

The Customers' Perception of Service Quality for Spa Establishments in the Active Beach Tourism Cluster, Thailand

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Abstract

The objective of this study is to assess the level of customers' perception in: service quality, perceived value, service encounter, and customer satisfaction of spa customers. The study focused on foreign customers using spa services in the Active Beach Tourism Cluster, Thailand. The sampling technique used multi-stage sampling; cluster sampling, quota sampling and convenience sampling. This study employed a questionnaire survey to collect data. The result indicated that the level of actual service was higher than the level the customer expected, producing positive gap scores. 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. Regarding the service encounter, dimensions were moderately high for both face-to-face encounters and remote encounters. Both disconfirmation of expectation and service satisfaction were rated moderately high for the level of satisfaction. As well, the service quality development guidelines exhibited in section of result discussion as its contribution for spa establishments were proposed.

Keywords: customer satisfaction; perceived value; service encounter; service quality; spa establishments

Introduction

The spa service is regarded as another important element for hospitality businesses. It is presently recognized for treatments providing relaxation to wellness therapies and beauty cares (Tourism Authority of Thailand, 2010). The policy by government; a plan to promote “Thailand as World Class Healthcare Destination”, as well as to reach “Spa Capital of Asia” was projected (Department of Trade Negotiation, 2011). Revenue producing and going up amount of spa establishments evidently confirm the augmented attention into the business. A decrease in growth rate in the past years has resulted in the need to improve service quality and good customer care. The ability to deliver excellent service is essential for the company to improve (Norman, 1984). Service interaction refers to the point, customers inheriting contact with servers as a delivery process (Zeithaml et al., 1990). Perceived value is the customers experience overall evaluation of product. A satisfied customer is the key aim for a successful business. Therefore, issues such as recognizing customers' perception of service delivery influence the business performance in order to develop an improved service performance (Bitner, 1990).

Literature Review

Zeithaml et al., (1990) defined service quality 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”. Perceived service quality model was presented by Gronroos (1982) indicating that technical quality (what), functional quality (how), image, marketing activities are crucial elements. If technical or functional quality fails, it leads to the failure of total perceived quality as well. Then, Parasuraman et al. (1985), explored the gap service quality model. This assesses five gaps in perceptions, comprising gaps within the service provider, gaps within the customers, and gaps between each party. The relations are explained as gaps or discrepancies, which indicate a critical service quality. A gap signifies a crucial obstacle to complete a favorable level. To be exact, gap 1 is a

consumer expectation and management perception gap, gap 2 is a management perception and service quality perception gap, gap 3 is a service quality specifications and service delivery gap, gap 4 is a service delivery and external communications gap, gap 5 is a expected service and perceived service gap. This model initially covers 10 determinants of service quality which are reliability, responsiveness, competency, access, courtesy, communication, credibility, security, understanding/known and tangible. In recent years, the modification of service quality dimension results in five dimensions. These comprise dimensions of tangible, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy and named SERVQUAL.

It is confirmed that perceived value, consumer value, and service value are used interchangeably in marketing concept (Woodruff et al., 1987; Zeithaml, 1988; Grewal et al., 1998). Zeithaml (1988: 14) termed perceived value as “the ratio or trade-off between quality and price, a value-for-money conceptualization”. Perceived value can be described as “the customer’s assessment of the utility of a product based on perceptions of what is received and what is given” (Grewal et al., 1998). Zeithaml (1988) also revealed consumer value as follows:

- 1) Value means low price or to be exact, discount price.
- 2) Value is whatever customers want from a product. Moreover, it can refer to the good aspect of a purchased product, and ability to reduce waste.
- 3) Value is receiving the quality customers pay for a particular product; Price always comes first, and quality follows.
- 4) Value is a large quantity of products in a purchased package, and the convenient and basic use of a product.

Perceived value comprises four types which are acquisition value, perceived transaction value, perceived in-use value and perceived redemption value as stated by Woodruff et al., (1987); Grewal et al., (1998); Parasuraman and Grewal (2000). In addition, perceived value has a great influence on clients’ activities, since it involves their decision on product alternatives, purchase intentions and repeat business (Shet et al., 1991). Shet et al., (1991) recommended five perceived values embrac-

ing functional value, social value, emotional value, epistemic value and conditional value. Sweeney et al., (1996) reveal perceived value of four dimensions that can lead to a pleasant state. These include:

1) Emotional value refers to the usefulness resulting from the affective condition that a product produces.

2) Social value represents the usefulness derived from the product's ability to augment social concept.

3) Functional value (price/value for money) stands for the usefulness came from the decrease of buying costs.

4) Functional value (performance/quality) means the usefulness developed from the perceived quality and expected product performance.

Pertaining to service encounters, Zeithaml and Bitner (1996) defined service encounters as “the dynamic interaction between customers and service providers”. Three stages of service encounters include a pre-consumption stage, a consumption stage and a post-consumption stage (Fisk, 1981).

During the ‘pre-consumption stage’, customer’s expectation toward the service and product are evident. At the ‘consumption stage’, the service provider has the obligation to professionally follow the established standard operating procedures. During the ‘post-consumption’ phase, the customer will evaluate the service encounters based on his expectation.

Similarly, Surprenant and Solomon (1987) propose that the level of service encounters is divided into three levels. These include 1) high-contact services are service provision which mostly requires staff to provide service, 2) medium-contact services require less involvement with service providers, and 3) low-contact services involve very little physical contact between customers and service providers. Types of service encounters in hospitality as discovered by Zeithaml and Bitner (1996) are divided into two types. The first one is remote encounters which occur without the need of physical human contact, and the second one is face-to-face encounters happen between customer and staff during a direct contact at a service establishment. Cascade in the moment of truth which can predict a failure at any point is mentioned by Bitner (1990),

Zeithaml and Bitner (1996) and Kandampully (2007). Regarding Shostack (1984), he performs a service blueprint, a map or flowchart indicating whole transaction of service delivery process both front and back stage. This is in line with Lovelock (2001) who argues that flowcharting allows a service firm to manage and control parts of the service delivery, as well as identifying opportunities to improve efficiency and productivity. Additionally, Widjaja (2005) explained that a service blueprint can help problem solving by identifying potential points of failure and highlighting opportunities to improve customers' perception of service.

Customer satisfaction relies on a measure of how the product offered meets or exceeds customer expectations and then form an opinion. Initially, Cardozo (1965), Olshavsky and Miller (1972) and Anderson (1973) state the paradigm to customer satisfaction lining disconfirmation expectation to subsequent customer satisfaction called "Expectancy Disconfirmation Theory". Then, "Expectation Disconfirmation Paradigm – EDP" is a prominent theory predicting and explaining customers' satisfaction (Oliver, 1980). Customer satisfaction or dissatisfaction (CS/D) is a function of the disconfirmation arising from discrepancies between expectations and actual performance. Effects on product evaluation and customer satisfaction may be referred as cognitive dissonance (assimilation), contrast, generalized negativity and assimilation-contrast (Anderson, 1973). Disconfirmation paradigm comprises four constructs by Patterson et al., (1997) as expectations, performance or customers' perceptions, disconfirmation and satisfaction. Customer satisfaction is a response conceptualized as either two dimensions; cognitive and affective response (Oliver, 1980).

Methodology

-Target Populations and Samples

The population for this study was foreign spa customers who experienced spa treatments in the Active Beach Tourism Cluster,

Thailand. Such customers originated from 4 regions; Asia, Europe, Oceania and the Americas. The sample was representative of the population of foreign spa customers in the area studied.

-Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

The researcher utilized the key informant technique to predict the spa customers' population. For this study, the researcher snowballed eight spa managers or spa entrepreneurs which considered keys informants for spa business in the Active Beach Tourism Cluster. They hypothesized that around 700,000 foreigners would utilize spa services in the area studied. After substituting these values into the formula regarding the Taro Yamane table (Siriluk, 1995), the response size was 400 sets.

Pertaining to sampling techniques, the researcher employed multistage sampling 1) cluster sampling was initially selected to divide the target populations into regions. As the most common type of subgroup used in research is a geographical cluster, four regions were Asia, Oceania, Europe and The Americas 2) once geographical subgroups were determined, the sample size was determined based on the proportion of clusters 3) convenience sampling was then conducted until the researcher reached a settled number (Asia=160, Oceania=58, Europe=120, The Americas=62).

-Data Collection

This study used a questionnaire survey to collect data and required 400 respondents to complete this questionnaire. The research site is the Active Beach Tourism Cluster in Thailand, covering Chonburi, Rayong, Chantaburi and Trat. These provinces were organized to make the cluster by the Ministry of Tourism and Sports in Thailand's Tourism National Plan 2555-2559. To obtain data, spa customers were a self-administered questionnaire survey.

Results and Discussions

The results of the perception level in service quality, perceived value, service encounter, and customer satisfaction of

customers who used spa treatments in the Active Beach Tourism Cluster, Thailand were as follow:

The discussion of the fundamental information regarding the respondents, found that a little over half of the respondents were female (51.67%), while male respondents reached almost fifty percent (48.33%). The reason for both male and female respondents making up around half the total respondents is attributed to the increase in interest and awareness that males have for their health, and in particular an increased interest in utilizing spa treatments. This can be contributed to spa entrepreneurs, encouraging both male and female gender in patronizing spa treatments.

Most respondents were aged between 31-40 years old, with 41-50 and 21-30 the next largest age groups respectively. The analysis of this suggests that people in these age ranges are more likely to be in full time employment, and therefore be able to afford the cost of the treatment, and as people become older they may become more conscious about their health, wellness and relaxation. To contribution, spa establishments acknowledge that targeted customers were not in the younger age groups and offering spa products should be suitable for this age groups.

Regarding the country of residence, Chinese and Singaporean respondents made the highest groups of respondents from Asia, followed by Korean, Hongkonger, Indian and Japanese. In terms of Oceania, the study included more respondents from Australia than New Zealand, and in terms of Europe, the majority of the respondents came from the United Kingdom, with French and Dutch respondents providing a similar amount of respondents. And in terms of The Americas, the majority of the respondents came from the United States of America. To be specific, spa establishments know the majority of customers of each region, then they can study the behavior of those countries and respond spa products in accordance with their desires and trends.

The main purpose of travelling, for more than half of the respondents who travelled to Thailand, across all the regions included

in the study were for leisure and relaxation. Business and official purposes accounted for a very small amount. This shows that Thailand is seen mainly as a destination for leisure purposes, such as holidays, rather than for official or business purposes, as these produced a small percentage of the visits in this study. This can be claimed that leisure customers are considered the key target and they are interested in choosing spa treatments for their activities while other purposes for traveling showed a small number.

Beaches, islands and marine areas were the first preferred tourist destination for customers in Thailand across all regions. These were followed by: historical and cultural sites, national sites, national forest parks and man-made tourist attractions in turn. This makes it obvious that respondents from all regions prefer a similar destination, and that as Thailand has abundant beaches, islands and marine areas, it proves an attractive tourist destination for international visitors. It is also argued that beaches, islands and marine areas' customers mostly take an interest in spa treatments while spending time there, thus spa entrepreneurs may need to know the requirement of the guests

Table 1 : Gap Scores of Service Quality between the Expected Service and the Actual Performance of Customers Using Spa Services in the Active Beach Tourism Cluster, Thailand

Service Quality Dimensions	Expectation (E)		Perception (P)		Gap Scores ^a (P-E)
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	
Tangible					
1.Spa establishments have modern equipment.	4.31	1.250	4.95	0.988	0.64
2.The physical décor is visually appealing.	4.54	1.264	5.11	1.057	0.56
3.Spa staff appearance	4.58	1.296	5.27	1.003	0.69
4.Promotional materials are visually appealing.	4.41	1.327	4.90	1.166	0.49

Table 1 : continued

Total of Tangible	4.46 Mod- erately high	1.102	5.06 Mod- erately high	0.799	0.60
Service Quality Dimensions	Expectation (E)		Perception (P)		Gap Scores^a (P-E)
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	
Reliability					
5. Spa establishments per- form according to agreed promises.	4.58	1.285	5.24	1.113	0.66
6. Spa staff show a genuine interest in solving problems.	4.60	1.280	5.12	1.189	0.52
7. Spa staff perform habitu- ally excellent service.	4.72	1.279	5.33	1.070	0.62
8. Spa staff complete treat- ments within agreed time.	4.64	1.285	5.36	1.235	0.71
9. Spa establishments keep on error-free service.	4.54	1.343	5.19	1.104	0.66
Total of Reliability	4.61 Mod- erately high	1.081	5.25 Mod- erately high	0.871	0.64
Responsiveness					
10. Spa staff give exact infor- mation.	4.61	1.300	5.27	1.154	0.65
11. Spa staff offer prompt service.	4.74	1.254	5.42	1.135	0.69
12. Spa staff are always will- ing to help customers.	4.82	1.313	5.49	1.101	0.67
13. Spa staff devote enough time to customers' requests.	4.66	1.273	5.36	1.071	0.70
Total of Responsiveness	4.71 Mod- erately high	1.113	5.38 high	0.904	0.67

Table 1 : continued

Assurance					
14. The behavior of spa staff instills confidence to customers.	4.61	1.235	5.35	1.084	0.75
15. Customers feel safe in their transactions.	4.68	1.365	5.40	1.112	0.72
16. Spa staff are consistently polite.	4.83	1.350	5.50	1.018	0.68
17. Spa staff provide sufficient knowledge of product.	4.66	1.299	5.26	1.086	0.61
Total of Assurance	4.69	1.155	5.38	0.850	0.69
	Mod-erately high		High		
Empathy					
18. Spa staff offer customized spa treatments.	4.52	1.240	5.15	1.045	0.63
19. Spa establishments have convenient and flexible operating hours for customers.	4.73	1.323	5.41	1.132	0.68
20. Spa staff take care of customers closely.	4.77	1.327	5.46	1.013	0.69
21. Spa staff understand the specific needs of customers.	4.58	1.270	5.27	1.022	0.70
Total of Empathy	4.65	1.109	5.32	0.794	0.67
	Mod-erately high		High		
Environmental element					
22. Spa establishments have pleasant landscape	4.54	1.283	5.20	1.049	0.66
23. Surrounding areas have proper sanitation.	4.64	1.371	5.35	1.082	0.71
24. Spa establishments have good ventilation.	4.62	1.301	5.34	1.060	0.72

Table 1 : continued

25. Spa establishments have relaxing music.	4.69	1.344	5.45	1.139	0.76
26. Lighting is adequate and proper.	4.62	1.297	5.35	1.084	0.73
27. Theme of decor is unique.	4.61	1.257	5.30	1.140	0.70
Total of Environmental Element	4.62 Mod- erately high	1.088	5.33 High	0.816	0.71
Grand Total of Service Quality	4.62 Mod- erately high	1.002	5.29 High	0.667	0.67

Notice: the gap scores^a mean the negative one implies the actual perceived service not meet the expected service while the positive one implies the actual perceived service equate or exceed the expected.

As exhibited in Table 1, the perception level of the service quality of customers using spa services found that almost all the factors were considered high. This included responsiveness and assurance as well as environmental element, empathy, reliability and tangible, were regarded as moderately high. In a similar vein, pertaining to the difference between expected and perceived service, it was found that the level of actual performance of all six dimensions was higher than the level of customer expectation, which produced positive gap scores. The tangible dimension showed the least positive gap score among all the dimensions for expectation, while environmental element dimensions produced the greatest gap scores for perception. This implies that the actual perceived service for all the dimensions overall exceeded the level of service that customers expected, resulting in the customers feeling positive about the service they were provided.

As well, there is not any negative gap score, thus confirming a quality of service which was positive.

This conforms to Parasuraman et al., (1985), when they proposed that a perception of service quality is developed from comparison of consumer expectation with actual service performance. Furthermore, quality evaluation involves both the process and outcome of service delivery. Zeithaml et al., (1990) argued that service quality originates from a comparison between expectation and perception forming attitudes that link disconfirmed expectations to subsequent service quality and consumer satisfaction. Parasuraman et al., (1988) agreed that service quality gap is a customer's judgment as to whether the service provided has met their expectation. It can be summed up that spa establishments offer an excellent spa services to their customers when they strictly follow the standard operating procedure, and spa staff are well trained by their manager. It is also vital that spa establishments recognize, and search, for what their prospective customers want and need. They should then respond to this accordingly in order to provide a service that meets the customers' expectation, and subsequently leads to customer satisfaction.

Table 2 : Mean, Standard Deviation and Level of Perceived Value of Customers Using Spa Services in the Active Beach Tourism Cluster, Thailand

Perceived Value Dimensions	Mean	S.D.	Level
Acquisition value			
I totally received considerable benefits from the spa treatments.	4.85	1.094	Moderately high
I received good value regarding spa treatments as they met my expectation.	4.99	1.097	Moderately high
Total of Acquisition Value	4.92	0.998	Moderately high

Table 2 : continued

Tradeoff value			
I feel pleasure with promotional price and saving money.	4.96	1.177	Moderately high
Aside from money I saved, I also fulfill my bliss.	4.99	1.052	Moderately high
Total of Tradeoff value	4.97	0.983	Moderately high
In-use value			
I feel good receiving personalized treatments while being treated.	5.24	1.077	Moderately high
I had a sense of joy and relaxation while being treated.	5.41	1.079	High
Total of In-use Value	5.33	0.976	High
Redemption Value			
It is worthy that I will revisit in future as they can fulfill my desire.	5.31	1.114	High
It is worthy that I will spread the excellent services to acquaintances.	5.33	1.129	High
Total of Redemption Value	5.32	1.016	High
Epistemic Value			
My curiosity was aroused with the newly launched spa treatments.	4.92	1.175	Moderately high
I feel good learning about the product benefits.	4.95	1.104	Moderately high
Total of Epistemic Value	4.94	1.042	Moderately high
Affective Value			
I got joyful feeling when I used spa treatments.	5.37	1.024	High

Table 2 : continued

After treatments, they put me in a good mood.	5.39	1.073	High
Total of Affective Value	5.38	0.946	High
Symbolic Value			
I feel that I have become a first-class person with a desirable life style.	4.97	1.206	Moderately high
I feel that ability to afford spa treatments fit into my social setting.	5.10	1.160	Moderately high
Total of Symbolic Value	5.04	1.042	Moderately high
Grand Total of Perceived Value	5.13	0.736	Moderately high

As illustrated in Table 2, the perception level of perceived value of customers using spa services found that the affective value held the highest mean. The dimension of affective value that produced the highest mean score was 'After treatments, they put me in a good mood.' This shows that customers placed importance upon the service meeting their needs, as well as the following: spa services being value for money, the effort taken to search for the establishment, location convenience, social elements, confidence, special-treatment benefits and waiting time. Spa customers compared what they give and what they obtained and evaluated the two.

This is in line with Shet et al., (1991), when they confirm that emotional value is another vital determinant a customer will afford for company product compared to a same featured and nameless product. As well, emotional benefit offers customers a positive sentiment when consuming a particular product by attaching richness and depth to the experience of utilizing the product. In the same way, Grot and Dye (1999) agree that

consumers are complicated today, as they are not only demand products serving the highest quality, they desire positive, emotionally satisfying experiences. To be exact for spa establishments, if spa establishments understand ways to attach emotional value to their customers' experiences, they will leave their competitors behind. To attract customers, most industries rely on features and articles that are easily noticed, and when completion arises they focus on their pricing. Instead of these methods, companies should invest in the emotional value from utilizing a service, as this is probably the one thing the competitors cannot duplicate or attack simply. Thus, affective value has a positive effect on the benefits that can be obtained from product. This is vital idea, and companies would be well advised to construct emotional value for their products.

Table 3 : Mean, Standard Deviation and Level of Service Encounter of Customers Using Spa Services in the Active Beach Tourism Cluster, Thailand

Service Encounter Dimensions	Mean	S.D.	Level
Remote encounter			
Content in the spa menu was tempting.	4.87	1.148	Moderately high
Online information was well interactive i.e., webpage, facebook.	4.49	1.352	Moderately high
Spa staff had telephone etiquette.	4.65	1.227	Moderately high
Total of Remote Encounter	4.67	0.970	Moderately high
Face-to-face encounter			
Greeting and welcoming of spa staff showed courtesy.	5.37	1.182	High
Offering drinks when arriving and after treatment showed Thainess.	5.36	1.243	High

Table 3 : continued

Service Encounter Dimensions	Mean	S.D.	Level
Spa staff interestingly presented spa menu.	4.91	1.198	Moderately high
Spa staff clearly gave consults on health and products before treatment.	4.70	1.396	Moderately high
Spa staff offered high standard treatment while treated.	5.15	1.097	Moderately high
Spa staff beneficially presented product recommendation after treatment.	4.64	1.328	Moderately high
Cashier process was quick and accurate.	5.29	1.162	High
Total of Face-to-face Encounter	5.06	0.818	Moderately high
Grand Total of Service Encounter	4.94	0.776	Moderately high

As exhibited in Table 3, the perception level during service encounter for customers using spa services found that face-to-face encounter produced the highest mean score. When focusing on the each dimension of face-to-face encounters, 'Greeting and welcoming of spa staff shows warmness.' gave the highest mean score. This implies that staff members delivered an excellent service when they interacted directly with customers during the initial stage. Spa staff members recognized a front stage service encounter, as a moment of truth that has vital effects on customers' perception of service since first interaction can make lasting impression. It can be stated that a failure at an early point of spa staff in the interaction stage may result in dissatisfaction at each ensuing stages, conversely, if the first

interactions are positive and affirming, it tends to look positively on each ensuing interaction, anticipating for satisfaction.

This corresponds with Czepiel (1990), who proposed that a service encounter is a dynamic interaction between a customer and service provider, and this interaction has been recognized as an important determinant of satisfaction. In a similar vein, Lovelock et al., (2002) remarked that service encounters mark a point in service delivery where customers interact with service employees, and the outcome affects perceptions of service quality. Zeithaml and Bitner (2003) put forward that any encounter can be potentially critical in determining customers' satisfaction and loyalty. Shostack (1984), Zeithaml and Bitner (1996) claim that face-to-face encounters occur during direct contact between an employee and a customer in a physical setting, and both verbal and nonverbal behavior can influence the customer's perception of quality. Fitzsimmon and Fitzsimmon (2001) argued that front stage service is crucial during the service encounter, as it is at the level where customers assess the services satisfaction provided to them.

Table 4 : Mean, Standard Deviation and Level of Customer Satisfaction of Customers Using Spa Services in the Active Beach Tourism Cluster, Thailand

Customer Satisfaction Dimensions	Mean	S.D.	Level
Disconfirmation of expectation			
Customers were satisfied with the service quality of spa staff since they were excellent as customer expected.	5.10	1.124	Moderately high
Customer was satisfied with the quality of spa treatment since it was excellent as customer expected.	5.17	1.062	Moderately high

Table 4 : continued

Customer Satisfaction Dimensions	Mean	S.D.	Level
Customer was satisfied with service quality of spa establishment since it was excellent as customer expected.	5.10	1.045	Moderately high
Total of Disconfirmation of expectation	5.12	0.962	Moderately high
Service Satisfaction			
From customer's knowledge and experience, customer was satisfied with this spa establishment.	5.09	1.054	Moderately high
Customers love this spa establishment as customer did the right thing.	5.09	1.122	Moderately high
Customer of decision's choice of being customers at this spa establishment was a wise one.	5.20	1.120	Moderately high
Dimension Total of Service Satisfaction	5.13	0.945	Moderately high
Grand Total of Customer Satisfaction	5.12	0.863	Moderately high

In terms of the customers' perception of satisfaction when using spa services exhibited in Table 4, the service satisfaction dimension showed the highest mean score. Regarding each dimension of disconfirmation of expectation, 'I was satisfied with the quality of spa treatment since it was as excellent as I expected.' produced the highest mean score. This suggests that customers felt satisfied, as their expected level of service was met by the actual service they were provided during spa treatments. Also, perhaps those spa establishments provided ingredients, raw materials, spa receptionist, spa therapist and physical facilities that were all of the very best quality. After treatment, customers could have felt that they were served with premium quality spa treatments.

This is in agreement with Cardozo (1965); Olshavsky and Mille (1972); Olson and Dover (1976); Oliver (1997, 1980); Bolton and Drew (1991), who argue that in a service context, customer satisfaction/dissatisfaction is a function of the disconfirmation arising from discrepancies between prior expectations and actual performance. To this, customers have certain service standards in mind before consumption (their expectation), they then observe service performance and compare it to their standards forming satisfaction judgments based on their comparison. The resulting judgment is labeled negative disconfirmation if the service is worse than expected, and confirmation if it was exactly as expected. When there is substantial positive disconfirmation, plus pleasure and element of surprise, then customers are likely to be delighted.

Conclusion

This research revealed that the customers' perception level of service quality for spa establishments, especially in Active Beach Tourism Cluster, Thailand. In overall, customers using spa services in the studied area indicated a satisfactory state; service quality gap scores exhibiting positive numbers, and service value, service encounter, and satisfaction were high and moderately high. To be concluded, the environmental element dimension exhibited the greatest gap scores for service quality, the affective value held the highest mean, the face-to-face encounter produced the highest mean score, the service satisfaction dimension showed the highest mean score. It can be stated that spa establishments offered excellent service providing high. This signified that customers were served spa products that greatly meet customer expectation.

In order to deliver the excellent service quality in spa business, the researcher suggested service quality development guidelines in section of result discussion as a contribution for spa establishments including service quality dimension, perceived value, service encounter, and customer satisfaction. To remain competitive

in a swiftly changing global circumstances, company must realize their customer's perceptions of service quality and act accordingly. For spa entrepreneurs, the stated perception can be beneficial; they can utilize the findings proposed as guidelines to develop their service performance and serve spa customers with a high degree of efficiency and excellence.

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