

ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation Developing Service Quality for Spa Establishments
in the Active Beach Tourism Cluster, Thailand

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Degree Doctor of Philosophy (Integrated Tourism Management)

Year 2013

The objectives of this study are: 1) to assess the level of perception in: service quality, perceived value, service encounter, and satisfaction of customers using spa treatments, 2) to study the dimensions of service quality, which is important in order to evaluate the spa establishments based on customers' demographics, 3) to study customers' desires toward spa treatments based on their demographics, 4) to study the causal relationship between service quality, perceived value and service encounter on customer satisfaction of customers using spa treatments, and 5) to create a service quality model for spa establishments in the Active Beach Tourism Cluster, Thailand.

The study focused on foreign customers using spa services in the Active Beach Tourism Cluster, Thailand. The sampling technique used multistage sampling; cluster sampling, quota sampling and convenience sampling. This study employed a questionnaire survey to collect data. Construct validity employed the confirmatory factor analysis-CFA. One-way ANOVA is used to compare the differences between the dimensions of service quality, the customers' desires toward spa treatments based on customers' demographics and the path analysis to study the causal relation between variables studied.

Regarding the perception level of customers using spa services in the Active Beach Tourism Cluster, Thailand, the results were exhibited: The level of actual service was higher than the level the customer expected, producing positive gap scores. Almost all the factors were high for perception level of service quality. Responsiveness and assurance achieved the highest scores, followed by environmental

element, empathy, reliability and tangible, which were moderately high. The level of perceived value was moderately high for almost all factors. In-use value, redemption value and affective value were considered high, while acquisition value, tradeoff value, epistemic value and symbolic value were moderately high. The level of service encounter was moderately high for both face-to-face encounters and remote encounters. The level of customer satisfaction was moderately high, for both disconfirmation of expectation and service satisfaction. With reference to the causal relation between service quality, perceived value and service encounter having an effect on satisfaction of customers using spa services in the Active Beach Tourism Cluster, Thailand, the finding revealed: service quality had a positive direct effect and a positive indirect effect (via perceived value) on customer satisfaction. Perceived value had a positive direct effect on customer satisfaction. Service encounter had a positive direct effect and a positive indirect effect (via perceived value) on customer satisfaction.