

Manuscript number: JTMA-D-13-00497R1

Title: Mitigating the seasonality of tourism demand in peripheral areas: A case study of the use of 'Wellbeing tourism' for destination development

Comments to author(s):

Thank you very much for submitting the manuscript for review.

There are several major weaknesses in your paper. The written language does not flow well and the paper is difficult to follow at places. The Review of relevant literature is thin and unclear; and the Conclusion does not flow from the findings but is seemingly a stand-alone entity. Much of the Conclusion should be moved to the start of the paper to set the direction for the flow of the paper; as it is relating to the background of your research. This did not however appear until the Conclusion and the paper is confusing, disjointed and fragmented. The contents of the paper are very thin and the paper does not meet the rigour and criteria required by Tourism Management. I therefore reject this paper.

Specifically, my comments on this paper are:

You used a number of 'assumptions' as stated in your paper. For example, p. 3 'Theoretical framework', line 7 '... by *assuming* that wellbeing tourism development in the region of Vaasa (Finland) follows the same structure as tourism development in other peripheral destinations...'; and p. 4 third paragraph 'Because research on factors... It is here *assumed* that the potential of wellbeing tourism to mitigate the effects of seasonality on demand...". Such assumptions without evidence or reason are not appropriate. You should provide evidence from other research or appropriate comparative studies to support your 'assumptions'. At present, the way the paper as written implies that your research is built on 'assumptions'.

In pages 3 and 4 you deliberated the differences between 'wellbeing' and 'wellness' tourism; however, in p. 5 second paragraph, lines 7 and 8, you stated '...brand their own unique forms of wellbeing/wellness tourism'. Are wellbeing tourism and wellness tourism the same or similar and are they to be used interchangeably in your paper?

Page 6 third paragraph: 'a tentative model for the destination-level development of wellbeing tourism can be put forward (Figure 3)': Figure 3 looks a *table* and it is not clear what *model* can be suggested or derived from Figure 3. Do you mean the table (Figure 3) is actually a flow chart so that one phase leads to next?

Moreover in page 6 fourth paragraph you 'assume' wellbeing tourism development can be divided into three phases. Is it divided into three phases? Why or why not? Any evidence to suggest this is the case? This paragraph is difficult to follow. It is fragmented and disjointed.

In p. 9 you provided a 'pragmatic definition' of wellbeing tourism. This definition is both vague and very broad whilst limiting the backdrop of wellbeing tourism to nature-based destinations. Does wellbeing tourism only take place in natural areas? What does 'natural area' mean? Is, for example, a Japanese Zen garden considered to be a 'natural area'? Are

those visitors going to monasteries for 'retreat' considered 'wellbeing' tourists assuming the visitor feels well afterwards? This proposed 'pragmatic definition' of wellbeing tourism effectively can mean any type of tourism as long as the tourist had fun, did various activities such as hiking, have their needs satisfied, enjoy good accommodation and food and felt well afterwards, (and the tourism takes place in a natural area); I don't, however, believe that this is what you intended it to be (page 10, first paragraph, lines 10-14). Your proposed 'pragmatic definition' is quite problematic.

The Conclusion does not flow from the Findings. P. 12 fourth paragraph: You should elaborate on the *Travel and relax project* and the *Wellness lake* in more detail in your Introduction and Literature Review in order to draw out comparisons and analysis of the Vaasa wellbeing tourism offerings. For instance, on p.14, first line you stated 'The Travel and relax project in the region of Vaasa was analysed for gaps in the planning process, which might influence the mitigating effects of tourism demand'. It is not clear that the Travel and project has been analysed explicitly earlier in your paper.

Recommendations: Reject.