

Research Article

The Customers' Perception of Service Quality for Spa Establishments

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ABSTRACT

Spa and wellness are the world's fastest-growing industry. Spas and health are rapidly developing these days, and this sort of service has emerged as a result of health tourism packages in spas. In Malaysia, spas are the most well-known industry. Therefore, this study aimed to explore the value and impact of service quality, perceived value and service performance on customer satisfaction at spa located in Pengkalan Chepa, Kelantan. This qualitative study utilized in-depth interviews. All interviews were consented, audio-recorded then transcribed verbatim, followed by identification of emerging themes. Data saturation was achieved after interviewing a total of 12 respondents. The results were presented and described according to the respondents' characteristics. Three themes raised from respondents were (1) Spa service quality, (2) Spa perceived value, and (3) Spa perceived service performance. The results have shown that service quality, perceived value and service meeting dimensions have a close relationship with all customers. Subsequently, the information obtained from this study might be used to create a marketing plan aimed at improving consumer satisfaction in the market and industry of the spa in Pengkalan Chepa, Kelantan. This study can help to grow the economy with the influx of foreign investment due to the quality of service and can provide numerous job possibilities for the community in Malaysia. As a result, looking at the degree of happiness from this spa's consumers can be a signal in creating new spas and improving the economy through foreign investment

Keywords: Customer perception; Service quality; Perceived value; Service performance; Spa operation

INTRODUCTION

The spa sector is part of the wellness and health industry, and it is one of the most well-known industries in the world. In fact, this industry is growing rapidly over time. Industry spa and

wellness is the fastest-growing global industry. The value and benefits can be seen through several levels in the spa industry (Sulaiman et al., 2020). In 2020, Asia-Pacific will be the leading region for health spending at \$1.5 trillion. It also belongs to one of the fastest-growing health markets from 2017 to 2019. Service quality is an important topic in the field of service management and marketing (Dadkhah, 2019). Service quality is described by Zeithaml et al. (1990) as "customer comparisons of expectation with service performance in which if the previous service provision falls short of the latter, the customers have unfavorable service experiences."

Customer satisfaction is important in business to ensure that the business is always growing and successful. Customer perception is based on the opinions, feelings, and beliefs of a customer that they feel towards the product or service they receive. According to scholars who have studied the customer's perception of the quality of this spa service, they think that it has a positive relationship with customer satisfaction. Customers put their trust in the service they receive without a guaranteed quality because the service they receive is not significant. If the quality perceived by the customer is more than the perceived cost then it will be high in customer value (Matzler et al., 2006). According to Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988), they have five scopes, which are dependability, tangibility, safety, responsiveness, and empathy. Former researchers have stated that scope is very significant for employees since the employee must constantly be responsive to the interests and customer needs.

Responsiveness captures the conception of inflexibility and the capability to acclimatize services to client requirements. Spa operations should also ameliorate staff skills. Good responsiveness will impact the value of customer satisfaction with spa services. When the spa staff provides fast service, it will make customers feel satisfied to do the treatment at the spa because they like the spa that provides quick and fast service without making them stay too long to get the service. After all, responsiveness is an important factor in explaining positive feelings. Staff need to be ready to help their guests, give prompt service, load workers, and promptitude of spa center staff because responsiveness is a factor strongest relationship with customer perception (Spyridoula et al., 2017).

Empathy and honest and compassionate treatment of guests is a variable that plays an important part in prognosticating client satisfaction (Spyridoula et al., 2017). According to the empirical results, it is shown that perceived value will have a significant positive effect on customer satisfaction that is word of mouth and the intention to repurchase the product or use the service again. Customer satisfaction has a very positive effect and significant price sensitivity on word of mouth and their intention to purchase or use the service again. Perceived value has a positive effect on customer satisfaction because the user's evaluation of the product or service is related to the perceived value, their repurchase intention will be influenced by the perceived value of the product by the customer. Therefore, the longer the perceived quality and value of a product or service, the longer the customer's intention to buy (Tyrone et al., 2022).

The purpose of the study was to explore the significance and impact of service quality, perceived value, and service performance on customer satisfaction at a spa in Pengkalan Chepa, Kelantan. This research has greatly improved service quality and customer satisfaction with spa services in Pengkalan Chepa, Kota Bharu, Kelantan. This study was crucial in supporting spas in acquiring a better understanding of service quality, which can have a positive or

negative impact on their client's satisfaction with the business. This is because this study serves as an indirect guidance for them to expand their competence and earn a lot of profit as a consequence of better spa client contentment.

METHOD

Research Design

This study uses qualitative as the main tool as a tool in the data collection process of the respondents. This research will focus on qualitative analysis that tries to explain in detail about social or human issues from various perspectives. In this study, in-depth interviews will be used to collect data. After collecting the data, it will be checked. Data was collected by sampling method either in a semi-structured format because we used a qualitative method in this study (Creswell et al., 2018).

Data Collection

In-depth interviews were conducted using an interview guide exploring respondents' experiences and their perspectives on customer satisfaction at a spa. The interviews were conducted at spa settings, and some were conducted in restaurants as per the respondent's request. Interviews were performed in the Malay language because most of the respondents were Malays, and they understood and preferred the language. The saturation occurs when new data collection has no longer contributed to further information on the issues under investigation. The respondents provided written consent, and brief socio-demographic information before the interview sessions. Confidentiality and anonymity of ethics were maintained. All interviews were conducted for approximately 45 to 90 minutes each session.

Sampling Strategy

Purposive sampling was the first sample technique utilized in this study. It is a non-probability sample that was chosen in accordance with the study's objectives and the demographics of the target respondents. Purposive sampling is a pretty simple process to carry out. As a result, researchers can gather as much information from as many perspectives as feasible. This was the case for M. Kogan and colleagues' customers at the spa were selected in this study as a total of 12 respondents. In other words, the sampling strategy for qualitative methods in implementation studies is less clear (Lawrence et al., 2015). This sampling was used to achieve the objectives of this research and obtain data from the respondents. Spa customers in Pengkalan Chepa, Kota Bharu have been selected for this study, a total of 12 respondents.

Data Analysis

The interviews were recorded with some note-taking by the researchers. The Malay language audio files were transcribed verbatim. These interview transcripts were then coded. Thematic analysis was chosen as the method to analyze the data from the interviews. The analysis represents a systematic framework to code qualitative data to recognize patterns across the data (Braun & Clarke, 2014). In order to enhance the credibility of the study, triangulation from different sources has been applied by researchers. Next, the member-checking process

was done by phone calls, and the polished content of the transcripts and the quotations cited were read to the respondents. The rich, thick description was utilized to provide various viewpoints on a theme, making the data more genuine and realistic. The study procedures were clearly documented in order to allow reproducibility (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The transcription notes were checked repeatedly with the audio files to minimize obvious errors. Furthermore, triangulation of data includes conducting a pilot study, multiple case studies, triangulation between case study interview data and respondent's verification of interview data. Rigor was tested in this study to assess research quality and ensure that the data obtained are as relevant and trustworthy as feasible (Finlay, 2006). Rigor was evaluated by means of dependability, credibility, confirmability, and transferability.

FINDINGS

Sociodemographic Characteristic

In this research, four demographic items have been set, namely age, gender, race and occupation. Respondents in the age range of 21-23 years are the majority for this study. Malays are the majority race for this study. In this study, customer satisfaction with the quality of service at the spa was used in the demographic section.

TABLE 1. Descriptive characteristics of respondents

Respondents	Age (years)	Gender	Ethnicity	Occupation
R1	22	Female	Malay	Student
R2	23	Female	Malay	Student
R3	23	Female	Malay	Student
R4	23	Female	Malay	Self- employed
R5	44	Female	Malay	Lecturer
R6	24	Female	Malay	Intern
R7	33	Female	Malay	Self- employed
R8	25	Female	Malay	Student
R9	23	Female	Malay	Student
R10	21	Male	Iban	Self- employed
R11	23	Male	Malay	Student
R12	33	Female	Malay	Student

Factor affect customer perception of customer perception:

Based on the semi-structured interviews, three main themes were derived from the transcripts regarding the factors that affect customer perception of customer service. The themes were: (1) Spa service quality, (2) Spa perceived value, and (3) Spa perceived service performance. Each theme was made up of several sub-themes.

TABLE 2. Themes and sub-themes for factors affect customer perception of customer perception

Quotations	Codes	Sub-themes	Main themes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>When I did the treatment at the spa, the staff there did it carefully. The reason is that he uses technology. (Respondent 2)</i> ● <i>And the answers given about the problems experienced by the customer are also very detailed and are always given examples if the customer does not understand it. (Respondent 9)</i> ● <i>I am quite confident in their treatment and words regarding my health and beauty. they are very good in providing information because the doctor from the spa explained to me that if you want to do facials regularly. (Respondent 6)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Assurance ● Responsive ● Reliability 	(1) Service quality of service staff	1. Spa service quality.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>The spa is near my house, and it is convenient and convenient for me to go there. In addition, the spa is very comfortable with aromatherapy and the service by the staff is very comforting and at the same time gives me confidence to go there again. (Respondent 1)</i> ● <i>It is near the spa, mostly overall from what I see, the view is beautiful, maintain, follow the creativity in the spa. (Respondent 2)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Convenience ● Cleanness 	(2) Service quality of ambiance	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Like for me because I like it there because he uses products from us. International has a brand, after we used it for treatment there, it didn't make my skin. Respondent 1)</i> ● <i>If you come early, ask your name, ask to sit first, wait a moment and wait inside, keep coming, their service is fast, when you walk in, you have to wait a while. (Respondent 1)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Good aspect of a purchased product 	(1) Customer's satisfaction on service & product	2. Spa perceived value

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>The waiting time was not long and he continued to enter because when I arrived there was no one but he said it was good luck because they usually have to book first so after I waited a very long time to enter then there were two or three workers. (Respondent 4)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ability to reduce waste 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Like for me because I like it there because he uses products from us. International has a brand, after we used it for treatment there, it didn't make my skin. (Respondent 1)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Receiving the quality customers pay for a particular product 	(2) Customer's satisfaction on prices	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>I am very satisfied with the price offered at the spa. It is worth the type of treatment offered. (Respondent 5)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Price always comes first, and quality follows 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>I got to know about this spa from Facebook, the post about this spa has been posted several times on my fyp, so it has attracted my attention to try to do treatment at this spa. (Respondent 8)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Remote encounter 	(1) Spa service encounter	3. Spa perceived service performance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>When the treatment is ready, he takes me to the relaxation area and gives me tea and a light snack. (Respondent 1)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Face to face encounter 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>I will message them first and tell them that I want to make an appointment or book the date I want to visit. Please reply to my messages quickly and reply to my messages nicely and politely. (Respondent 4)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Phone encounter 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>The spa provides great service and provides good customer service. (Respondent 12)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Customer service 	(2) Spa functional quality	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Really satisfied, good service, like when she canceled the appointment, she apologized for everything, we have to understand whether or not the employee is there. (Respondent 6)</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Product performance 		

DISCUSSIONS

According to our respondents, (1) spa service quality, (2) spa perceived value, and (3) spa perceived service performance influenced customer impression of customer service in Pengkalan Chepa, Kelantan. Many spa customers in the Pengkalan Chepa continent respond positively and in accordance with the user's preferences. Customers who visit the spa have certain expectations as spa goes in Malaysia. The Spa in the Pengkalan Chepa base area, it turns out, received positive comments or sharing from the consumers who went. Many people also mentioned that the spa where they attended offered clear instructions on how to do a treatment. According to Jack et al. (2019) the aspect that influences whether people trust a leader is how well-informed and knowledgeable they are. Although the customer does not know the actual cost, they simply follow the internal sentiment for a product that is worth it where it is relevant to support the use of perceived value for the improvement service quality guidelines shown (Keme et al., 2013).

One of the customers who came to the spa in Pengkalan Chepa stated that she was very satisfied with the price offered by the spa which was worth the type of treatment offered. It shows that perceived value will have a significant positive effect on customer satisfaction, that is word of mouth and the intention to repurchase the product or use the service again. Customer satisfaction has a very positive effect and significant price sensitivity on word of mouth and their intention to purchase or use the service again. Some consumers see value when there is a low price, others see value when there is a balance between quality and price (Mercy Mueni Kiyingi et al., 2018). Spa Service Experience Expectations for a service interaction were characterized by Hsieh as a desire for service. The services or goods that should be offered or desired by those customers are presented as customer expectations. Another industry that focuses on customer satisfaction and is recognized for offering therapies for well-being and beauty includes spa services (Chen et al., 2013). This factor is an important issue that affects the level of customer satisfaction with service quality because the value of the service that customers feel will affect the price because they are willing to pay a high price because the quality of the service provided is worth the price.

Some customers from the Pengkalan Chepa spa stated that the staff at this spa provided very good service. A good staff can provide pleasure and comfort to their customers as well as improve the performance and good image of the spa. According to (Carpini et al., 2017). Job performance is probably the most important and studied variable in industrial management and organizational behavior. A good experience from customer response can also give a good performance and image to the spa. This is due to the staff giving sweet smiles and welcoming service to the customer. The ability of a firm to sustain revenue during service encounters was then further emphasized, highlighting how important customer service and satisfaction are. Wang (2011) claims that several earlier studies have backed the claims that good customer service directly influences customer happiness. Next, it is said that through perceived value, customer service has an impact on customer satisfaction. According to Choi (2019), wellness services like spas heavily rely on services cape. The personnel at these facilities recognize the spa service encounter as a front-stage experience and a true moment that has a significant impact on these services (Choi, 2019).

Communication partners should be present in messenger communication and give a case for why they should be heard and helped (Knop et al., 2016). Getting information directly from customers is one of the ways to enhance the spa experience and win their trust. Customers in the study acknowledged their pleasure with the service given, indicating that it meets the

spectrum of satisfaction and gives them more trust. According to Ali et al. (2021), the appearance of physical facilities, equipment, workers, and communication materials is a Service Quality Dimension for the spa.

As a result, the study's findings may be useful to spa owners or managers in strategizing their marketing plan to maximize revenue and minimize costs on which attributes to focus on, as tangibility and responsiveness attributes do not affect spa-goer satisfaction. Aside from that, spa owners or managers might conduct an inquiry into disgruntled spa-goers to enhance the present service so that it meets the demands and expectations of the spa-goers.

CONCLUSION

This study revealed that consumers' perceptions of service quality for spa establishments, particularly in Pengkalan Chepa, Kelantan, are outstanding. Overall, customers who used spa services in the studied region reported being satisfied; favorable rising spa evaluations, and service value, service experience, and contentment were all satisfied. Furthermore, customers were provided with spa commodities that exceeded their expectations. The researchers proposed service quality development recommendations as a contribution to spa industries in order to give exceptional service quality in the spa industry, including service quality dimension, perceived value, service experience, and customer satisfaction. The mentioned perceptions may be advantageous to spa entrepreneurs; they can use the offered results as guidance to build their service performance and serve spa consumers with a high degree of efficiency and perfection.

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