

A STUDY ON THE ANTECEDENTS OF REVISIT INTENTION FOR KOREAN MEDICAL TOURISM: FOCUSING ON CHINESE MEDICAL TOURISTS

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ABSTRACT. *This study attempts to investigate the influences of medical service quality, accessibility, cost adequacy, and tourism quality of Korean medical tourism on tourists' satisfaction and revisit intention, by targeting Chinese medical tourists. For the purpose of empirical study, a survey has been conducted to Chinese medical tourists who have experienced Korean medical services. After eliminating questionnaires with irrelevant answers and missing values, 264 questionnaires out of 312 questionnaires have been analyzed in hypotheses tests. The results of the study are as follows. First, the factors of medical tourism attributes including quality of medical service, cost adequacy, and quality of tourism have turned out to have positive effects on medical tourists' satisfaction, while accessibility has not shown significant effect on tourists' satisfaction. Second, tourists' satisfaction has a positive effect on revisit intention.*

Keywords: Korean medical tourism, Chinese medical tourists, Medical tourism attributes, Tourists' satisfaction, Revisit intention

1. **Introduction.** The rate of service industry increased rapidly with changes in the industrial structure, and the continued increase in service industry resulted in saturation of the service industry [1]. With service-related industries currently saturated in Korea, domestic medical tourism, which can reconsider the growth and development of the service industry, is rapidly emerging as an attractive industry. In the face of the government's growing policy and investment in domestic medical tourism, Korea's medical tourism market is experiencing explosive growth every year despite a shortage of medical tourism-related professionals and difficulties in the domestic medical tourism industry where domestic medical laws and policies are not systematically formulated [2].

Tourists seeking medical tourism seek incentives to visit foreign countries for treatment purposes from a variety of factors, including advanced technology, higher accessibility, high quality of medical services and appropriate costs compared with the countries they reside in [3]. Since the 2000s, Korea has rapidly emerged as a tourist destination favored by foreigners, along with the popularity of 'Hallyu' content such as K-pop and dramas. Based on its high level of expertise, Korea Medical Tourism is highly regarded for its treatment achievements in medical areas such as cosmetic and beauty-related treatment, medical examination, disk surgery, cardiovascular surgery, and cancer treatment, and attracts foreign medical tourists with its high competitiveness in many ways, including medical equipment, medical services and cost adequacy [2].

For medical tourism in Korea, the market share is at an early stage of growth with a lower level of market share compared to advanced government-led medical tourism countries such as Thailand, Singapore and India, and thus we are trying to analyze problems such as current policies and conditions for promoting domestic medical tourism [4]. In addition, according to the Korea Health Industry Promotion Agency (2018), Korean medical tourism ranked first in the number of patients in each country with 99,837 out of 321,574 foreigners, and 31.0 percent of all foreign patients in 2017. Of the total, the proportion of female patients accounts for 70.9 percent, followed by 29.2 percent for those in their 30s and 27.1 percent for those in their 20s, with 72.6 percent of the total patients using medical institutions based in Seoul. Meanwhile, the total amount of medical care paid by Chinese medical tourists came to 184.1 billion won in 2017, of which the total amount paid by inpatients was tallied at 56.7 billion won. The average medical cost per person was 1.84 million won, and the average medical cost per inpatient was 6.65 million won [5]. This can be said to have a very high economic impact on the Chinese portion of Korea's medical tourism industry every year after year. Therefore, it is essential to identify factors that affect the satisfaction of medical tourism and revisit of Chinese people who are visiting Korea for the purpose of medical tourism in order to ensure stable growth and development of Korea's medical tourism industry.

Based on these market conditions, multiple medical tourism studies have been conducted on Chinese visitors. Research has been conducted on the motivation and choice of Korean medical tourism for various purposes and backgrounds, including the choice of destination for Chinese medical tourists visiting Korea, the purpose and propensity of Chinese consumers to visit Korea, the effect of perceived risk, loyalty, and the behaviour of beauty and plastic surgery-related medical tourism [6-9].

However, research on medical tourism properties that affect medical tourism satisfaction is insufficient, and it is deemed necessary to study medical tourism attributes through a multi-dimensional approach such as medical service quality, tourism quality, cost and accessibility. Therefore, in this study, the medical tourism attributes recognized by the Chinese in Korea had an effect on the satisfaction of medical tourism and the effect of medical tourism satisfaction on the revisit. Based on the results of this study, we would like to present a direction for future Chinese consumer behavior research in the Korean medical tourism industry, and present strategic implications for the continued development and growth of the Korean medical tourism market.

2. Theoretical Background and Hypotheses.

2.1. Medical tourism attributes. The concept of medical tourism as defined by the Korean Tourism Promotion Act is recognized as a new tourism form combining medical services and activities such as recreation, leisure and cultural activities, and is used as a combination of medical and tourism. Article 12 of the Tourism Promotion Act of Korea defines medical tourism as a tourism in parallel with medical services by patients and their partners who receive medical services through treatment, treatment or surgery of domestic medical institutions [1]. In general, when defining medical tourism, it can be defined as a kind of travel package for patients traveling abroad for the purpose of receiving medical services [10]. In sum, medical tourism can be defined as a new type of tourism that simultaneously experiences two different types of services: medical services and tourism services [11].

Meanwhile, medical tourism attributes include those that are convenient to travel abroad for medical tourism, easy access, reasonable medical costs, short waiting time, high quality medical treatment, and simultaneous treatment and tourism [12,13]. Therefore, medical tourism attributes must be able to reflect both medical and tourism attributes,

which can consist of subassemblies such as quality of medical services, convenience, accessibility, and differentiation [14,15]. To sum this up, the previous preceding study could be viewed as consisting of optional attributes that value consumers from an institutional perspective rather than from the perspective of goods and services that influence medical tourism choices and some user-side studies focused on medical services, effectively lacking research on tourism service factors [7].

Medical tourism attributes have been studied in different variables depending on the researcher's perspective. Lin's study on the revitalization of international medical tourism in Southeast Asia identified four attributes factors: the world economy environment affecting medical tourism, medical technology, medical service levels, and geographical accessibility to destinations [16]. Meanwhile, a study by Kwak et al. examined the medical choice and tourist choice attributes of foreigners visiting Korea for medical tourism purposes, and confirmed that the results showed that doctors' expertise, convenience of communication, price adequacy, and post-procedure service had a significant impact on their choice [17,18].

In this study, medical tourism attributes were defined as Korea Visit Motives as a form of tourism combining medical activities and tourism activities and consist of four attributes including medical service quality, accessibility, cost adequacy and tourism quality as subcomponents.

2.2. Medical tourism satisfaction. Research into customer satisfaction is conducted in various fields, so are the academic definitions of this. In general, customer satisfaction can be defined as the overall emotional state of consumers who experience after a particular activity, and thus satisfaction in the medical tourism sector means an evaluation of the overall performance of the experience of medical tourism [19]. According to a study by Baker and Crompton, satisfaction is defined as a cognitive response to the expectations of medical tourists before their visit, a positive oral or recommendation assessed after the tour [20].

In order to identify the effects of the four attributes of medical service quality, accessibility, cost adequacy and tourism quality, which are adopted as sub-concepts of medical tourism attributes, the preceding variables in this study, the following information was identified.

Studies by Choi and Kim confirmed that the quality of medical services and the benefits of distance have a positive effect on the satisfaction of medical tourism, and that the lower the quality of tourism services, the lower the satisfaction of medical tourism [21]. This indicates that the parameters of this study, medical service quality, accessibility and tourism quality, are related to medical tourism satisfaction and positive(+). Meanwhile, a study by Cho found that for Chinese medical tourists, the quality and accessibility of medical services among the characteristics of choosing a destination for medical tourism have a positive effect on the satisfaction of medical tourists [14]. In other words, medical tourists from China may have an impact on medical service quality and accessibility in selecting Korea as a destination for medical tourism.

Wang et al. argued that there was a significant influence in the relationship between the quality factors of medical tourism services and customer satisfaction [22]. Based on the above medical tourism attributes and literature research on medical tourism satisfaction, the following hypotheses were derived from this study.

H1: Medical tourism attributes will have a positive effect on tourists satisfaction.

H1a: Medical service quality will have a positive effect on tourists satisfaction.

H1b: Accessibility will have a positive effect on tourists satisfaction.

H1c: Cost adequacy will have a positive effect on tourists satisfaction.

H1d: Tourism quality will have a positive effect on tourists satisfaction.

2.3. Revisit intention. The intention of a visit can be defined as a resultant variable resulting from customer satisfaction, which can be defined by the recognition of the product or service after purchase [14]. Behavioral, i.e., oral, recommendation, intent to visit, or revisit means the possibility of consumers' planned future behavior translating their beliefs and attitudes into action [23]. Research in tourism has been conducted on the intention of recommending and revisiting tourists in behavior that appears after they form an attitude toward a target [6]. Therefore, the Chinese people's positive attitude toward medical tourism in Korea for the purpose of medical tourism increases the level of revisiting intention. In addition, revisit means whether medical tourists intend to revisit the medical institution after using a specific medical period, and when a customer uses a medical institution, a revisit may be formed as a result of the quality of medical service and satisfaction and confidence in it [24].

In a study by Kim and others on the relationship between tourism quality and perceived value, satisfaction, and behavior, it was argued that tourism satisfaction had a positive effect on behaviour [25]. Meanwhile, research by Jang et al. confirmed that medical tourism satisfaction has a significant effect on revisiting [24], Wang et al.'s analysis of the relationship between Korean medical tourism satisfaction and revisiting degree in Chinese confirmed that medical tourism satisfaction has a positive effect on revisiting [22].

As discussed above, it was confirmed that medical tourism satisfaction could have a positive and significant impact on revisiting, and the following assumptions were established based on prior research.

H2: Tourists satisfaction will have a positive effect on revisit intention.

Based on the assumptions set above, the research model is presented as shown in Figure 1. This study examined the impact of medical service quality, accessibility, price adequacy and quality of tourism on tourist satisfaction and revisit in medical tourism of Chinese medical tourists to Korea.

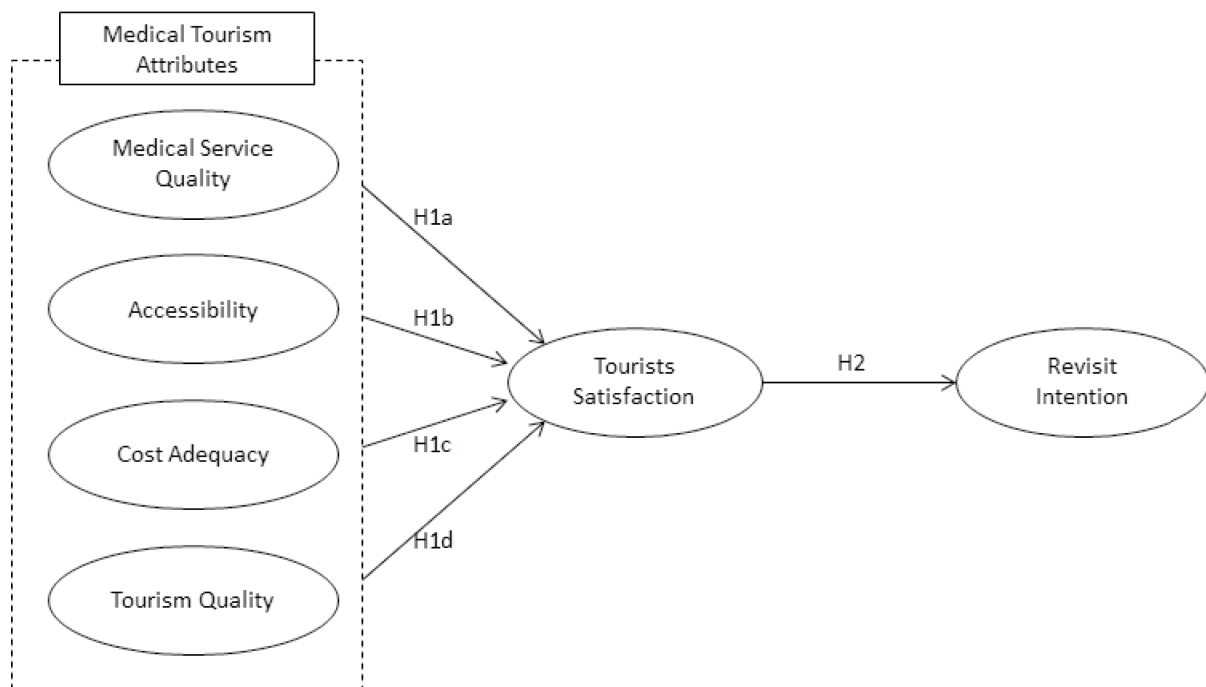


FIGURE 1. Research model

3. Research Design.

3.1. Methodology. The purpose of this study is to check how the Korean medical tourism attributes including medical service quality, accessibility, cost adequacy, and quality of tourism show effects on medical tourism satisfaction and subsequently on revisit intention. Therefore, questionnaires were distributed and collected among tourists who visited Korea as medical tourism destinations for the empirical analysis of this study. The survey was conducted over three weeks from December 7 to December 21, 2019, and 264 of the total 312 questionnaires distributed were retrieved. Of these, 264 copies were used for final analysis using SPS 18.0 and AMOS 21.0, except for incomplete questionnaires.

3.2. Measurement. The measurement items used in this study are composed of a total of 24 items that are modified and supplemented to suit the purpose of this study, focusing on prior research. The medical tourism attributes were composed of 16 questions, four for each attribute, in the studies of Chung [2], Cho [14], and Park [15].

Specifically, medical service quality consists of four categories: “The hygiene of the hospital is good”, “There is smooth communication support in the hospital”, “The hospital’s medical staff is professional”, “The hospital’s medical facilities are good”, “I think the flight time to Korea is short”, “I think the local travel time is short”, “Local transportation services are convenient” and accommodation close.

With respect to cost adequacy, it consists of four categories: “The cost of medical tourism is appropriate”, “The cost of medical tourism is generally satisfied with the cost of medical tourism”, “The cost of medical care and tourism is good for the country”, “The quality of medical services is good for the cost”, “The tourism products vary” and “The facilities and opportunities for local shopping” and “The amenities vary with the amenities of 4 items”.

Meanwhile, from the research by Chuang and Lee, the measurement questions for medical tourism satisfaction and the measurement questions for revisit were modified in the study of Kang et al., which consist of four measurement questions each [14,19,23].

Regarding tourist satisfaction, it consists of four categories: “I am generally satisfied with Korean medical tourism”, “I am satisfied with the tourist service”, “I am satisfied with the medical service”, “I do not regret the choice of using Korean medical tourism”, “I intend to use Korean medical tourism over other countries”, “I prefer to use Korean tourism” and “I will consider Korea as a destination country in case of medical tourism”.

4. Analysis.

4.1. Characteristic of respondents. The demographic characteristics of the sample are shown in Table 1. There were 76 men (28.79 percent) and 188 women (71.21 percent), 117 in their 20s (44.32 percent) and 83 in their 30s (31.44 percent). Income levels of less than 800,000 won and less than 1.2 million won are 123 (46.59 percent), nearly half of the total survey respondents, and the purpose of the visit is 80 percent of cosmetic surgery and skin care.

The ratio of high female patients, especially those in their 20s and 30s, is consistent with statistics released by the Korea Health Industry Promotion Agency (2018), and that nearly 80 percent of them take medical tours for cosmetic and beauty purposes.

Therefore, the subject of this survey can represent the entire Chinese medical tourist population and is a sample that meets the purpose of this study [2,5].

4.2. Confirmatory factor analysis. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was conducted to ensure the intensive validity and reliability of the variables presented in this study. The reliability of all measurement variables can be seen as above 0.8 and above the acceptance threshold of 0.7.

TABLE 1. Characteristics of respondents

Division	Item	Frq.	Ratio
Gender	Male	76	28.79%
	Female	188	71.21%
	Total	264	100%
Age	20s	117	44.32%
	30s	83	31.44%
	40s	48	18.18%
	Over 50s	16	6.06%
	Total	264	100%
Income	Less than \$500	19	7.20%
	\$500~\$800	43	16.29%
	\$800~\$1,200	123	46.59%
	\$1,200~\$1,500	55	20.83%
	More than \$1,500	24	9.09%
	Total	264	100%
Purpose of visit	Plastic surgery	105	39.78%
	Skin care	88	33.33%
	Other operation	48	18.18%
	Medical checkup	23	8.71%
	Total	264	100%
No. of visit to Korea	Once	38	14.39%
	Twice	70	26.52%
	3 times	74	28.03%
	4 times	53	20.08%
	5 times or more	29	10.98%
	Total	264	100%

On the other hand, the validity of the measurement model is identified by the convergent validity and discriminant validity, with the standard factor capacity of 0.7 (significant level of 0.01) and the Average Variance Extended (AVE) values above 0.5 and therefore the concentration per measurement variable is ensured. The CFA results for variables used in this study are given in Table 2.

4.3. Correlation analysis of measurement. Correlation analysis was conducted between the variables used in this study to determine the discriminant validity, and the results are given in Table 3.

Discriminant validity can be obtained when the AVE square root value for each variable is higher than the value of the correlation of all the variables being compared. The square root value of the AVE presented in the table may be lower than some correlation numbers, which may cause some problems with discriminative feasibility, but it may be judged that there is no problem of multiple coherence among the study variables because the correlation coefficient is not above 0.9 [26].

4.4. Path analysis. AMOS 21.0 was used to test the hypotheses of this study, and the analysis results indicate that the suitability of the research model can be met with the recommended levels ($\chi^2 = 265.154(218)$, $p = 0.000$, $\text{CMIN/DF} = 1.216$, $\text{RMR} = 0.045$, $\text{GFI} = 0.908$, $\text{TLI} = 0.958$, $\text{CFI} = 0.966$, $\text{AGFI} = 0.852$, $\text{RMSEA} = 0.032$). Therefore, the research model was determined that statistical analysis for the hypothesis test would not be unreasonable and the hypothesis test was conducted. The results of a hypotheses test using the structural equation are shown in Table 4.

TABLE 2. Results of confirmatory factor analysis

Construct	Item	Std. Est.	S.E.	t-value	CR	AVE
Quality of medical service	QM1	.825	—	—	.882	.659
	QM2	.790	.072	12.985		
	QM3	.828	.074	13.863		
	QM4	.803	.071	13.258		
Accessibility	AC1	.781	—	—	.875	.621
	AC2	.765	.094	11.275		
	AC3	.845	.094	12.542		
	AC4	.781	.100	10.067		
Cost adequacy	CA1	.838	—	—	.879	.635
	CA2	.745	.072	11.565		
	CA3	.835	.078	13.489		
	CA4	.761	.077	11.412		
Quality of tourism	QT1	.795	—	—	.842	.572
	QT2	.702	.088	10.575		
	QT3	.811	.085	12.285		
	QT4	.709	.091	10.475		
Tourists satisfaction	TS1	.811	—	—	.878	.612
	TS2	.762	.073	11.768		
	TS3	.823	.078	12.667		
	TS4	.785	.075	12.675		
Revisit intention	RI1	.865	—	—	.911	.785
	RI2	.847	.703	15.686		
	RI3	.895	.665	17.241		
	RI4	.832	.735	15.135		

$\chi^2 = 265.154(218)$, $p = 0.000$, $CMIN/DF = 1.216$, $RMR = 0.045$, $GFI = 0.908$, $TLI = 0.958$, $CFI = 0.966$, $AGFI = 0.852$, $RMSEA = 0.032$

TABLE 3. Discriminant validity

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
(1)	0.832					
(2)	0.775	0.811				
(3)	0.435	0.465	0.853			
(4)	0.756	0.682	0.538	0.872		
(5)	0.654	0.523	0.652	0.681	0.881	
(6)	0.634	0.582	0.645	0.684	0.792	0.925

*Squared root of AVE values are on the diagonal.

(1) Quality of medical service/(2) Accessibility/(3) Cost adequacy

(4) Quality of tourism/(5) Tourists satisfaction/(6) Revisit intention

First, H1a, which indicates that the quality of medical service has a positive effect on satisfaction in medical tourism, was adopted at the significance level of 0.05 ($\beta = 0.284$, $p = 0.041$). Second, H1b that accessibility had a positive effect on satisfaction in medical tourism was rejected because it did not appear to be significant ($\beta = 0.045$, $p = 0.584$). Third, H1c, which indicates that cost adequacy has a positive effect on satisfaction in medical tourism, was adopted at the significance level of 0.01 ($\beta = 0.412$, $p = 0.000$). Fourth, H1d, which indicates that the quality of tourism has a positive effect on satisfaction in medical tourism, was adopted at the significance level of 0.01 ($\beta = 0.354$, $p = 0.000$). Finally, H2, which indicates that satisfaction in medical tourism

TABLE 4. Results of path analysis

Hyp.		Std. Estimate	<i>p</i> -value	Results
H1	H1a	0.284	0.041	Accepted
H1	H1b	0.045	0.584	Rejected
H1	H1c	0.412	**	Accepted
H1	H1d	0.354	**	Accepted
H2		0.832	**	Accepted

$\chi^2 = 265.154(218)$, $p = 0.000$, $\text{CMIN/DF} = 1.216$, $\text{RMR} = 0.045$, $\text{GFI} = 0.908$, $\text{TLI} = 0.958$, $\text{CFI} = 0.966$, $\text{AGFI} = 0.852$, $\text{RMSEA} = 0.032$, $**p < 0.01$

has a positive effect on revisit intention, was adopted at the significance level of 0.01 ($\beta = 0.832$, $p = 0.000$).

5. Conclusion. The purpose of this study was to examine the effects of medical tourism attributes (quality of medical service, accessibility, cost adequacy, quality of tourism) on satisfaction in medical tourism for Chinese who visited Korea for medical tourism. The effect of medical tourism on revisit intention was examined. The summary of this study is as follows.

First, among four medical tourism attributes, quality of medical service, cost adequacy, and quality of tourism were found to have a significant effect on satisfaction in medical tourism, but accessibility was not significant on satisfaction in medical tourism. On the other hand, cost adequacy was the most influential among medical tourism attributes, and it was confirmed that it was affecting satisfaction in medical tourism in order of quality of tourism and quality of medical service. This is in line with the argument of Song and Kim [7] that the quality of medical services and tourism services is an important factor for satisfaction in medical tourism. In this study, cost adequacy was found to be a significant factor in satisfaction in medical tourism. The research results of Park [15] confirmed that they preferred medical institutions with appropriate or low-cost medical insurance and insurance, and that these factors were important choices in the selection of medical tourism sites. In the correlation between cost adequacy and satisfaction, it can be seen that satisfaction is regarded as if the medical service is received at a reasonable cost or perceived as lower than the local cost. It is necessary to calculate the cost, form a reference price based on the price established in the local medical market in China, and reasonably construct the cost for selecting a tourist site and sightseeing and presenting an attractive cost for the whole medical tourism. It is considered to be a deciding factor in activating the attraction of medical tourists. In addition, it is essential to improve the professionalism of medical institutions and to invest in facilities, and to develop various tourism products in order to increase the quality of tourism. Chinese medical tourists have a strong desire to tour in well-recognized cities, so cities that want to attract medical tourists to China will need marketing strategies that include developing tourism programs and actively recognizing them.

On the other hand, the study of Cho [14] partially agrees with the results of this study in that the quality of medical service and accessibility have a significant effect on the degree of satisfaction of medical tourists. In other words, in this study, accessibility among medical tourism attributes did not have a significant effect on satisfaction in medical tourism. This suggests that unlike general tourism, the medical tourism attributes of accessibility are not a factor in effect due to the specificity of the purpose of medical tourism. This suggests that accessibility factors such as short flight distance, convenient transportation, close accommodations to Korea already selected as a medical tourism destination may not be a factor for evaluating medical tourism. It can be seen that the quality of tourism

or quality of tourism and the cost of tourism are the criteria for assessing satisfaction. The reason for the rejection of accessibility is to classify the type of travel as free travel or package travel, and it is necessary to study in the future as the results may vary depending on the tourist attractions visited during medical tourism.

Second, it has been shown that the satisfaction in medical tour has a significant effect on the intention of reusing. Through the inventory of quality of medical service, cost adequacy, and quality of tour, satisfaction in medical tour was able to confirm that there was a significant effect on the Korean medical tourism of Chinese visiting Korea, which is in line with the results of previous preceding research. While satisfaction of products or services does not necessarily lead to re-use or revisit intention, it suggests that Chinese medical tourists with experience in Korea are likely to consider Korea again when they feel the need for medical tourism after coming back to their country after they have satisfied on Korean medical tourism.

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