vinodan, 2019). International travel agencies have benefited from wellness travel by encouraging people to go to different nations to enhance their health and wellness by experiencing the regions (Sheldon & Bushell, 2009; Strack & Raffay-Danyi, 2020). A larger variety of services and experiences that make up value propositions that can positively influence people's well-being have emerged as a result of the tourist industry's all-encompassing strategy (Suban, 2022b, 2022a; Suban et al., 2021).

The spa industry, one of the important wellness categories, directly provides customers with individualized services and experiences (Sangpikul, 2021). Spas are places dedicated to advancing general wellness (Int. Spa Assoc., 2022). These are destinations for rejuvenation and relaxation where natural products and relaxing techniques are combined with beauty treatments (Buxton & Michopoulou, 2021). Thus, The modern spa industry is a fragmented, diverse segment of the economy that is just starting to mature (Tabacchi, 2010). Many studies on tourism have focused on the "spa," and the majority of high-end hotels have adjusted their services to meet the expectations of travelers (Anaya-Aguilar et al., 2021b; Buxton & Michopoulou, 2021; Dryglas & Salamaga, 2017; Kucukusta & Denizci Guillet, 2014). According to the Global Wellness Institute (2021), "Wellness Tourism, Spas, and Mineral Thermal Springs: The Global Wellness Economy Looking Beyond COVID-19," the spa industry experienced significant growth from 2017 to 2019, with an annual growth rate of 8.7% and revenues reaching \$111 billion over 165,717 spas, with a notable rise in resort spas. Between 2017 and 2019, the hot springs market experienced remarkable growth within the wellness industry. Revenues in this sector surged from \$56 billion to \$64 billion, representing an impressive annual growth rate of 6.8%. However, the industry was hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, with revenues falling by -39%. With the closure of approximately 4,000-day spas. The report also suggests that the spa industry is expected to recover rapidly, with a projected annual growth rate of 17% through 2025, and a forecasted revenue of \$150.5 billion. The spa industry in the Asia-Pacific region has witnessed significant expansion and development (Kucukusta & Denizci Guillet, 2014). Seven main categories of spa services are listed by the International Spa Association (ISPA), including Cruise Ship spas, Club Spas, Destination Spa, Say spas, Medical Spas, Resort Spa, and Mineral Springs spas (Gustavo, 2010).

This tourism industry has expanded in both volume and value due to the demand for health and wellness products (Magdalini & Paris, 2009). Studies on spa tourism are scarce

when compared to medical and health tourism, although wellness travel has gained increasing popularity (Suparna et al., 2021). The tourist industry has seen notable growth in spa tourism; however, further research is required to establish its scientific basis (Budiawan et al., 2020; Tuzunkan, 2018). However, there is still much to learn about the variables and innovations that contribute to successful spa destinations (Hartwell et al., 2016). Given these data, more investigation into the novel idea of spa tourism is necessary. Locations with a focus on yoga, spas, therapies, health, Ayurveda, and spiritual contact are in great demand (Karn & Swain, 2017). The development of spa tourism is still in its nascent stages, and the investigation into spa vacations is crucial (Budiawan et al., 2020). Although research on wellness has recognized the value of examining visitor emotions, destination perception, satisfaction, and behavioral goals (C. C. Chen et al., 2013; González & Brea, 2005; Loureiro et al., 2013; Rašovská et al., 2021). The relationships between the conceptualized pieces were haphazardly attempted to be summarised in an earlier study (Hallmann et al., 2015; Prayag & Ryan, 2012). Studies hypothesized a model of the links between “visitors' emotions, satisfaction, intention to revisit, and recommendation”, but left out the destination image (B. K. Lee et al., 2014; Prayag et al., 2013). Studies have conceptualized the relationships between an image of a destination, satisfaction, intention to return, and recommendation, but they do not take visitors' emotions into account (Assaker & Hallak, 2013; Hallmann et al., 2015; Huang et al., 2015; Prayag, 2009; Sfodera et al., 2022). The intention of visiting again was not included in studies that hypothesized links between visitors' emotions, perceived destination image, recommendation, and satisfaction (Prayag et al., 2015). In spa tourism, the intricate linkages between the conceptualized categories have not yet been completely defined (Cain et al., 2016). It is expected to investigate a framework examining the role of specific emotions experienced by tourists in predicting their intent to revisit via perceived destination image and tourists' satisfaction with spa tourism. The interrelationships between these components in a single model of spa tourism have not yet been concurrently addressed in tourism literature. This research is intended to address the gap in the tourism marketing literature. The objectives of this article are to: i) investigate a theoretical model looking at how particular tourist emotions, such as “joy,” “love,” and “positive surprise,” might predict their behavior by looking at how satisfied they are with their whole experience when visiting spas; ii) to determine if the “intention to recommend”, and “intention to revisit” are the necessary indicator of behavioral intentions in a model of spa tourism.

Theoretical Background and Hypothesis Development

Spa Tourism

India, Singapore, Hong Kong, and Malaysia have seen a tremendous increase in tourism to wellness spas (Han et al., 2018). Body massages and cosmetic procedures are the primary services that spas offer (M. Smith & Puczkó, 2008). Quality, perceptions of destination prices, brand loyalty, and the physical environment for returning to a wellness spa in Thailand (Han et al., 2020). Bhumiwat (2020) has determined that location, sources of information, and service costs are all important for encouraging travelers to repurchase spa travel. Polish spa resorts are visiting for treatment, recreation, and preventative healthcare, which has highlighted the direction of growth for Poland's spa resorts (Dryglas, 2020). Wellness spa tourism helps to promote Thailand as a tourist destination by attracting new foreign visitors as well as by encouraging their good post-purchase behaviors (Han et al., 2017).

In terms of both pain relief and a doctor's overall assessment, spa therapy has always outperformed medication therapy (Karagülle et al., 2007). The fundamental emotion in the

spa context is relaxation, which is more crucial to achieving contentment than pleasure and has little to no direct or meaningful influence on word-of-mouth (Loureiro et al., 2013). Customers prefer branded spa products, full-range spa facilities, high levels of privacy, mid-range pricing, and high levels of therapist qualifications, which are proven to be the most crucial factors when making spa reservations (Kucukusta & Denizci Guillet, 2014). Comparing spa customers' preferences for spa services, it was found that there were significant differences between the genders (González et al., 2007). According to Mak et al. (2009), Four motivational variables were found after an analysis of spa-goers' motivations in Hong Kong: Self-indulgence, escape, relief and relaxation, and health. Koh et al. (2010) examined the social, relaxation, health, and rejuvenation as driving forces behind Americans visiting spas. Relevance of the psychological as opposed to the physical parts of wellness spa tourism, as spas and massages typically improve tourists' moods, help them relax, and reward with care is part of this tourism (Monteson & Singer, 2016). According to Strack (2020), Successful spa operations involve thorough management of finance, successful marketing, original concepts, efficient labor, and high-quality services. A study reveals the genuine nature of Andalusian spa customers, their high degree of satisfaction with the business, and their strong commitment (Anaya-Aguilar et al., 2021a). The level of enjoyment from interesting and varied spa activities as well as the staff's capacity to incite pleasant emotions in visitors can all contribute to increased well-being, and this is in addition to the practical advantages of the necessary spa products (Choi et al., 2015). Male participants at spas in Hong Kong primarily used hotel spas for relaxation, with body massages being the most popular treatment (Tsai et al., 2012).

Spa visitors are interested to utilize the internet facility to make travel plans and extensively rely on hotel, airline, and travel planning and booking services (Joppe, 2010). The pressure on prices has led to some spas being compelled to provide customized services (Pforr & Locher, 2012). Transportation, lodging, and cuisine help compensate for the supporting infrastructure that enhances the whole spa experience (C. Lee & King, 2008). Values and traditions and emotional well-being had a significant impact on spa customers' loyalty (Pan, Beckman, et al., 2021). An article by (Szromek & Naramski, 2019) indicated that location loyalty and spa experience were both significantly correlated with emotional experiences, satisfaction, and product performance.

Visitors perceptions of the facility's value and degree of satisfaction are influenced by the services offered, the setting and environment, the service experience, and their own emotions (Sotiriadis et al., 2016). Activities connected to wellness spa tourism include baths, acupuncture, body massages, cosmetic procedures, and thermal swimming pools (Kazakov & Oyner, 2021). The emotional experience, Product quality, and satisfaction were all shown to be strongly correlated with visitors' loyalty to tourism in spas (K. H. Chen et al., 2023; Faullant et al., 2011; Yoon et al., 2022). Papadimitriou et al (2015) recognized that the destination's personality and emotional image have a significant influence in forming the destination's overall image.

The Construct on Emotional Responses of the Tourist

As a psychological concept, emotion is measured using recognized scales developed by Watson (1988), and titled as "Positive Affect and Negative Affect". Studies in tourism use an emotional measurement scale based on psychology (Kim & Fesenmaier, 2015). Despite their widespread applicability, the validity, and reliability of such scales recently come under examination by experts (Schoefer & Diamantopoulos, 2008). These are unable to adequately convey the diversity of location features and their behaviors (J. J. Lee & Kyle, 2013). Psychology-based scales that are currently in existence produce erroneous results

when they are used to gauge emotions in the tourist industry (Cain et al., 2016; Haynes et al., 1995). Modern researchers of tourism and marketing have recognized the demand for accurate assessment of the emotional experience of tourists (Voigt et al., 2010) and conceived and created the "Destination Emotion Scale". Empirically and conceptually, the rationalization of emotion in travel is on par with the Destination Emotion Scale (J. J. Lee & Kyle, 2013) and determined that "joy, love, and positive surprise" are significant attributes of emotions in festive occasions. "Joy, love, and positive surprise" are three aspects of emotion that are represented by the fifteen indications found in the DES (Lazarus, 1991) noticed that people experience joy when they believe they are making reasonable progress towards their goals. "Delight, pleasure, enthusiasm, joy, and cheerfulness" are among its components. A person's emotional relationship to a location is measured by their level of love (Hosany, 2015) affection, tenderness, love, and warmth of heart are among its components. Izard (1977) noted the emotion of surprise that results from an unpredicted development. It is combined with other emotions to provoke either a pleasant or unpleasant surprise. "Amazement, astonishment, inspired, surprise, and fascinated" are among its adjectives. Interestingly, only positive emotions are represented in the DES's three emotional aspects (Hosany & Gilbert, 2010). This scale is appropriate for use in wellness tourism, which is differentiated as a collection of hedonic processes that generate pleasant emotions (Aggarwal et al., 2008). The majority of wellness travelers are engaged in hedonistic well-being pursuits like yoga and other associated activities (Nolan & Nolan, 1992). This study incorporates the scale developed by Hosany (2010) for evaluating visitors' emotional reactions toward spa travel.

Impact of the Emotional Response of the Travellers on Destinations` Image

Destination image is described as "an attitudinal or mental construct representing a sum of ideas, beliefs, or impressions that a tourist holds about a destination"(Crompton, 1979). The impression of a destination that travelers create throughout their journey is dynamic (J. (Jiyeon) Lee, 2014). A meta-analysis identifies the destination image as a powerful proxy for the overall picture (Zhang et al., 2014). Chen et al. (2014) discovered an image of the restaurant as a result of sentimental feelings in a hotel environment. Prayag (2015) confirmed that Tourists' feelings have been scientifically proven to be a good indicator of how they would feel about the island as a whole. Positive emotions are known to positively influence one's overall appearance, both theoretically and experimentally. Therefore, In this investigation, it seems sensible to hypothesize that;

- H₁. The destination image is impacted by Joy.*
- H₂. The image of the destination is affected by the emotions of love.*
- H₃. Positive surprise influences the image of a location.*

The Impact of Visitors' Emotions on Satisfaction

In tourism studies, satisfaction is not clearly defined (Kozak, 2001). According to Huang et al (2015) emotional reaction derived from customer encounters is satisfaction. As per Vieira (2006) satisfaction is an evaluation of expectations following consumption. Tourism research (Prayag et al., 2013) and marketing (Ladhari, 2007) have exhibited a strong connection between emotions and satisfaction. Satisfaction is positively impacted and is independent of positive specific emotions, which has been scientifically demonstrated

(Machleit & Eroglu, 2000). Prayag et al (2013) further showed how distinct emotions affect satisfaction in a historical tourist scenario.

H₄. Tourists` satisfaction is influenced by the emotion of Joy.

H₅. Love significantly impacts the satisfaction of the tourist.

H₆. Tourists` satisfaction was positively impacted by the positive surprise of emotion.

The Impact of the Destinations` Image on Tourism Satisfaction

Studies in tourism have showcased a strong impact of destination image on satisfaction (Chi & Qu, 2008). Previous research indicates that a key element in determining satisfaction is the overall destination image (O`Leary & Deegan, 2005; Wang & Hsu, 2010). Studies by Wang (2010) have identified a strong connection between satisfaction and image. A significant indirect correlation exists between the image of the location and satisfaction (Assaker & Hallak, 2013). In light of the foregoing explanation, the following assumption may be drawn:

H₇. Satisfaction is influenced by the Overall destination image.

The Impact of the Image of the Destination on Behavioral Intention

Tourism studies have gained significant recognition to examine the influential level of destination image on tourists' behavior (Castro et al., 2007). In the tourist industry, an intent to visit again and the intention to suggest are the two most common behavioral intents or loyalty indicators (Qu et al., 2011). Yang et al(2009) revealed that behavior intentions are directly impacted by destination image. But, Lee (2009) discovered inverse connections between behavioral intentions and destination image. The intent to revisit is positively impacted by the overall image of the place (Prayag et al., 2015). Destination images influence behavioral intentions both directly and indirectly(Ã & Tsai, 2007). As a result, it seems sensible to make hypotheses on the linkages that:

H₈. The revisit intention is influenced by destination`s image.

H₉. The intention to recommend is impacted by Overall image of the destination.

Satisfaction's Impact on Behavioral Intentions

Satisfied visitors are more inclined to recommend that place to others (Ã & Tsai, 2007). Prayag and Ryan (2012) discovered that travelers' positive behavioral intentions are influenced by satisfying emotional experiences. The single notion of intention to revisit cannot fully capture the multidimensional nature of behavioral intention(Cain et al., 2016; Chi & Qu, 2008). Previous research has empirically proved this relationship ("Intention to recommend" and "intention to revisit") (Qu et al., 2011). A direct correlation was discovered between satisfaction and the intention to revisit and recommend (Prayag et al., 2015). Therefore, it seems sensible to propose the idea that:

H₁₀. Satisfaction of the tourists` significantly impacts revisit intention.

H₁₁. Satisfaction positively impacts traveller`s` intention to recommend.

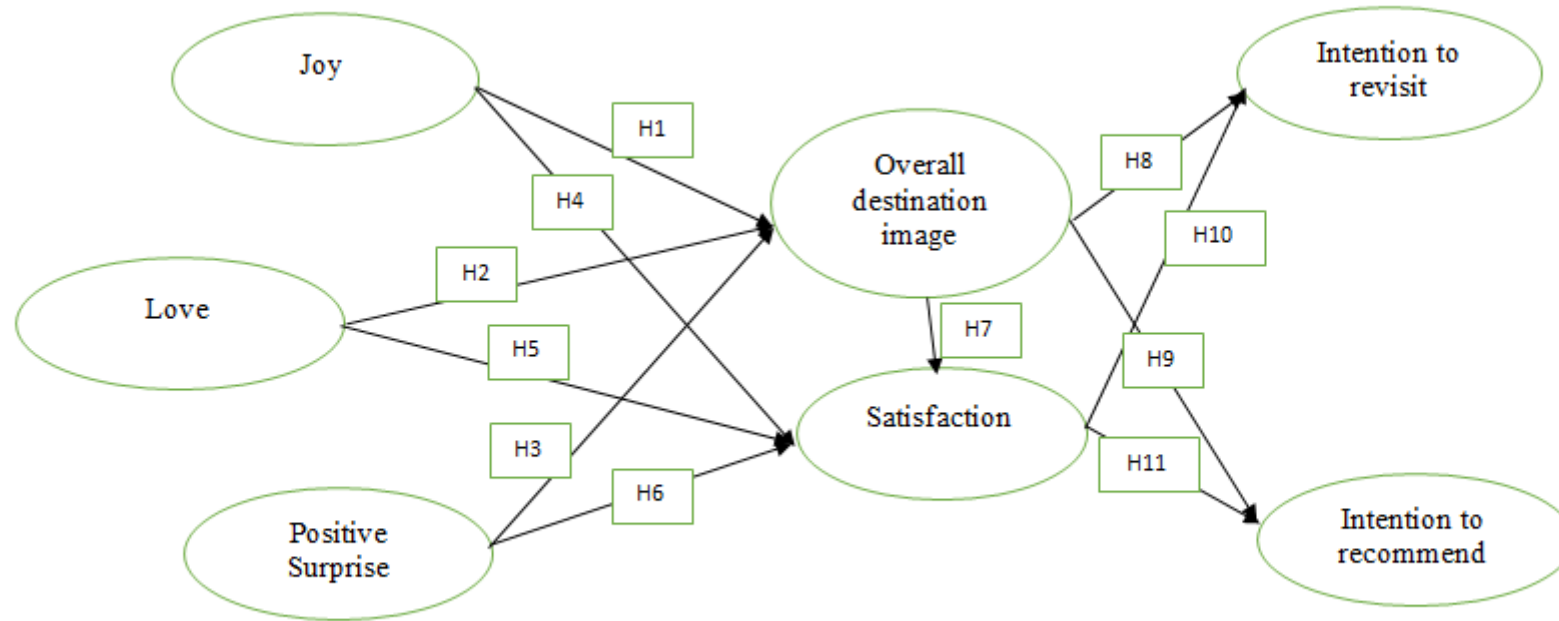


FIGURE 1
A CONCEPTUAL MODEL OF TOURISTS' EMOTIONS TOWARDS BEHAVIORAL INTENTIONS

Figure 1 this figure gives an understanding role of specific emotions like Joy, Love, and positive surprise in predicting the their destination image, satisfaction, and behavioral intentions towards spa tourism.

METHODS

Study Area and Setting

Alleppey, also known as Alappuzha, is a coastal town in the Indian state of Kerala. Located on the Arabian Sea, it is known for its beautiful backwaters, palm-lined canals, and serene beaches. It is often referred to as the "Venice of the East" due to its extensive network of waterways that meander through the town. One of the main attractions of Alleppey is the backwaters. The backwaters are a network of interconnected canals, lagoons, and lakes that stretch over 900 kilometers in Kerala. Alleppey is also known for its spa tourism, which offers visitors a chance to rejuvenate and relax amidst the serene surroundings of the town. Many resorts and hotels in Alleppey offer spa treatments that incorporate traditional Ayurvedic therapies, including massages, steam baths, and herbal treatments. The natural beauty of the town, combined with the healing properties of Ayurvedic therapies, make Alleppey an ideal destination for those seeking to unwind and recharge. Some of the popular spa treatments in Alleppey include Abhyangam, a full-body massage using warm herbal oils, Shirodhara, a therapy that involves pouring warm oil on the forehead, and Pizhichil, a massage that involves pouring warm medicated oil over the body. These therapies are believed to promote relaxation, reduce stress, and improve overall health and well-being.

The data was collected from the domestic tourist who visits Alleppey. According to Kerala Tourism Department, in 2022, Alleppey recorded a total of 2,62,165 domestic tourists and 11,547 foreign tourists. The researcher targeted to have a sample size of 385 domestic tourists. Following (Krejcie et al., 1996), the sample size was determined. Assuming a 10% rate of unusable data and a 50% response rate, a population of 963 tourists was approached, calculated by dividing 385 by 0.4 (Chi & Qu, 2008). The researcher has used the "structural equation modeling" technique to analyze the primary data and to develop a model. To utilize this method, this approach needs a minimum sample size of 300 (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2014). Thus, even though 385 responders and 963 tourists were reached for this study's minimum sample size of 300. As a result, structured instruments (questionnaires) were circulated to visitors in the same way that (C. C. Chen et al., 2013) adopted in their research. The utilization of a non-probability (purposive) sampling method in this study effectively ensured a well-balanced representation of respondents, but the conclusions may only apply to similar locations, limiting their applicability to a broader audience. To distribute the questionnaire, three helpers were hired. The author meticulously watched and oversaw the whole data-collecting procedure.

Measurement Scale and Development of Questionnaire

Seven parts of a single questionnaire were created. The questionnaire made an effort to use a multiple-item scale to assess the conceptualized elements of a theoretical model. Table 1 shows the literature source and measurement scales of the study. The first part of the study was to assess tourists' emotional reactions while they were in Alleppey. The scale developed by Hosany (2010) was used to assess the emotions in this study. The scale consists of fifteen measurements that represent emotion's components ("joy, love, and positive surprise"). The

construct ("delight, enthusiasm, joy, pleasure, and cheerful") were used to quantify the emotion of joy. The indications of love (such as "warm-hearted, affection, caring, love, and tenderness") were used to evaluate it. The five characteristics "fascinated, surprised, inspired, astonishment, and amazement" were used to determine positive surprise. Using a four-item Likert scale, Alleppey's destination image was evaluated (Stylidis et al., 2017). Using a five-item questionnaire, travelers' satisfaction with the travel is also assessed. This is in line with the findings of (Y. K. Lee et al., 2008). Utilising a 3-item scale created by Lee et al (2008) recommendation intention was recorded. Attributes (including "age, occupation, gender, marital status, income, and education") are used to capture the socio-demographic profile of the sample.

Joy (5 Items)	Enthusiasm	(Hosany, 2015; Hosany and Gilbert, 2010; Prayag <i>et al.</i> , 2013, 2015)(Prayag <i>et al.</i> , 2013)
	delight	
	cheerful	
	pleasure	
	joy	
Love (5 Items)	Caring	(Hosany, 2015; Hosany and Gilbert, 2010; Prayag <i>et al.</i> , 2013, 2015)(Prayag <i>et al.</i> , 2013)
	warm-hearted	
	Tenderness	
	Love	
	Affection	
Positive surprise (5 Items)	Amazement	(Hosany, 2015; Hosany and Gilbert, 2010; Prayag <i>et al.</i> , 2013, 2015)
	Astonishment	

	Surprise	
	Inspiration	
	Fascinated	
Perceived destination image (4 Items)	Scenery and natural attractions of the Place	(Prayag and Ryan, 2012)(Lam González <i>et al.</i> , 2015)(Yang <i>et al.</i> , 2009)(Prayag <i>et al.</i> , 2013) (Wang and Hsu, 2010)
	Climate and weather of the Place	
	Unpolluted and unspoiled environment	
	Exciting and interesting place to visit	
Tourist satisfaction (5 Items)	I truly enjoyed visiting this place	(Prayag and Ryan, 2012)(Lam González <i>et al.</i> , 2015)(Yang <i>et al.</i> , 2009)(Prayag <i>et al.</i> , 2013) (Wang and Hsu, 2010)
	Visiting this beach has met my needs	
	This tour has exceeded my expectations	
	I am satisfied considering the money and time I spent here	
	Overall, I am fully satisfied with this tour	
Intention to recommend (3 Items)	Recommend to friends and family	(Prayag and Ryan, 2012)(Lam González <i>et al.</i> , 2015)(Yang <i>et al.</i> , 2009)(Prayag <i>et al.</i> , 2013) (Wang and Hsu, 2010)
	Encourage others to visit	
	Tell positive things to others	
Intention to revisit (4 Items)	I have an intention to revisit the place	(Prayag <i>et al.</i> , 2015)(Prayag and Ryan, 2012)(Prayag, 2009)
	I am willing to revisit this place	

	I will make an effort to revisit the place	
	I am willing to spend time and money to revisit the place.	

The initial development of the survey instrument involved creating it in English, followed by a translation into Tamil, Malayalam, Kannada, and Telugu with the assistance of a language editor and a professional translator. Except for a few minor grammatical issues, the participants did not recommend any significant changes to the questionnaire. The questionnaire was modified by considering the comments on clarity, significant missing elements, and appropriateness suggested by the experts. The questionnaire underwent a pilot test among 45 visitors of Alleppey to examine the clarity and relevance. To accomplish this, Cronbach's alpha coefficient values were computed (Liébana-Cabanillas et al., 2018). It is considered that the statements used to measure a specific variable exhibit internal consistency if the value surpasses the threshold of 0.7 (Pham & Ho, 2015). After making a slight change and considering the outcomes of the aforementioned tests, the questionnaire's final form was developed.

Data Analysis

The initial data preparation was carried out to assess the sample data for analysis and descriptive statistics were performed after screening the data. Confirmatory factor analysis was conducted to evaluate the model's validity and reliability (Vieira, 2006). According to Bollen (1989), the criteria for evaluating the fit indices were as follows: χ^2/df between 1 and 3, GFI and CFI above 0.90, and RMSEA below 0.08. Subsequently, by using CFA and SEM, the properties of the conceptual model were examined. Finally, path coefficients were analyzed. The author has used SPSS version 21 and AMOS to perform this entire process.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondent's Profile

A sample of 345 individuals who traveled to Alleppey as domestic tourists participated in the research study is illustrated in table 2. Among the total sample, 53.33% were males and 46.67% were females. The largest portion of the tourists (65.22%) was married, while the remaining 34.78% were single. Regarding age, the sample included tourists from various age categories, with the largest percentage in the 45-54 age range (24.06%), followed by the 35-44 age range (19.71%) and those aged 65 years and above (19.42%). Regarding education, most of the tourists (56.13%) had finished their education up to the 12th class, while 45.22% had completed graduation or higher. Regarding their employment status, more than half of the tourists (53.63%) in the sample were either employed full-time or were self-employed. Additionally, 60% of the tourists were repeated visitors to Alleppey specifically for spa tourism.

Demographic	Classification	Proportion (sample, n=345)	
		Number	Percentage
Gender	Male	184	53.33
	Female	161	46.67
Marital Status	Single	120	34.78
	Married	225	65.22
	others	0	0.00
Age	18 – 24	31	8.99
	25 – 34	42	12.17
	35 – 44	68	19.71
	45 – 54	83	24.06
	55 – 64	54	15.65
	65 and Above	67	19.42
Level of Education	Up to 10 th Class	68	19.71
	12 th Class	121	35.07
	Graduate	83	24.06
	Post Graduate & Above	73	21.16
Occupation	Full-time employee	98	28.41
	Part-time employee	59	17.10
	Self employed	87	25.22
	Retired	38	11.01
	Students	51	14.78
	Unemployed	12	3.48
	Others	0	0.00
Income (Indian Rupees)	Less than 1Lakh	58	16.81

	1–2.99999 Lakh	119	34.49
	3–4.99999 Lakh	78	22.61
	5–9.99999 Lakh	51	14.78
	10 Lakh and above	39	11.30
Visit	First time	138	40.00
	Repeat	207	60.00

Note: n=sample size, %=percentage of sample”.

Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive statistics table 3 provide insight into the responses of tourists visiting Alleppey for spa tourism. The mean score for joy is 4.1, indicating that tourists have experienced a high level of joy during their visit. Similarly, the mean score for love is 3.89, indicating that tourists have felt a moderate level of love during their visit. The mean score for positive surprise is 3.96, indicating that tourists have experienced a moderate level of positive surprise during their visit. The mean score for perceived destination image is 4.27, demonstrating that travelers have a favorable opinion of the image of the destination. The mean score for visitor satisfaction is 4.05, expressing that they are satisfied with Alleppey`s spa tourism. The mean score for intention to recommend is 3.88, indicating that tourists are moderately desiring to suggest the place to others. The mean score for intention to revisit is 4.1, this suggests that tourists have a moderate level of willingness to visit the place again. From this table, it is inferred that travelers visiting Alleppey for spa tourism have had a positive experience overall, with high levels of joy and a positive image of the destination. However, there is a possibility for improvement in terms of providing a more consistent positive surprise experience for tourists.

Items	Mean (n=345)	Standard deviation	Cronbach ‘ α
Joy	4.1	1.23	0.91
Enthusiasm	3.98	1.27	
Deleight	4.1	1.45	
Cheerful	4.23	1.12	
Pleasure	4.34	0.89	

	Joy	3.85	1.42	
Love		3.89	1.41	0.87
	Caring	4.41	1.34	
	warm-hearted	3.65	1.67	
	Tenderness	3.43	1.42	
	Love	3.86	0.85	
	Affection	4.12	1.78	
Positive surprise		3.96	1.51	0.79
	Amazement	3.21	1.43	
	Astonishment	3.81	1.87	
	Surprise	4.34	1.38	
	Inspiration	4.12	1.52	
	Fascinated	4.32	1.39	
Perceived destination image		4.27	1.3	0.87
	Scenery and natural attractions of the Place	4.32	1.45	
	Climate and weather of the Place	3.92	0.87	
	Unpolluted and unspoiled environment	4.31	1.29	
	Exciting and interesting place to visit	4.56	1.61	
Tourist satisfaction		4.05	1.53	0.89
	I truly enjoyed visiting this place	3.87	1.61	
	Visiting this place has met my needs	4.23	1.57	
	This tour has exceeded my expectations	3.73	1.31	
	I am satisfied considering the money and time I spent here	4.34	1.16	

	Overall, I am fully satisfied with this tour	4.12	1.51	
Intention to recommend		3.88	1.23	0.83
	Recommend to friends and family	3.56	1.49	
	Encourage others to visit	3.85	0.85	
	Tell positive things to others	4.24	1.35	
Intention to revisit		4.1	1.48	0.85
	I have an intention to revisit the place	4.46	1.45	
	I am willing to revisit this place	4.42	1.38	
	I will make an effort to revisit the place	3.65	1.43	
	I am willing to spend time and money to revisit the place.	3.87	1.67	

“Note: n=sample size; α =alpha”.

Measurement Model

The model displayed a satisfactory fit, as evidenced by the indices ($\chi^2=385.33$, $df=189$), indicating an overall fit between the observed data and the theoretical model. The model fit indices were higher than the required minimum of 0.90, with CFI=0.99 and GFI=0.96, indicating an appropriate fit (Fidell et al., 2013). Furthermore, the indices $2/df=2.039$ and RMSEA=0.067, which further demonstrate the applicability of the measurement model, fulfilled the range of 1 to 3 for χ^2/df and corresponding cut-off conditions of 0.08 for RMSEA (Hair et al., 2014). It is important to highlight that all the indices achieved statistical significance with a p-value of less than ($P < .001$) Table 4.

Table 4 MEASUREMENT MODEL				
Constructs	Standard loadings	t-value	Composite reliability	AVE

Joy				0.82	0.61
	Enthusiasm	0.7	13.26*		
	delight	0.78	14.23*		
	cheerful	0.71	13.98		
	pleasure	0.69	14.898		
	joy	0.84	13.11*		
Love				0.88	0.67
	Caring	0.72	17.89*		
	warm-hearted	0.63	15.23*		
	Tenderness	0.83	16.41*		
	Love	0.78	14.41*		
	Affection	0.84	13.61*		
Positive surprise				0.91	0.72
	Amazement	0.76	17.98*		
	Astonishment	0.8	16.81*		
	Surprise	0.71	18.81*		
	Inspiration	0.69	15.71*		
	Fascinated	0.76	14.12*		
Perceived destination image				0.86	0.71
	Scenery and natural attractions of the Place	0.79	13.87*		
	Climate and weather of the Place	0.81	16.73*		
	Unpolluted and unspoiled environment	0.75	14.89*		
	Exciting and interesting place to visit	0.81	16.74*		
Tourist satisfaction				0.81	0.74
	I truly enjoyed visiting this place	0.83	15.78*		

	Visiting this place has met my needs	0.82	16.83*		
	This tour has exceeded my expectations	0.79	14.45*		
	I am satisfied considering the money and time I spent here	0.81	16.87*		
	Overall, I am fully satisfied with this tour	0.82	17.56*		
Intention to recommend				0.85	0.64
	Recommend to friends and family	0.76	16.51*		
	Encourage others to visit	0.77	15.86*		
	Tell positive things to others	0.82	17.66*		
Intention to revisit				0.79	0.72
	I have an intention to revisit the place	0.83	15.74*		
	I am willing to revisit this place	0.84	14.67*		
	I will make an effort to revisit the place	0.79	13.56*		
	I am willing to spend time and money to revisit the place.	0.82	14.89*		

“Note: AVE=average variance extracted; *p < .001; **p < .01”.

Pearson's correlation technique was employed to examine the correlations between different constructs in this study. The inter-construct correlation matrix displays the correlation coefficients between the constructs assessed in the research. Each construct is denoted by a number ranging from 1 to 7. The diagonal of the matrix exhibits the correlations between each construct and itself, which is always 1. The cells outside

the main diagonal depict the correlations between the construct's pairs. As an illustration, Love and Positive Surprise correlate by 0.42, whereas Love and Joy have an association of 0.41. The significance level of the correlation coefficients is indicated by asterisks. Correlations with $*p < .001$ are considered highly significant, while those with $**p < .01$ are moderately significant. Destination image and tourist satisfaction show a substantial positive correlation of 0.69, indicating a strong positive association between both categories. Similarly, the correlation of 0.72 suggests that tourists are more intent to visit the destination again, intention to recommend.

Construct		M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	Joy	4.1	1.23	0.61						
2	Love	3.89	1.41	0.41*	0.67					
3	Positive Surprise	3.96	1.51	0.35*	0.42*	0.72				
4	Perceived Destination image	4.27	1.3	0.31*	0.27*	0.39*	0.71			
5	Tourist Satisfaction	4.05	1.53	0.23*	0.35*	0.46*	0.69*	0.74		
6	Intention to recommend	3.88	1.23	0.57*	0.38*	0.47*	0.41*	0.37*	0.64	
7	Intention to revisit	4.1	1.48	0.42*	0.36*	0.51*	0.39*	0.33*	0.54*	0.72
* $p < .001$; ** $p < .01$; M=mean; SD=standard deviation; a=average variance extracted; b=inter-constructs correlation".										

Structural Model

Maximum likelihood and SEM were applied to evaluate the structural characteristics of the model. The connections between the constructions were created using models and theories from earlier studies. The proposed conceptual model was evaluated utilizing several indices, including "2/ df, CFI, GFI, and RMSEA." Test indices showed an acceptable fit ($\chi^2=437.85$, $df=149$). The fit indices were greater than the cutoff of 0.90 (CFI = 0.90 and GFI = 0.93)(Byrne, 2001). Additionally, these ($\chi^2/df=2.97$ and RMSEA=0.071) further demonstrate the structural model's suitability with the cut-off limits (RMSEA: 0.081 and $1/3$ for χ^2/df , respectively) (Turner & Reisinger, 2001). The statistical significance level for each of the indices was determined to be ($P < .001$).

Path coefficients Analysis

The graphical representation of the path diagram confirms the relationships outlined in hypotheses 1, 2, and 3. The corresponding beta (β) coefficients were found to be 0.37, 0.27, and 0.49, respectively. Concerning the overall destination image, these pathways account for 32.21% of the variability ($R^2 = 0.3212$). The paths corresponding to hypotheses 4, 5, and 6 were similarly supported, showing beta (β) coefficients of 0.27, 0.45, and 0.46, respectively. Additionally, the path connected to hypothesis 7 was confirmed, showing a beta (β) value of 0.67, which explained 46.81% of the variation in satisfaction ($R^2=0.4771$). The figure 2 demonstrates that hypothesis 8 and 9 were accurate, with beta values of 0.47 and 0.49, respectively. Additionally, with values of 0.37 and 0.43 for the paths corresponding to hypotheses 10 and 11, respectively, they were also supported. With respect to the intentions to revisit ($R^2=0.306$) and recommend ($R^2=0.266$), these paths account for 30.25% and 26.11% of the variability, respectively. Significantly, all eleven paths exhibited statistical significance in the anticipated directions.

Figure.2. Alt Text. This figure gives an understanding role of specific emotions like Joy, Love, and positive surprise in predicting the their destination image, satisfaction, and behavioral intentions towards spa tourism.

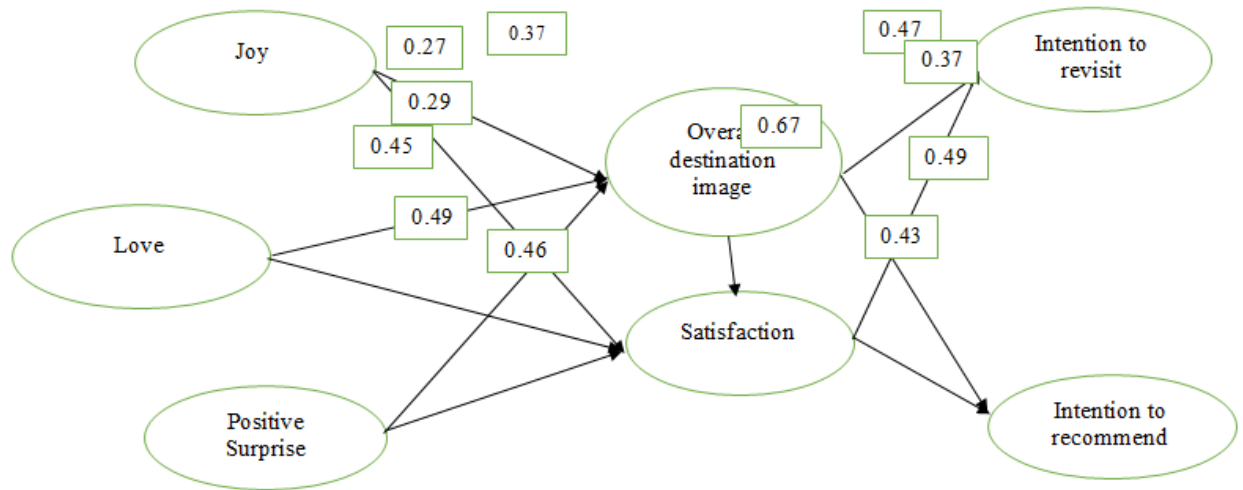


FIGURE 2

THE MODEL OF TOURISTS' EMOTIONS TOWARDS BEHVIORAL INTENTIONS SHOWING PATH COEFFICIENT

Hypothesis Testing

The hypothesized model suggests that there are significant relationships between the constructs being studied is depicted in table 5. All the hypotheses are supported, as denoted by the significant coefficients (β) and t-values. This study supported H1, H2, and H3 by demonstrating that “emotions of joy, love, and positive surprise” have a considerable influence on the image of the destination. The findings of this study conflict with those of the publication by (Prayag et al., 2015) whereby pleasant surprise and overall image did not appear to be significantly correlated. The findings that the pleasant “emotions of Joy, love, and positive surprise” have a substantial effect on satisfaction support hypotheses H4, H5, and H6. H7 is supported by the finding that there is a substantial correlation between satisfaction and overall image. (Wang & Hsu, 2010) likewise discovered a comparable outcome in their different study settings. The association between satisfaction and overall image was determined to be the one with the greatest correlation among all of the factors under investigation. This study supports H8 and H9 by showing a strong association between the destination’s image and the inclination to return and recommend. It corroborates the findings of (Bigné *et al.*, 2005). Finally, while validating hypotheses H10 and H11, the findings reveal a substantial correlation between satisfaction and the behavioural intention. These connections were also supported by earlier investigations (Chi & Qu, 2008). The research suggests that a higher degree of satisfaction would encourage visitors to return and recommend the location to others.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Academic Implications

This study will aid scholars in comprehending how specific emotions (such as "joy," "love," and "positive surprise"), coupled with the destination's image and satisfaction, affect visitors' behavior toward wellness spa tourism. The study clarified the notion of how emotions are formed in tourism studies and showed that the emotions of visitors have several dimensions. Numerous research publications recognize the multidimensional character of emotion, but only a few studies have developed a theoretical model with specific emotions. This study filled this gap in the tourism literature by adding "specific emotions" to comprehend visitors' behavior in wellness spa tourism. "Joy, love, and positive surprises" are the aspects of travelers' emotions. Among all the dimensions, joy scored the highest mean score. The second factor was a positive surprise, and love got the lowest average rating. According to the data, travelers who chose Alleppey as a spa vacation location rated the city to be more cheerful, delightful, and pleasurable than amazing, caring, and fascinating. A significant conclusion that can be made from the data is that wellness spa tourism is the only sector where pleasant emotional experiences are predominant. This research demonstrates the distinctiveness of wellness tourism within the travel and tourism sector. This study makes a methodological addition by addressing the problems with measuring visitors' emotions and outlining the advantages of evaluating certain emotions in wellness tourism. According to the study's findings, satisfaction and overall image are affected differently by love, joy, and positive surprise. Researchers studying tourism should use caution when reducing emotions to categorical contrasts (positive vs. negative).

Managerial Implications

This research offers vital information for developing, planning, and putting into practice tourism policies in the spa tourism sector. It is advised that marketers and organizations with specialized knowledge (such as "tour operators, travel agencies, hotel chains, and local governments") foster particular positive emotions (i.e. "joy, love, and positive surprise") as they directly contribute to the enhancement and creation of a consistent and thorough image about the place (Qu et al., 2011). Strong evidence is shown in this study to support the idea that behavioural intentions are directly influenced by satisfaction. Managers of tourist destinations should be aware of how essential satisfaction is in motivating visitors' behavioural intentions. Advertisements in tourist destinations should place a strong emphasis on evoking and provoking emotions that aim to stimulate and encourage positive emotions. To evoke the emotional appeal of visitors, destinations all over the world have been employing music, visual effects, and photography in their advertising campaigns. Particularly, tourist providers have to make an effort to provoke, and advance joyful and loving emotions through advertising appeals. The objective of marketers and neighborhood businesses should be to provide on-site experiences that please visitors and beyond their expectations.

Multiple strategies may be employed by destination marketers to foster a satisfying emotional experience while visiting the location. Marketers may set up a romantic location where visitors can take in the scenery and indulge in spa services. Visitors may be given the chance to take part in some of the games planned for them in the location. Similar to this, they could be set up in a tranquil area of the main attraction where visitors enjoy pausing for brief relaxation following their regular spa treatments. Marketers could create "surprising," "unexpected," and "spurring" activities for tourists. Additionally, this ought to surprise visitors to the area. However, destination marketers must consistently innovate if they want to surprise visitors. For example, a) In Alleppey, a destination for wellness tourism, visitors may get the chance to learn about how locals support their way of life; b) Tourists may be allowed to speak with spa trainers to comprehend spas and their wellness advantages; c) For the

entertainment of visitors, a spa camp may be set up at any time. Spa and resort managers may easily surpass visitors' expectations if they have a thorough understanding of what they anticipate from wellness tourism and what they need from their accommodations. However, failing to accurately analyze guests' needs might negatively impact their whole experience.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

The findings should be viewed carefully for their limitations while also suggesting a potential course for future tourism marketing study. To begin with, the conceptualized model was only considered in light of a single wellness spa tourism location. This restricts how far the findings may be applied. Research in the future may study the correlations in different locations with various tourism contexts. This study was conducted under a specific time frame and environmental conditions. To determine how time affects the model, future studies may investigate the suggested model using a longitudinal method. This article focuses on domestic travelers who travel to Alleppey, so the conclusions may not be relevant to research utilizing foreign tourists. The presented model may be investigated further utilizing information from foreign tourists. Additionally, utilizing the suggested approach, a comparison between domestic and foreign visitors may be done. Future research should use an attribute-level measurement scale to assess visitor satisfaction (Vieira, 2006). Only domestic visitors are taken into account in this study's sample. This is because there are far fewer foreign tourists visiting Alleppey than there are domestic tourists. Future research would be worthwhile if it could duplicate the results on overseas tourists, so that more information on the subject may be incorporated into theory and practice, adding to the scholarly discussion on spa tourism and offering practical advice to destination marketers, decision-makers, and tourists organizations working to enhance spa tourism in Alleppey. Finally, Future studies should investigate the potential emotional antecedents of tourism, since these factors may improve comprehension of these notions when tested to the aforementioned conceptualized ideas. Future studies should be done on how technology is used to promote the destination spa resorts in Alleppey. Additionally, organized spa and resort professionals are needed to focus on wellness tourism as a niche industry to change how the majority of international tourists view India—who just see it as a passable spa destination—and turn it into a preferred wellness tourism destination.

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Received: 09-Oct-2023, Manuscript No. AMSJ-23-14081; **Editor assigned:** 10-Oct-2023, PreQC No. AMSJ-23-14081(PQ); **Reviewed:** 29-Dec-2023, QC No. AMSJ-23-14081; **Revised:** 29-Feb-2024, Manuscript No. AMSJ-23-14081(R); **Published:** 02-Mar-2024