A STUDY OF THE INTERRELATIONSHIP OF SPA GUESTS' MOTIVATION, PERCEIVED SERVICE QUALITY, VALUE, SATISFACTION, AND BEHAVIORAL INTENTIONS

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A STUDY OF THE INTERRELATIONSHIP OF SPA GUESTS' MOTIVATION, PERCEIVED SERVICE QUALITY, VALUE, SATISFACTION, AND BEHAVIORAL INTENTIONS

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Abstract:

The main objective of this study is to test a hypothesized model constructed for examining the service purchasing process from beginning to end. In the context of the U.S. resort/hotel spa sector, data concerning what motivated spa patrons to visit resort/hotel spas, how these patrons perceived the quality and the value of the services received, and what influenced their levels of satisfaction and behavioral intentions were collected and analyzed. In addition, the possible moderating effects gender and age might have on the relationship between motivation and service quality were assessed empirically. Except for the hypothesized relationships of "service value-repurchase" and "satisfaction-repurchase," all other relationships among the constructs proposed in the model were supported. It was confirmed that resort/hotel spa guests' motivations to visit resort/hotel spas influenced positively the perceived service quality of such visits. In terms, the perceived service quality influenced positively the perceived service value and the level of satisfaction. In addition, the perceived service value had significant positive effects on satisfaction, and both perceived service value and satisfaction influenced word of mouth positively. The hypothesized moderating effects of gender and age on the relationship of motivation and service quality were not found. Instead, these moderating effects exercised their influences upon the relationship between service quality and satisfaction, with female and younger resort/hotel spa patrons appearing easier to be pleased than their male and older counterparts were. Lastly, it was discovered that resort/hotel spa guests with different demographic and resort/hotel spa visit characteristics were motivated to visit resort/hotel spa differently and had different perceptions on service quality, value, satisfaction, and behavioral intentions.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

After golf, health & racquet and cruise lines, the U.S. spa industry is the fourth largest sector in the nation's leisure industries and was valued at 12.3 billion in 2009. The industry had experienced phenomenal growth since the late 1990s until its own maturity (Tabacchi, 2010) and the lingering recession have put its growth on hold for the last couple of years.

There were 20,610 spas in the U.S. in 2009, and 1,810 of these establishments were resort/hotel spa[1]. Although the number of resort/hotel spas represented less than 9% of the nation's total number of spa establishments, in 2009 the average revenue of $1,458,000 per resort/hotel spa was 2.5 times larger than the average of all spa types (International Spa Association, 2010). The resort/hotel spa category had once thrived with the nation's booming spa industry but is now navigating through an economic sea that has been made bumpy by the country's most serious economic crisis since the Great Depression (ISPA, 2010).

[1] A spa owned by and located within a resort or hotel providing professionally administered spa services, fitness and wellness components and spa cuisine menu choices. In addition to the leisure guest, this is a great place for business travelers who wish to take advantage of the spa experience while away from home.
(International Spa Association: http://www.experienceispa.com/spa-goers/spa-101/types-of-spas/)

Many of the present spa operations in the U.S. hotel industry were built in the first decade of the new millennium. Whether these spas are managed by an in-house spa arm of a hotel chain or outsourced to a spa management company, they were expensive to build – a substantial amount of financial resources is required for designing, constructing, and stocking up equipment and products, not to say the need in sparing out existing spaces for the operation. Morone (2002) estimated it would cost $\$400/ft^2$ to build a spa; Monteson (2002) suggested it would be between \$350 and $550/ft^2$; and Thorsteinsdottir (2005) projected $\$307/ft^2$. According to International Spa Association (2010), the average size of a resort/hotel spa is 13,713 ft^2, hence it might require approximately \$6.64 million to build a resort/hotel spa[2]. Most of these operations were built in the past few years. The high costs in operating a resort/hotel spa (the total labor and operating expenses stand at 67.8% of total spa department revenue in 2009) and the recent drop in department income (the average resort/hotel's spa department profits fell by 19.1% from 2008 to 2009) (PKF, 2010) underscore the fact that it would take a long period of time before these spas could recapture their initial outlay.

The investment costs present a strong exit barrier for these resort/hotel spa operations (Tabacchi, 2010), so these establishments will continue to operate and in fact, they have to. In the U.S. the presence of a spa is correlated with a higher occupancy rate and spa has become a significant revenue driver (McNeill, 2008; Tabacchi, 2010). Indeed, today many travelers make their resort/hotel choices largely dependent on whether there is a spa in the place they stay. As such, having a spa in a resort/hotel has become a strategy used by many hotel chains for raising occupancy and attracting guests (Gibson, 2008).

Yet amidst the prevailing recession, people are cutting back their spending. In 2009, 39% of spas experienced a decrease in client spending (ISPA, 2010), which posed a big challenge to the

[2] Utilizing an online inflation rate calculator (http://www.usinflationcalculator.com/), the inflation rate in the U.S. between 2002 and 2010 is 21%. With reference made to the spa building cost suggested by Morone (2002), i.e., $\$400/ft^2$, in 2010 it would cost around $\$484/ft^2$ to build a spa (\$400 X 1.21=\$484). ISPA reported in 2010 that the average resort/hotel spa size was 13,713 ft^2, thus in 2010 it might cost 13,713 ft^2 X \$484 = \$6.64 million to build a resort/hotel spa.

resort/hotel spa sector. This phenomenon led to the dwindling of the average revenue per spa establishment from $1,024 in 2001 to $594 in 2009 (ISPA, 2010).

To sail against the tide, many resort/hotel spas have resorted to strategies such as expanding referral incentive and loyalty programs, offering discounts and incentives, and reducing employee numbers and operating hours (ISPA, 2010). While these strategies might and probably work in short term, the resort/hotel spa operators will need to have some long term means that can help them defy the present recession gravity and continue to compete confidently in the market when the economic tide turns. To formulate such long-term means the operators must first have a good and thorough understanding of the guests visiting their spas, and this can be done by knowing the guests' characteristics and motives towards visiting resort/hotel spas, how they perceive the quality, value and satisfaction of these visits, and their intentions towards repurchasing and giving word of mouth recommendation.

In the following first a short history of the spa industry from ancient Roman times to the 19th century is discussed. Second, a brief review is given to the development of the American spa industry from the 20th century until the present time. Third, the purpose and objectives as well as the theoretical and practical significances of this study are presented. Lastly, the organization of this study is summarized.

A Brief History of Spa: From 25 BC to the 19th Century

To many the spa sector is a new comer to the hospitality and tourism industries, a modern development of the West (Redman & Johnson, 2008), and it has only found its place in the industries in the last ten to fifteen years. Considering the many awe-inspiring achievements and wonders offered by other well-established sectors of the hospitality and tourism industries in recent years, it is not difficult to comprehend this "new-kid-on-the-block" and insignificant image attributed to the spa sector. For examples, today in the hotel industry the biggest five-star hotel complex, the Venetian and

the Palazzo in Las Vegas, has a total of 7,117 rooms; in the cruise industry, the largest cruise ship the Allure of the Seas offers 2,706 staterooms; in the airlines industry, the highest-capacity passenger aircraft Airbus 380 accommodate up to 525 passengers in a typical first class-business-economy layout. The constructions of these mega hospitality/tourism features would be inconceivable without modern technology. Yet people might be surprised to learn that the first ever "mega" structure built for the hospitality industry was a creation by the spa industry – the Thermae of Diocletian, a Roman grandeur public bathhouse debut in 306 AD that could at any one time accommodate up to 6,000 bathers (Register, 2005).

Without the advantage of modern technology, the Romans ingeniously built enormous bathing structures in the city of Rome and beyond, turning bathing activities into the largest "hospitality industry" at the beginning of the first millennium AD. Since the Emperor Agrippa built the first bathhouse in Rome in 25 BC, by the end of the 4th century AD close to 950 baths had been built in the city (Crebbin-Bailey, Harcup, & Harrington, 2005). A number of these bathhouses were enormous complexes that were built in a most magnificent manner. Take Thermae of Caracalla as an example, it occupied an area of almost 300 acres, the size of 227 American football fields; its 1,450,000 cubic feet multichambered reservoir that supplied water to the bathhouse's pools, fountains, gardens, bathing and other water facilities could devour every single drop of water from 16.5 Olympic-size swimming pools; its massive brick and concrete walls rose to 80-100 feet high, the height of a 12-storey building (parts of these walls are still very well preserved today in their original sites) (Yegül, 2010).

These brightly lit "people palaces" were extravagantly built, a self-sufficient world enclosed within high walls that was decorated with trophies, inscriptions, and sculptural monuments. Every surface, floor, wall, and ceiling was generously articulated and decorated by multicolored marble and stone imported from all over the empire, complemented by dazzling mosaic glasses and captivating pool surfaces. Besides bathing areas, pools, massage facilities, and hot and cold chambers, these thermae

also provided a whole array of entertainment amenities that aimed at cultivating the body, health, and mind. Examples of these amenities include stadia, libraries, gymnasia, gardens, dining areas, palaesters, medical and health consulting places, lecture rooms, art and sculpture galleries, multipurpose meeting and ceremonial halls, shaded parks and promenades, and theaters. (Fagan, 2002; Redman & Johnson, 2008; Yegül, 2010).

The use of baths for hygienic, medical and social reasons in the West declined as the Western Roman Empire waned after the 4th century. The intercultural diffusion between the Eastern Roman Empire and the Islamic world, however, created the Hammam, or Turkish bath around the 8th century, which has been deeply embedded in the Middle-eastern culture and is still thriving in countries like Turkey and Tunisia (Crebbin-Bailey et al., 2005; Fagan, 2002; Redman & Johnson, 2008).

Between the decline of the Western Roman Empire and the Renaissance era, the bathing culture in Europe continued, only that the Continentals were deprived of the luxurious Roman bathhouses once enjoyed by their ancestors. Healing pool facilities were built around towns such as Spa in Belgium, Baden Baden in Germany, and Bath in England that were dotted with thermal springs. The Europeans believed that "taking the waters" in these spas would have healing effects on their various illness (Register, 2005).

During the Renaissance era Henry VIII banned his subjects from going to the bathhouses on his land, but he could not stop them from crossing the sea to visit bathhouses in Belgium (Redman & Johnson, 2008). On the Continent, the baths were well frequented and communities were built around these baths. However, not all these facilities were the same. For examples, while the baths in Germany were well-appointed, those in Italy were rusty and primitive (Palmer, 1990; Redman & Johnson, 2008).

In the 18th and 19th centuries thalassotherapy – the use of sea water, seaweed and mineral bath for healing purposes – was very popular throughout Europe. France was one of the most popular

countries for thalassotherapy, other places like Brighton of England and the Dead Sea were also visited by locals and travelers alike. Besides bathhouses, hospitals were built in locations that offered thalassotherapy. For example, a marine hospital was built in Margate in England in 1791 (Redman & Johnson, 2008).

Evolution of the U.S. Spa Industry

The evolution of the spa industry after the 20th century to a large extent has been nurtured by the U.S. spa industry. Two millennia after the building of the first Roman bathhouse that ushered in the world's first quasi spa industry in ancient Roman Empire, in the early 20th century European spas by and large were still focused on its founding philosophy, i.e., hydrotherapy and bathing (Tabacchi, 2008), an industry with its constituents sparsely spread over the Continent in hot spring towns frequented mainly by the locals and most of these places and operations were unknown to the rest of the world. It is the American spa professionals and entrepreneurs who have step-by-step turned the spa industry into a household name and a major player in today's hospitality and tourism industries.

The United States has emerged gradually as a center of spa innovation since the 1850s, when hot springs such as the New York's Saratoga Springs became fashionable retreat visited by celebrities such as Edgar Allan Poe and Franklin Delano Roosevelt (SpaFinder, n.d.). Health resorts were built around these hot springs and the foundation of the U.S. spa industry was laid. At the turn of the last century Elizabeth Arden brought the concept of makeup and beauty treatments to the U.S. and opened the first city day spa[3] The Red Door Salon in New York in 1910 (Redman & Johnson, 2008). The Red Door not only revolutionized the concept of spa by specializing in manicures and facials rather than providing the traditional massages or baths to its customers (Tabacchi, 2008), but ended the status hot

[3] A spa offering a variety of professionally administered spa services to clients on a day-use basis. Day spas offer many of the same services and procedures as cosmetic spas. (International Spa Association)

spring health resorts had held for decades as the only choice of getting spa service in the U.S. After operating for more than 100 years, now The Red Door Salon is renamed as The Red Door Spa and has 31 day and resort spas located across the U.S.

Before the Great Depression hit the U.S. hard, the health spas that were built around hot springs were expanding fast. In the 1930s, the business of the publicly owned spas in Saratoga Springs, New York, and Hot Springs, Arkansas, not only unaffected by the crash of the stock market, they were benefited from the economic depression that beset the nation as people increased their patronage to these establishments in order to alleviate their depression. In fact, it was in the same decade that a Committee on Spas and Health Resorts in the United States was established at the 16th Congress of Physical Therapy in 1937 (Redman & Johnson, 2008).

During World War II while some of the best spas and resorts were commandeered by the military and converted into hospitals for physical therapy and rehabilitation programs (Redman & Johnson, 2008), in 1940 the Brooklyn-born Deborah Szekely and her husband Edmond Szekely opened Rancho La Puerta in Tecate, Mexico, the first new-style destination spa[4] ever operated. The Rancho La Puerta puts emphasis on organic vegetarian food, daily meditation, exercise, and the mind-body connection, but without the hydrotherapy aspect of the old-line health spas (Tabacchi, 2008).

After accumulating almost twenty years of successful experience in running Rancho La Puerta, Deborah Szekely opened The Golden Door spa in Escondido, California in 1959. The Golden Door is a destination spa with traditional Japanese honjin inn design that focuses on preventive principles of fitness, nutrition, meditation, and spa treatments. The week-long personal health and fitness training program offered by The Golden Door is prototypical for many modern destination spa programs and the brand itself has become an iconic symbol of luxury, personal growth, education and fitness

[4] A destination spa is a facility with the primary purpose of guiding individual spa-goers to develop healthy habits. Historically a seven-day stay, this lifestyle transformation can be accomplished by providing a comprehensive program that includes spa services, physical fitness activities, wellness education, healthful cuisine and special interest programming. (International Spa Association)

(Redman & Johnson, 2008; Tabacchi, 2008; Van Itallie & Hadley, 1988). Today, The Golden Door operates four destination spas in America and one in Puerto Rico.

As The Red Door is regarded as the first day spa and The Golden Door the first destination spa in America, Canyon Ranch in Tucson, Arizona, is dubbed as the first total vacation/fitness resort (Van Itallie & Hadley, 1988). Founded by Mel and Enid Zuckerman in 1979, Canyon Ranch offers a wide range of exercise, learning programs, medical services, recreational activities, water classes, massages, and workshops. The founding philosophy for Canyon Ranch is to educate and help its guests in how to make healthy choices in all aspects of their lives and attain lasting positive changes for emotional and physical health and wellbeing (Van Itallie & Hadley, 1988). Now Canyon Ranch operates two destination spas, several spa clubs (e.g. at The Las Vegas Venetian Resort Hotel and in the cruise ship Queen Elizabeth II), and has expanded into the property market by building spa lifestyle communities.

The U.S. spa industry experienced an unprecedented growth at the turn of the new millennium, the total number of spas increased from 4,140 in 1999 to 21,310 in 2008 (ISPA, 2010). The main power that catapulted the growth came from the day spa sector, which constitutes 79% of the total spa number in the U.S. (ISPA, 2010). The expansion trend made its way to the resort/hotel industry during the late 1990s and early 2000s. Learning about the successful stories of destination spas such as the Canyon Ranch and The Golden Door and witnessing the growth of the day spa sector, the resort/hotel sector started to realize that a spa operation, if well managed, can be a very good revenue source. Hotel chains were in full force in the last decade building resort/hotel spas in their properties and 77% of them were built after 2000 (ISPA, 2010). These resort/hotel spas are either managed by professional spa management companies such as ESPA (e.g. managing spas for The Peninsula Chicago and The Peninsula New York) and Mandara (e.g. managing spas for The Paris Hotel in Las Vegas and Disney's Grand Californian Hotel in Anaheim) or by the spa management teams of some famous resort/hotel chains (e.g. Marriott's Quan Spas and Hyatt's Pure Spas). The exponential

growth of the resort/hotel spas after year 2000 can be explained by a number of reasons and they are discussed in the next chapter.

Purpose and Objective of the Study

Resort/hotel spas are confronting every kind of obstacle imaginable rooted from the current challenging economic condition. From September 2009 to March 2010 42% of resort/hotel spas reported a decrease in number of visits and 43% experienced a drop in spending per visit. The discouraging environment forced 41% of the resort/hotel spas reduced their staffing levels (ISPA, 2010).

Resort/hotel spas must find ways to survive in the present economic depression. Taking care of the cost side by trimming staff size may be unavoidable, but to remain reasonably profitable is even more important. A crucial means to keep a resort/hotel spa profitable is by knowing how spa guests appraise their spa experiences. Hence, how much the management of a resort/hotel operation knows about the following will to a large extent determine the success or failure of the operation:

1. The underlying factors that motivate consumers to visit resort/hotel spas.
2. The ways spa guests evaluate the resort/hotel spa quality and value received.
3. The ways spa guests determine the satisfaction level of a resort/hotel spa visit.
4. The factors that determine resort/hotel spa guests' repurchasing behavioral intention.
5. The factors that determine resort/hotel spa guests to initiate positive word of mouth communication.

This study has a twofold purpose. First, it is to develop and test a model that explains the underlying motivating factors of resort/hotel spa guests and links them to the prediction of these guests' future actions through their perceptions of resort/hotel spa services. Second, the study will provide

recommendations to the resort/hotel spa operators that will help them devise strategies to enhance guests' intent to visit and provide services that will be perceived as both satisfying and of high quality and value.

For the detailed objectives of this study, they are specifically aimed at addressing the issues discussed above by investigating into the following:

1) To understand the relationship of the motivating factors and perceived service quality of resort/hotel spa guests.
2) To examine the effect of service quality on service value as well as on satisfaction of resort/hotel spa visits.
3) To test how the perceived service value of resort/hotel spa visits influences guests' satisfaction.
4) To investigate into how the perceived service value of resort/hotel spa visits affects spa guests' repurchase and word of mouth activities.
5) To discover how the satisfaction level of resort/hotel spa visits determines repurchase and word of mouth intentions.
6) To examine how word of mouth activities influence repurchase intention.
7) To test the moderating effects of age and gender on the relationship of spa guests' motivating factors and perceived service quality.
8) To explore whether the different demographic characteristics of spa guests have different types of motivations for visiting resort/hotel spas, and the kinds of influences these characteristics have on perceived service quality, perceived service value, satisfaction and behavioral intentions (word of mouth and repurchase intentions)

Significance of the Study

Theoretical Contributions

Albeit the spa industry has become a very important sector in the hospitality industry, very few studies have chosen this specific industry as the subject of investigation. Among the very handful studies on the spa industry are the work by Snoj & Mumel (2002) in which the service qualities of two Slovakian spas were studied; Bennett, King, and Milner (2004) investigated into positioning aspect of spas in the Australia's health resort sector; Monteson & Singer's (2004) attempt to discover the means to market a resort-based spa in the United States; Mak, Wong and Chang (2009) checked into the motivations and characteristics of Hong Kong spa guests; and Azman & Chan (2010) explored on the motivators of the spa guests visiting Saba, Malaysia.

Regarding the resort/hotel spa sector in the U.S., no empirical study has been performed to address how the interactions among spa guests' motivations, the perceived quality and value of their experiences, and the satisfaction derived from such visits may affect their repurchase and word of mouth intentions. This study is important because it is the first attempt to examine the constructs of motivation, quality, value, satisfaction, word of mouth, and repurchase intention in the context of the U.S. resort/hotel spa sector. A conceptual framework is developed to see how these mentioned constructs interact with each other. In addition, the moderating effects of age and gender have on the relationship between motivation and service quality are also explored.

Practical Implications

Having a full-scale spa operating in a resort/hotel property was once an afterthought for many resort/hotel operators, a luxury amenity instead of an independent profit-generating center. This idea has certainly changed. Now a resort/hotel spa has moved beyond being a luxury amenity and having a spa is crucial to remain competitive in the market (Madanoglu & Brezina, 2008; Mandelbaum & Lerner, 2008).

Today the spa guests are a group of sophisticated and experienced consumers (Mandelbaum & Lerner, 2008). These consumers know what spa is and only a quality and value spa experience can satisfy them and persuade them to come back and spend more. It is hoped that the results of this study will provide operators in the U.S. resort/hotel spa sectors with insights and ideas on what motivate consumers to visit resort/hotel spas and how to retain them by serving them better. Only by building a strong client base can a resort/hotel spa operating under a challenging economic condition recapture its construction costs in a reasonable period of time and remain profitable in the long run.

Organization of the Study

This study is divided into five chapters. The first chapter focuses on presenting a general background of the study which includes a brief introduction of the evolution of the spa industry, its purpose and objectives, as well as its theoretical contributions and practical implications. Chapter two gives a specific review on the U.S. resort/hotel spa sector, the major elements that have promoted its growth, and the various theories and relationships concerning the individual constructs that are explored in this study. The conceptual framework and hypotheses developed for this study are also introduced in this chapter. Chapter three details the research methods that are used in this study, including research design and instrument developments, sampling plan, and data collection and analysis methods.

Chapter four presents and discusses the findings of the data collected as well as the results of the various hypothesis testings. Chapter five concludes the study by reviewing the results and implications of the study, describing its limitations, and providing recommendations for future research.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In this chapter a specific review is first given to the resort/hotel spa sector in America. Next the major factors that have contributed to the unprecedented growth of the resort/hotel spa sector are presented. These factors include the healthy lifestyle that has become popularized since the 1980s, the baby boomers, Generation X, Generation Y, the changing travel patterns of leisure and business travelers, and the needs to get relaxed and refreshed. After reviewing the factors that have nurtured the growth of the American resort/hotel spa sector, the chapter moves on to explore what researchers have discovered since the 1950s about the constructs motivation, service quality, service value, satisfaction, word of mouth and repurchase intentions, and the moderating effects of gender and age. Since many concepts and models have been proposed for these constructs over the last sixty years, in order to understand the evolutionary journeys of these concepts and models in a relatively easy and manageable fashion, as far as it is possible the reviews are presented in a chronological order. This chapter concludes by presenting the hypotheses and conceptual framework of this study.

The U.S. Resort/Hotel Spa Sector

In the past five decades, the popularization of plane traveling has stimulated the exponential growth of tourism industry. The booming tourism industry, in turn, has boosted the expansion

of the hotel industry in a way the latter has never experienced before. The thriving hotel industry has drawn entrepreneurs and corporations to build and manage many individual and chain hotels in America to meet the ever growing demands coming from the leisure and business travelers. Yet the hotel business is not an exception to Darwinism – survival of the fittest. Competition in the luxury hotel segment perhaps is the most eye-catching, and in different times different types of new facilities have been introduced by these luxurious hotels to compete in the market. For examples, in the 1960s and 1970s, no resort/hotel could claim or qualify as a 4- or 5-star property if it did not have a swimming pool and a gymnasium; in the 1980s it was a business center that every deluxe hotel had to offer; in the 1990s a trendily designed food and beverage outlet became a very useful marketing tool for a luxurious property to compete in the market; and in the first decade of the new millennium, it was a spa that every upscale resort/hotel had to have.

Yet how did the hotel industry discover the potential of spa? The following section will attempt to answer this question.

The Emerging of Resort/Hotel Spas

In the 1980s, as discussed in the last chapter, when formulating strategies and concepts to compete in the market the idea of spa seldom came across the minds of hoteliers, analysts and consultants. Even if it did, spas would be viewed as a cost center that chances to make money were dim. Spa operation, to sum up, was nothing but a loss leader (Monteson & Singer, 1992). Yet the perception toward spa operation changed since the early 2000s. Prompted by the strong wellness needs and healthy lifestyle that practiced by baby boomers and learned from the successful stories of the U.S. destination spas, many full-service upscale resorts that built in the 1990s would incorporate a spa in their operations. Once these leisure travelers were exposed to the wonder of the pampering and healing effects of spas, they fell in love with the experience

right away and began to add whether a resort has a spa or not as one of the major criteria when selecting the next resort to stay (Azman & Chan, 2010; Chon & Singh, 1995; Ellin, 2002).

It had taken quite some years after the establishments of The Golden Door (opened in 1959) and Canyon Ranch (opened in 1979) before the resort sector realized the potential of spa in the 1990s, and one more decade for the urban hotel sector to catch up with the trend in the early 2000s. Yet from there on there is no return – the spa concept has firmly anchored in the resort/hotel sector. As more hotel guests turn to spa facilities as venues to improve their health and well-being during their travels, the resort/hotel-spa concept continues to blossom (McNeil & Ragins, 2005) and spa has become a compulsory feature at upscale resort and urban hotels (White, 2006). Today, hoteliers not only continue to build spas, but are building larger and more elaborate ones as well: The Cosmopolitan Hotel and Resort and The City Center in Las Vegas have vast spa areas of 40,000 and 70,000 square feet respectively (Rudd, Mills & Racic, 2010), something unperceivable before the year 2000. No wonder the spa industry is now the 4th largest leisure industry in the U.S. (ISPA, 2010)

Still, as a rule in economics, demand always comes before supply, so what factors have stimulated and sustained the unprecedented growth of the resort/hotel spa sector? In the following section, a brief account will be given to the driving forces behind the booming resort/hotel spa phenomenon.

Factors that Contribute to the Growth of the Resort/Hotel Spa Sector

Healthy Lifestyle

The Americans have been tackling chronic diseases such as obesity, diabetes, heart disease, and cancer for decades. These lifestyle-related diseases might very possible lead to, for the first time in American history, a shortened lifespan for the nation's next generation (Cohen, 2008; Olshansky et al., 2005). The dependencies on science and medical advances (Cohen, 2008) seemingly have not been able to help the Americans keep these diseases on check. However, the health problems the Americans face today might not reflect the failure of the medical system or technology as much as the failure of the people in choosing to live a healthy lifestyle. To help combat the chronic diseases, the media in the U.S. has been enthusiastically promoting the concept of living healthily and the market has offered various programs and products to meet the demands (Hallab, 2006). In the 1980s the very strong desire that came from the public in general and the baby boomers in particular to stay physically fit had led to an explosion in the number of health and fitness clubs – the total number of establishments had increased from 5,000 in 1981 to 13,854 in 1990, a drastic growth of 280%. Although from 1990 to 2002 the fitness/health club industry took in another 6,000 new establishments, a 43% increment in the total number of operations, the growth speed of the industry had obviously slowed down (McNeil & Ragins, 2005; Stern, 2008). The slowing down of the health club industry reflects not the Americans focusing less on living healthier, but it is just that besides physical fitness, they are looking for other means that can help them relax and refresh, and they have discovered spas. Since the early 1990s, more and more consumers have regarded spas as places for health and wellbeing improvements, havens that provide them with the types of products and services that can positively contribute to their sense of wellness (McNeil & Ragins, 2005; Sherwood, 2007). The demand for spas nurtured the growth of the spa industry, increasing the number of spa

establishments and visits by 52 percent and 70 percent respectively between 1997 and 1999 (McNeil & Ragins, 2005). The first decade of the new millennium saw the golden years of the spa industry with the total number of operations jumped from 4,140 in 1999 to 20,610 in 2009, an incredible increment of 500 percent.

The healthy lifestyle practiced by many Americans and the strong demand for spas have big impacts on the hotel industry. Hallab (2006) commented that since an individual's values and lifestyle will influence his/her consumption behavior, when he/she travels, that lifestyle of his/hers will certainly affect his/her style of travel. Indeed, back in the 1990s Chon and Singh (1995) already realized that there has been a growing trend that the Americans are putting new emphasis upon the experiential and emotional aspects of their vacations and many of them have cited that the presence of a spa at a resort is a primary reason for drawing them. To response to the needs of these health conscious travelers, resorts and hotels across America have started remodeling their amenities and services by adding spas to their properties to help their guests release stress and improve physical conditioning (Azman & Chan, 2010). The growing concerns for wellness along with the convergence of the health, travel and hospitality sectors (Cohen, 2008) will provide momentum for the continued growth of the resort/hotel spa sector.

Baby Boomers, Generation X and Generation Y

Experts of the hospitality industry have cited many factors that have stimulated the incredible growth of the resort/hotel spa sector (Hanks III, 2006). These experts might come up with different sets of stimulators, yet they all agree on one thing – baby boomers are an important driving force behind the growth.

Baby boomers, born between 1946 and 1964, have become one of the most powerful shaping forces of the hospitality and tourism industries. The baby boomers are entering their senior years and have brought with them various lifestyle and market changes (Redman & Johnson, 2008). The boomers are also reaching their peak earning and spending years and when they travel, they will spend billions of dollars staying in luxury accommodations (Kotler, Bowen & Maken, 2006). Indeed, these middle-aged travelers earns 35 percent more than the average guests and stay approximately 20 nights per year in hotels, and they are more than willing to spend beyond their means for a good stay, to feel important, respected, and most of all, to be pampered (Barsky & Nash, 2003). Today, the kinds of activities the boomers participate while traveling are quite different from those they frequented when they were at their physical prime. In the eighties, when the baby boomers were still young and restless, they went to gymnasia to do body-building and take aerobic classes. Today, entering their late forties or mid-sixties, they are searching for a healthier balance between fitness and stress management and spa treatments are exactly what these aging baby boomers need (Rowe, 1998). While on vacation, in between the many recreational activities such as golfing, hiking, swimming, or sightseeing the baby boomers like to add spa treatments in order to allow themselves to relax, de-stress and enjoy a fulfilling experience. There is, however, another major reason why resort/hotel spas have become so popular: Different from tennis courts and golf courses, spas do not require their patrons any special skills – or even energy (Hanks III, 2006; Monteson & Singer, 1992; Rodriguez, 2001).

Although at present the baby boomers constitute the biggest amount of visitors to resort/hotel spa, their younger counterparts, Generation X, are catching up fast and the number of visits by these younger guests is on the rise (McNeil & Ragins, 2005; Rowe, 1998). Apparently both the baby boomers and their younger "Xers" are both willing to pay to look young and healthy. ISPA members have seen a surge in these two groups of spa guests looking for healthy ageing treatments and products that deliver results (ISPA, 2006).

Born in 1965 to 1976, Generation X prizes experience and want a better quality of life (Kotler et al., 2006). This group of "young pleasure travelers enjoy the good life in preferred hotels." Once in the hotel, they are easier to please than many other high-end travelers (Barsky & Nash, 2003). As long as they feel being well pampered, they will return. Generation X, like baby boomers, also worry about health concerns and are seeking preventive services for stress-related conditions (McNeil & Ragins, 2005). This group of travelers is also increasingly aspiring for mini-escapes and turn to spas as a means for engaging self-reflection (Redman & Johnson, 2008). Generation X is a very important market segment for the resort/hotel spas because after 2010, they have overtaken the baby boomers as a primary market for almost every product category (Kotler et al., 2006).

Apart from the baby boomers and Generation X, a younger generation of consumers, known as Generation Y, is hitting the spas in record number and exerting more and more impacts on the spa industry (S. Ellis, 2008). Although consensus has not been reached regarding the starting and ending birth years of this group of young consumers (Redman & Johnson, 2008), many put those who were born between the second half of the 1970s and mid-1990s into this generation group. In this study, Generation Y is referred to those born between 1977 and 1994 (Morton, 2002).

Morton (2002) had the following observations regarding this young generation. First, this group of consumers has more money to spend than any young people to date – almost one of every six Gen Yers have either their own credit card or access to their parents'. Second, they are fashion, trend and brand conscious, yet they incline to change brand loyalties quickly. Third, Gen Yers spend their money in a pragmatic fashion, they enjoy convenience, are value-oriented and risk adverse, they mistrust mass media, and word of mouth is the best method of marketing to them.

Adria Lake of Spa Concepts commented that the needs and expectations of Gen Yers will certainly shape the next generation of spas. These young spa guests are interested in new

experiences, but want them to be real and authentic, not artificial or staged. The pragmatism of Gen Yers makes them to expect spas to be both a place for pampering and performing (Nicol, 2010). Gen Yers are keen spa guests and they enjoy visiting spa in group. In 2007, there were nearly four million American teenagers going to spas. This group of spa guests mainly takes treatments that focus on what other people can see – hair, face and hands, and they shows an unprecedented comfort level with cosmetic med-spa procedures (S. Ellis, 2008; Redman & Johnson, 2008). However, Gen Yers do not have much brand loyalty and are the most ethnically diverse of any prior generations (S. Ellis, 2008).

Leisure and Business Travelers

To complement the traditional or standard leisure activities, today many leisure travelers are inclined to experience other diverse and novel activities as far as possible while on vacations, and most of them will include spa visits in their traveling plans for the fun, experimentation and indulgence offered by spas (Mak et al., 2009; Redman & Johnson, 2008). While many leisure travelers see the value of spa treatments when on vacations, a growing number of business travelers also begin to appreciate the importance of going to spa while on a business trip (Leavy, 2001). Business travelers of both sexes regard their health and well-being are vital for performing well at work as well as feeling excellent about themselves, and they also want to keep their self-care programs while they are away from homes (Wylie, 2000). Liz Neporent, former president of Frontline Fitness and Plus One Health Management that runs the fitness spa facilities at Waldorf-Astoria and the Trump International Hotel Tower in New York, commented that when business travelers books hotel rooms, they would make their choices based on whether they could get a facial and a massage at the hotel for the need to relieve jet-lag and stress so that they could clear up their minds for business meetings big and small (Ellin, 2002).

Traditionally, baby-boomers who are female, married and over 50 represent the most important market for spas (McNeil & Ragins, 2005). This group of customers – heavier users of spa treatments – is traveling more and more on business. In 1970, women accounted for less than 1 percent of all business travelers, they now account for about a half of all business travelers (Kotler et al., 2006). These female travelers are a vital factor for the growth of hotel spas.

At the same time, more businessmen are getting use to enjoying spa treatments as well (Wylie, 2000). Reports indicate that there are an increasing number of men seeking spa therapy to reverse damage done to their health by age and the environment, raising from 29 percent of all spa guests in 2003 to 48% in 2008 (ISPA, 2008; McNeil & Ragins, 2005; Redman & Johnson, 2008). Philippe Dumont, owner of Nickel Spa for Men in New York City, commented that men are extremely easygoing, if they like the place, they will come back on a regular basis (Bennis, 2002). As it is illustrated above, business travelers of both sexes look for spa services while they travel. Their interests in spa have stirred a significant shift in the past years from a key travel constituency: meeting planners. When searching for hotels, the executives charged with organizing conferences, association gatherings and corporate retreats will specifically look for spas and are increasingly refuse to consider hotels without ample spa facilities (Foster & Mandelbaum, 2005; Haake, 2008; Hanks III, 2006). In addition, many corporations are using spa treatments as incentive, recognition or reward tools to boost productivity and morale of hardworking employees (Haake, 2008). Very soon the so-called MICE industry, i.e., meetings, incentive travels, conventions and exhibitions industry, will become another important booster for the resort/hotel spa sector.

The Needs to Get Relaxed and Refreshed

The stressful modern life makes the spa an important part of the total guest experience (Club Management, 2003). Busy work schedules, high stress levels, and a growing focus on one's health and well-being are prompting more people to spas for regular massages and treatments – there are just too many overstressed guests looking for relaxation and rejuvenation. In fact, marketing appeal of a spa as a stress eliminator and luxurious indulgence is well received by clientele already attracted to luxury-oriented hotels (Foster & Mandelbaum, 2005; Rowe, 1998; Wolman, 2005).

People go to resort/hotel spas to reward themselves for working so hard. They want to be distressed, decompressed, protected, and cared for (ISPA, 2004; McNeil & Ragins, 2005). Indeed, people crave for relaxation and refreshment. When people are engulfed by competitions and pressure in their daily life, spas to them become refuges and havens where they can get relaxed and refreshed physically and mentally.

Motivation Theories

The study carried out by Stone (1954) in identifying urban shopper types is regarded as the first ever attempted study to discern the taxonomy of shoppers (Westbrook & Black, 1985). The study was administered to 150 housewives living in the neighborhood of an outlying business district on Chicago's Northwest Side. From the study Stone identified four shopper types and their respective shopping motives. The shopper types identified by Stone are listed below:

1. Economic shoppers: "unambiguously directed to the purchase of merchandise" and justified their pleasantness of their shopping experience by the criteria of price, quality,

and merchandize assortment.

2. Personalizing shoppers: "fundamentally and positively interpersonal." Store patronage was to a large extent influenced by the closeness of relationship between this group of shoppers and the store personnel.
3. Ethical shoppers: "help the little guy out" by patronizing preferred neighborhood stores and shunned "lower prices or a wider selection of goods" offered by chains.
4. Apathetic shoppers: did shopping only because it was necessary. The most important shopping criterion to them was convenient locations and they did not pay much attention to "price, quality of goods, relationships with store personnel, or ethics."

Stone's (1954) findings have served like an assembly call inviting researchers to join him in investigating purchasing motives and consumer behaviors. Indeed, since the publication of his findings, the world has never stopped responding.

Based on an exploration into the patronage and shopping behavior of shoppers in retail stores, Stephenson and Willett (1969) suggested four shopping styles and they were (1) store-loyal shoppers, (2) compulsive and recreation shoppers, (3) convenience shoppers and (4) price-bargain-conscious shoppers.

In his investigation into the shopping motives of Los Angles shoppers, Tauber (1972) realized that there were two distinct groups of psychosocial needs that motivated a shopper to shop and they were personal motives and social motives. For personal motives, there were six of them and they were categorized as: (1) role playing – for example, the role of mother; (2) diversion – diversion from the routine of daily life, a form of recreation; (3) self-gratification – to relieve unhappiness by spending; (4) learning about new trends – to learn about the latest fashion/styling trends or product innovations; (5) physical activity – walking as a kind of exercise; and (6)

sensory stimulation – to be stimulated by sight, sound and smell. For social motives, five different motives were recognized and they were grouped as: (1) social experiences outside the home; (2) communication with others having a similar interest; (3) peer group attraction; (4) status and authority – the opportunities to receive attention and respect from store personnel; and (5) pleasure of bargaining. Besides identifying the two psychosocial buying motives, Tauber (1972) also proposed the concept of impulse buying and explained that the "the existence of modern transportation and the availability of increasing amounts of discretionary time serve to expose people to many shopping clusters while in transit to their job, or social and recreational activities. This mobility increases exposure to new shopping alternatives and enhances opportunities for impulse shopping" (p.49).

Two years after the publication of Tauber's work, Darden and Ashton (1974) examined the shopping behaviors of supermarket patrons and confirmed the existence of specific patronage attribute preference segments and that lifestyle and shopping orientations did vary among them. In their study the authors identified seven shopper types and they were (1) apathetic shopper, (2) demanding shopper, (3) quality shopper, (4) fastidious shopper, (5) stamp preferer, (6) convenient location shopper, and (7) stamp haters. Two years later, Moschis (1976) propped into the different information needs and communication behavior of cosmetic consumers and discovered six distinct shopper types and they were (1) special shopper – shopping for specials, (2) brand-loyal shopper – buy products only from the preferred brands, (3) store-loyal shopper – purchase only at a certain stores, (4) problem-solving shopper – decide what to buy during the purchasing process, (5) psychosocializing shopper – buying motives were influenced by others such as friends, and (6) name-conscious shopper – judging brands on the basis of the store that carries them. Approaching the end of the 1970s Williams, Painter, and Nichols (1978) constructed a typology of grocery shoppers and four shopper types were identified. The four shopper types were, namely (1) apathetic shopper – valued convenient location and in-store

promotion, (2) convenience shopper – valued efficient shopping process and are store loyal; (3) price shopper – low price hunter; and (4) involved shopper – possessed a salient shopping role, valued convenient store location, ease of shopping, and competitive prices.

One of the shopping motives that had been investigated upon in the 1970s was shopping environment (Darden & Ashton, 1974; Tauber, 1972). Donovan and Rossiter (1982) expanded this particular issue by studying the interrelationship of retail store atmosphere and two emotional states of the customers, namely pleasure and arousal. The authors proposed that the interaction of the pleasure and arousal could influence a patron's shopping enjoyment inside the store, time spent in it, willingness to communicate to the sales personnel, tendency to spend, and future patronage. In the same year Donovan and Rossiter announced their findings, Holbrook and Hirschman (1982) also inquired into how various environmental and consumer inputs interacted with each other. The "experiential view" proposed by the authors stated that this perspective is "phenomenological in spirit and regards consumption as a primarily subjective state of consciousness with a variety of symbolic meanings, hedonic responses, and aesthetic criteria. Recognition of these important aspects of consumption is strengthened by contrasting the information processing and experiential view" (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982, p.132). The authors further opined that consumption research had largely focused on the utilitarian functions of consumption and ignored the experiential aspect of it, i.e., a shopping experience also has the ability to deliver fantasies, feelings and fun. Indeed, as pointed out by the authors, many products do "project important nonverbal cues that must be seen, heard, tasted, felt, or smelled to be appreciated properly" (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982, p.134).

To explore on what motivated shoppers to shop, Westbrook and Black (1985) contributed by hypothesizing seven shopping motivation and they are listed as follows:

1. Anticipated utility: denotes shopping motivation linked to the expectation

of benefits or hedonic states.

2. Role enactment: describes the motivation to identify with and assume culturally prescribed roles regarding the conduct of shopping activity.
3. Negotiation: describes the motivation to seek economic advantage through bargaining interactions with sellers.
4. Choice optimization: identifies motivation to search for and secure precisely the right product.
5. Affiliation: describes the motivation to affiliate directly or indirectly with other individuals involved in marketplace institutions.
6. Power & authority: refer to motivations which concern the attainment of elevated social position.
7. Stimulation: denotes motivation to seek novel and interesting stimuli from the retail environment.

The study of Westbrook and Black (1985), in the authors' words, "represented the first systematic effort to isolate the various motivational dimensions underlying consumer shopping activity" (p.99). Practically speaking, the authors had contributed by providing confirmation to some important purchasing motivation hypotheses advanced by other scholars such as Tauber (1972).

While Westbrook and Black (1985) summarizing and hypothesizing various shopping motivation, Sherman and Smith (1987) further explored on the subject regarding how consumer perceptions of store image would affect actual shopping behavior by extending the study of Donovan and Rossiter (1982). Sherman and Smith (1987) studied how a consumer's mood at the point of

purchase would influence the buyer's buying behavior and confirmed that there was a significant interaction between consumer's mood and store image, revealing that the mood of the consumer might be affected by an appreciable store image which in turn would influence the number of items purchased as well as the time and money spent in the store.

Studies conducted beyond 1980s have continued to explore the interrelationships among store environment, motives to shop, and the psychological states of the consumers. Dawson, Bloch, and Ridgway (1990) examined how preexisting motives and transient emotions might influence retail-related outcomes and generally confirmed that emotions experienced during the buying process did vary across groups with varied shopping motivation, i.e., consumers with strong product or experiential motives reported most pleasure and arousal in the shopping environment. In addition, Dawson et al. (1990) revealed that consumers who came to the shopping place to experience sight, sound and people would receive higher arousal and pleasure. Bitner (1992) proposed a framework that to a large extent elevated the importance of manmade and physical environment in affecting the commercial activities conducted in it. The term "servicescape" was coined and it basically included three composite dimensions and they were (1) ambient conditions, (2) spatial layout and functionality, and (3) signs, symbols, and artifacts. McCabe, Rosenbaum, and Yurchisin (2007) examined why consumers shop at favored retail organizations and the relationship among shopping motivations and their outcomes. The findings indicated that there were four shopping motives and they were (1) experiential stimulation, (2) bargain hunting, (3) image-maintenance, and (4) pampering. Furthermore, three shopper types were also identified and they were (1) goal-oriented shoppers, (2) bargain hunters, and (3) sociable shoppers.

Investigation into what motivate people to travel has occupied tourism and hospitality scholars for decades as well. Among the various theories that have been suggested, the push and pull motivation theory perhaps is the most popularly quoted (Azman & Chan, 2010; Crompton, 1979; Mohammad & Som 2010; Tezak, Sergo, & Luk, 2010). The push factors can be regarded as the

intrinsic motivators while the pull factors the extrinsic. Push factors are origin-related and regarded as some intangible desires of the individual travelers, such as the desires for escape, nostalgia, rest, relaxation, social interaction, wellness and healthy lifestyle of the tourists. Pull factors, on the other hand, are associated with the attractiveness of a given destination and its tangible tourism resources like sunshine, sea, spa and accommodation facilities (Azman & Chan, 2010; Dann, 1977; Mohammad & Som, 2010).

Dann (1977) commented that before the mid-1970s the market had preferred to use various pull factors to explain the motivations behind traveling and ignoring the important role played by the push factors. To supplement and complement the study on what motivate people to travel, i.e., to move beyond the overdependence on using the physical elements offered by the destinations to explain why people travel, the different psychological motivation dimensions that prompted people to travel should also be studied as well. He proposed two psychological motivation dimensions that motivate people to travel – anomie and ego-enhancement. Dann explained that people wanted "to transcend the feeling of isolation obtained in everyday life" and "to communicate with his fellow man." Furthermore, people need to be recognized, to have his/her ego "enhanced or boosted from time to time" and attain a certain desirable status. Traveling, as such, offer people the exact opportunities to get away from a routine life, chances to freely communicate with people who don't know much about them (unlike talking to people who know you, talking to people who don't bears basically no consequence in whatever topics a person initiates), and get an ego boost (however, nothing comes for free, and it is very likely that the costs are in proportion to the level of ego one wants to boost). Dann further argued that the presence of anomie and ego-enhancement is conducive to the creation of a fantasy world.

To add weight to Dann's (1977) argument on the importance of socio-psychological motives that prompt people to travel, Crompton (1979) identified nine push traveling motives. Seven of these nine motives were classified as socio-psychological (the push factors) and they were (1) escape

from a perceived mundane environment, (2) exploration and evaluation of self, (3) relaxation, (4) prestige, (5) regression, (6) enhancement of kinship, and (7) facilitation of social interaction. The remaining two motives (the pull factors) were grouped into the cultural category and they were (8) novelty and (9) education.

Adding another psychological perspective to what motivate people to travel, Iso-Ahola (1982) proposed the "approach/seeking" and "avoidance/escape" dimensions. Iso-Ahola (1982) stated that "an awareness of the potential satisfaction" that can be gained from leisure activity participations, in particular tourism, is linked to these two socio-psychological forces – approach/seeking means the feelings of mastery and competence, and avoidance/escape represents the need to leave the routine environment behind. He regarded tourism behavior as a dialectical-optimizing process, i.e., tourism "provides an outlet for avoiding something and for simultaneously seeking something." In addition Iso-Ahola (1990) also pointed out that the seeking and escape dimensions did encompass psychological and social elements. As such, the two dimensions could be expanded further into personal seeking, personal escape, interpersonal seeking and interpersonal escape. These motives should be treated as latent and operated as the push factors in a person's pursuit of recreational activities (Mak et al., 2009)

For the spa industry, in 2008 International Spa Association published its Global Consumer Study (ISPA 2008) and reported the following North American spa guests' top motivators for visiting a spa:

1. Gift certificate
2. Friends and/or family recommendation
3. Health care practitioner recommendation
4. Complimentary products or bonus services
5. Packages

6. Advertised sales

7. Appointment times that meet your schedule and needs

Interesting enough, the motivators reported by ISPA could all be classified as pull factors. On the other hand, when Mak et al. (2009) exploring the underlying factors that motivated Hong Kong spa guests to try out spas while traveling, perceiving the more important role played by push factors than pull factors in stimulating a tourist to travel, the authors focused only on examining the push factors that motivated tourists to visit spas. An instrument with 21 motivating items was developed for the study. The data collected was factor analyzed and four motivating factors were revealed and they were, namely, (1) relaxation and relief, (2) escape, (3) self-reward and indulgence, and (4) health and beauty. The 21 motivating items are listed below:

Table 2.1: Push Factors for Hong Kong Spa Guests

1.	Seek physical relaxation
2.	Pamper oneself
3.	Reward oneself for working hard
4.	Seek mental peacefulness
5.	Get away from the pressures of work and social life
6.	Improve overall health
7.	Try a spa experience
8.	Seek spiritual refreshment
9.	Get away from daily routine
10.	Indulge in luxurious experience
11.	Enhance physical attractiveness
12.	Seek relief for a medical condition
13.	Try latest/special spa treatment first-hand
14.	Rejuvenate my appearance
15.	Spend time with friends
16.	Share with friends and family about the spa experience
17.	Foster friendship ties
18.	Spend time with family
19.	Enhance family bonding
20.	Lose weight
21.	Desire to be seen as fashionable

Source: Mak, A., Wong, K., & Chang, R. (2009). Health or self-indulgence? The motivations and characteristics of spa guests. *International Journal of Tourism Research, 11*(2), 185-199.

As Mak et al. (2009) put the push factors into use to examine the underlying motivating factors of Hong Kong spa guests in visiting spa, Azman and Chan (2010) utilized both the push and pull factors to explore the psychological factors that drove foreign visitors in Saba, Malaysia to visit health and spa centers. The study revealed that both push and pull factors were important motivating factors that stimulated tourists to visit spas, although it appeared that the push factors might exert a more powerful thrust in causing a tourist to visit spa. However, the authors further explained that the pull factors were also vital in stimulating the "subconscious" psychological needs, i.e., the push factors of the tourists, to experience spas. The push and pull factors exhibited by the Saba's spa guests as discovered by the authors are summarized in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2: Themes of Push and Pull Factors that Motivate Foreign Travelers Visiting the Spas in Saba, Malaysia

Themes/Push and Pull Factors	Sub-themes
<u>Push Factor</u>: Self-satisfying goal Self-fulfillment	 Escape – relax and pamper *Reward after working hard* Distress/time-out *Relieve from work-stress* *Take a break* Unwind/Rejuvenate/Regeneration *Recovery from tension in busy life* *Distant travel / long flights* *Travel activities*
<u>Pull factors</u> : Spa attributes	 Physical looks – tangible resource *Environment / Atmosphere* *Well-decorated* Marketing image *Affordability* *Availability and accessibility* *Range of treatments* *Professionalism*

Source: Azman, I. & Chan, J. (2010). Health and spa tourism business: Tourists' profiles and motivational factors. In *Proceedings of the Travel and Tourism Research Association Europe 2010 Annual Conference* (pp. 9-25). Dalarna, Sweden: Travel and Tourism Research Association Europe.

The study also revealed that although spa might not be the most important determinant for tourists to select a holiday destination, whether a resort had a spa or not was a primary concern when they were deciding at which property they were going to stay and it was important for them to involve in health-related activities.

Service Quality

Having a good understanding in customers' service expectations and to deliver the kind of service they perceive as quality can help a business achieve better economic returns than its competitors (Gilbert, Veloutous, Goode, & Moutinho, 2004; Qin & Prybutok, 2008). Indeed, the ability of a business to provide quality service strategically to its customers is vital for its success and survival and it is its predominant duty to understand the motivators and expectations of the customers it serves (Chen & Hsin, 2010; Dawkins & Reichheld, 1990; Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1985).

Considering the important role played by service quality in various service industries, an army of scholars have landed on the service quality territory and devoted immense efforts charting and measuring its extent. Yet despite the efforts spent in understanding service quality, no agreement has been reached regarding how this construct should be conceptualized and measured (Brady & Cronin, 2001; Hume, 2008).

Although the concept of service quality is an "elusive and indistinct" construct (Parasuraman et al. 1985), many useful conceptual models have been proposed to help comprehend it. With reference to the work by Brady & Cronin (2001) in recounting the development of the concept of perceived service quality, an attempt will be made in the rest of this section to look into the evolutionary history of service quality model building.

Grönroos (1984) proposed illuminatingly that the perceived service quality of a certain service was actually the result of an act of disconfirmation, i.e., a comparison of the expected and perceived service quality. In any service delivery, according to the model, was the interplay of two quality dimensions, namely, functional quality and technical quality. In a nutshell, functional quality corresponds to how the service was delivered to the consumer by the service personnel and technical quality concerned what was delivered. Grönroos further suggested that functional quality might carry more weight than technical quality in the service quality evaluation process.

Another model, SERVQUAL, was a masterpiece by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988). The model could be regarded as the most widely used and at the same time, the most debatable one (Brady & Cronin, 2001). The principal idea of SERVQUAL can be conceptualized by the existence of a "service quality gap" between customers' expectations and perceptions of the service they received (Zeithaml & Parasuraman, 2004). Originally Parasuraman et al. (1985) proposed a ten-dimension model for service quality testing but had the model refined to the now well-known SERVQUAL that consists of five dimensions and a 22-item instrument for measuring them. The five dimensions and the 22 items are listed in Table 2.3.

Table 2.3: The Five Dimensions and Measuring Items of SERVQUAL

Dimension	**Definition**	**Measuring Items**
Tangible:	Physical facilities, equipment and appearance of personnel	1. Up-to-date equipment 2. Physical facilities are visually appealing 3. Employee are well dressed and appear neat 4. The appearance of the physical facilities is in keeping with the type of services provided
Reliability	Ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately	1. When XYZ promises to do something by a certain time, it does so 2. When you have problems, XYZ is sympathetic and reassuring 3. XYZ is dependable 4. XYZ provides its services at the time it promises to do so 5. XYZ keeps its records accurately

Dimension	Definition	Measuring Items
Responsiveness	Willingness to help customers and provide prompt service	1. XYZ does not tell customers exactly when services will be performed 2. You do not receive prompt service from XYZ's employees 3. Employees of XYZ are not always willing to help customers 4. Employees of XYZ are too busy to response to customer requests promptly
Assurance	Knowledge and courtesy of employees and the ability to inspire trust and confidence	1. You can trust employees of XYZ 2. You feel safe in your transactions with XYZ's employees 3. Employees of XYZ are polite 4. Employees get adequate support from XYZ to do their jobs well
Empathy	Caring, individualized attention the firm provides its customers.	1. XYZ does not give you individual attention 2. Employees of XYZ do not give you personal attention 3. Employees of XYZ do not know what your needs are 4. XYZ does not have your best interests at heart 5. XYZ does not have operating hours convenient to all their customers

Source: Parasuraman, A., Zeithaml, V., & Berry L. (1988). SERVQUAL: A multiple-item scale for measuring consumer perceptions of service quality. *Journal of Retailing*, *64*(1), 12-40.

Since its publication the model has been used by many across a wide spectrum of fields, in particular by the tourism and hospitality researchers (Wuest, 2001). Notwithstanding the model's popularity, it has not stopped encountering criticism questioning its universality. Perhaps one of the most critical challenges directed at SERVQUAL was the one initiated by Cronin and Taylor (1992). The authors commented plainly that SERVQUAL is "inadequate" and "flawed." They claimed that service quality was actually affected mainly by current performance rather than by the expectation-performance disconfirmation-based effect. Cronin and Taylor promoted empirically the efficacy of using only perceived performance to assess service quality instead. Nonetheless, as much as they questioned the SERVQUAL concept, the authors agreed on the

validity of the 22 measuring items of SERVQUAL and incorporated them into their SERVPERF performance-based service quality measuring model.

In spite of the many bombardments SERVQUAL received, it has held its ground. Knutson. (2001) stated that SERVQUAL is still the dominant service quality survey instrument. McCabe et al. (2007) might have shed light on the model's resiliency when they commented that the challenge in using SERVQUAL might lie in the way it is 'administered' rather than having anything to do with the model's instrumental items.

SERVQUAL was followed by a three-component model a couple of years after its debut. To build on Grönroos's functional-technical concept, Rust and Oliver (1994) introduced to the service quality research arena the three-component model consists of service product, service delivery, and service environment. The first dimension service product represents the technical quality of the service while the second dimension, the service delivery, describes the functional quality of the service. The third dimension, the service environment, is a newly proposed component that denotes the internal and external environments in which service is delivered and received.

Two years after the introduction of the three-component model Dabholkar, Thrope, and Rentz (1996) offered their hierarchical factor model which divided retail service quality into three levels. Sandwiched in between is the dimension level that consists of five dimensions: (1) physical aspects, (2) reliability, (3) personal interaction, (4) problem solving, and (5) policy. On top of the dimension level is a common higher order factor known as retail service quality. Below the dimension level is the subdimension level. Three of the five dimensions have their subdimensional components: the physical dimension carries the appearance and convenience components; the reliability has the promises and doing-it-right components; and the personal interaction dimension is linked to the inspiring confidence and courteousness/helpfulness

components (no subdimensional component is assigned to the dimensions problem solving and policy). The main driving force for constructing the hierarchical factor model for the retail industry, according to its builders, is that it was impractical to apply the same measurement model across all service industries. Like the retail industry, all other service industries have their unique characteristics, so different models should be devised for the purpose of measuring the service quality of each distinct service industry (Dabholkar et al., 1996).

Into the new millennium Brady and Cronin's (2001) attempted to synthesize various service quality measuring concepts in a multidimensional, hierarchical model. Similar to the model proposed by Dabholkar et al. (1996), the new model is made up hierarchically by three levels. The structure of the top and middle levels of Brady and Cronin's model is an adaptation of Rust and Oliver's (1994) three-component model, hence, there are three "primary dimensions" in the middle level and they are (1) interaction quality, (2) physical environmental quality and (3) outcome quality, the performance of these quality dimensions will influence the overall "service quality" located on the upper level of the model. Two of the three primary dimensions in the middle level, the outcome quality and interaction quality dimensions, are modifications of Grönroos's (1984) functional-technical concept. The physical environmental quality is included not only because it has been used in the multidimensional model advanced by Dabholkar et al. (1996), but the environment within which service is delivered has been proved as an important dimension by previous work such as Bitner's (1992) "servicescape."

In turn, each of the three primary dimensions in the middle level of the model is linked to another three subdimensions and these subdimensions are to be described by selected variables extracted

from SERVQUAL. The subdimensions and their related descriptors are listed below:

Primary Dimension	Subdimension	Descriptor
Interaction Quality	Attitude	R, RP, E*
	Behavior	R, RP, E
	Expertise	R, RP, E
Physical Environmental Quality	Ambient conditions	R, RP, E
	Design	R, RP, E
	Social factors	R, RP, E
Outcome Quality	Waiting time	R, RP, E
	Tangibles	R, RP, E
	valence	R, RP, E

**R = Reliability, RP = Responsiveness and E = Empathy*.

Brady and Cronin (2001) empirically tested and confirmed their hierarchical, multidimensional model in four different industries, namely, fast-food, photograph developing, amusement parks, and dry cleaning. Thus, the said model might have successfully integrated the various service quality models discussed above.

Service Value

Before 1990s the construct service quality had been considered as a strategic tool for enhancing the competitiveness and improving the financial position of an organization and as such it was commonly used and regarded as the principal determinants for customer satisfaction (McDougall & Levesque, 2000; Parasuraman et al., 1988; Reichheld & Sasser, 1990). However, in order to comprehend the relationship between service quality and satisfaction, it is necessary to

investigate into the concept of value (Huber, Herrmann, & Henneberg, 2007). In fact, since the late 1980s researchers have been passionately exploring the influences the construct value has on customer satisfaction (Eggert & Ulaga, 2002; Sinha & DeSarbo, 1998).

There are at least two reasons for explaining why researchers have given so much attention to the value construct. First, it is the earlier mentioned important relationship between satisfaction and value. Second, value plays a significant role in influencing customers' post-purchase behaviors, i.e., clients may stay loyal to an organization if they believe that the organization is offering greater value than its competitors (Molinari, Abratt, & Dion, 2008; Tam, 2004). Hence, the ability of an organization in creating and providing superior and competitive values to its customers has become an indispensable marketing strategy for gaining market share and enhancing corporate profitability (Huber et al., 2007; Woodruff, 1997).

Although the construct service value has been regarded by many as a concept that is subjective, distinct, dynamic, and difficult to define and measure (Holbrook, 1994; Parasuraman and Grewal, 2000; Woodruff, 1997; Zeithaml, 1988), researchers have exhibited zealous passion in studying it.

Among the different studies on service value, the definition given to it as a means-end, trade-off concept by Zeithaml (1988) perhaps is one of the most universally accepted definitions of the construct. The concept is popular because it can be used effectively and straightforwardly in linking the perceived price, quality and value constructs together (Chen & Hsin, 2010; Zeithaml, 1988).

In the means-end aspect, the chief hypothesis is that the value consumers perceived is the end to the fundamental features of a product/service that representing the means (Gutman, 1982). Zeithaml (1988) stated that in this means-end chain value involved a trade-off of give and get components**,** i.e., the consumers are evaluating the value or payoff of the product/service they "get" with the perceived price they "give." The perceived price might be monetary or non-

monetary. For the non-monetary prices, they are the costs of time, search and psychological tensions, and anxiety that involved.

According to the different perspectives consumers have on value, Zeithaml (1988) further discovered four value definitions and they are: (1) value is low price, (2) value is whatever I want in a product, (3) value is the quality I get for the price I pay, and (4) value is what I get for what I give.

Albeit the straightforwardness and effectiveness of Zeithaml's (1988) give-and-get value concept, it has been questioned by others concerning the overdependence on using the various costs involved in a buying process, in particular the monetary cost, for measuring service values is not comprehensive and thorough. Holbrook (1994) stated that directing attention solely to the way in which benefits, utilities and costs are weighed or compared is a far too narrow approach. Indeed, controversial results have been found in linking monetary cost to service quality, satisfaction, and behavioral intentions: A research performed by Tam (2004) in the restaurant industry revealed that the relationship between quality and price was weak and concluded that customers' perceptions of quality might not be affected by monetary cost; Hume (2008) discovered that in the context of performing arts the perceived value for money demonstrated no direct relationship with repurchase intention; upon modeling the effect of various antecedents might have on customer satisfaction in the fast-food industry, Qin & Prybutok (2008) found that the price was not a significant antecedent; and Anuwichanont & Mechinda (2009) reported that when comparing with quality, reputation, and emotional value, monetary price was the least important dimension in influencing satisfaction in the spa industry.

Seemingly the construct service value is more complex than the means-end trade-off definition and a number of researchers support to adopt a multi-dimensional approach to renew the search for the function of the construct, as customer choice is the result of multiple value perceptions

(Chen & Hsin, 2010; Petrick, 2002a; Sweeney and Soutar, 2001), and monetary price is just one of these perceptions.

In fact, researchers have placed their interests in studying variables other than monetary price since the early 1980s. Hirschman and Holbrook (1982) had initiated the discussion on two other types of shopping values: utilitarian and hedonic. The authors pointed out that the utilitarian values that sprang from an act of consumption were complemented by its hedonic counterparts and advocated that attention should be paid to three commonly neglected hedonic facets involved in a consumption process: multisensory experience, fantasy imagery, and emotive response. During a shopping experience, a consumer is either passively receiving or actively seeking sensory messages from the product they purchase. These sensory messages that stimulate the five senses of a buyer prompt him/her to build two types of multisensory images – historic and fantasy imageries. For the former type, it is an imagery built by a buyer's past experience (e.g. the smell of an aromatic oil would remind a spa guest his/her experience at a spa). For the latter type, it is a totally new experience, formed in a buyer's mind the first time by the sensory messages he/she received from the product/service purchased (e.g. the unique design of a spa, its lighting, music, aroma, and treatment offered would help its guests visiting it the first time to create a fantasy imagery of his/her visit).

Regarding another hedonic consumption value, emotive response, Hirschman and Holbrook (1982) believed that for certain kinds of consumptions, in particular those that involved high culture products within popular culture (e.g. attending a Rolling Stone concert), performing arts (e.g. watching Puccini's Turandot) and plastic arts (e.g. buying a piece of Andy Warhol's work), could be considered as an act of attaining an emotion arousal value. The authors explained that when a purchase was performed as an expressive symbol, i.e., to purchase something for the sake of invoking an emotional reaction within oneself (e.g. a baby boomer buying a ticket to see Paul McCartney in concert), this kind of consumption value could be classified as an emotional one.

To extend and examine the operationalization of the utilitarian-hedonic values, Babin, Darden, and Griffin (1994) developed a 15-item two-dimensional scale to measure perceived shopping value in a personal context. The undertaking confirmed that consumer value could be represented by both the utilitarian and hedonic aspects. Babin et al. (1994) commented that the shopping behavior of a consumer is not dictated only by satisfying the involved functional, physical, or economic needs but is also influenced by the intellectual and emotional bearings of the consumer as well.

Instead of analyzing the two-dimensional utilitarian-hedonic shopping values, Sheth, Newman, and Gross (1991) empirically proved the existence of another five consumption values and used them to explain why consumers chose to buy/use or not to buy/use a certain goods/service. The five consumption values are listed as follows:

Functional Value:	It is the perceived utility acquired from the functional, utilitarian, or physical performance of a product/service and is measured on a profile of choice attributes.
Social Value:	It is defined as the perceived utility acquired from a positive or negative association with stereotyped demographic, socioeconomic, and cultural-ethnic groups. It is measured on a profile of choice imagery.
Emotional Value:	It is defined as the perceived utility acquired from a product/service's capacity to arouse feelings or affective states and is measured on a profile of feelings associated.

Epistemic Value:	It is the perceived utility acquired from a product/service's capacity to arouse curiosity, provide novelty, and/or satisfy a desire for knowledge.
Conditional Value:	It is defined as the perceived utility acquired as the result of the specific situation or set of circumstances facing the choice maker. It is measured on a profile of choice contingencies.

The work of Sheth et al. (1991) has been utilized in various studies that followed and the five values have been applied in different situations (Moliner, Sáchez, Rodríguez, & Callarisa, 2007). Built on the foundation laid by Sheth et al (1991) Sweeney and Soutar (2001) developed a 19-item measure named PERVAL that can be used in both pre-purchase and post-purchase retail setting. The instrument is used to find out what types of consumption values motivate consumers' purchase attitude and behavior as well as to explore "customers' perceptions of the value of a consumer durable goods at brand level" (p.203). Four value dimensions are factored in Sweeney and Soutar's (2001) work and they are termed quality, emotional, price and social.

Sweeney and Soutar's (2001) endeavor was followed closely by Petrick's (2002a) SERV-PERVAL model. Using Zeithaml's (1988) the give-and-get perception on how a consumer values the utility of a product as the corner stone for his conceptual premise, Petrick (2002a) proposed and empirically tested the 25-item five dimensions SERV-PERVAL in the context of leisure and tourism services (the cruise industry). The five dimensions of perceived service value included in the model are: (1) behavioral price, (2) monetary price, (3) emotional response, (4) quality, and (5) reputation.

With reference to the earlier concepts and instruments constructed for explaining and measuring value, Sánchez, Callarisa, Rodríguez, and Moliner (2006) proposed the 24-item six-dimension

GLOVAL model for delving into the service value tourists have for travel agencies, probing especially into the various consumption as well as purchase experience that take shape in tourists during the pre-purchase, purchasing, and post-purchase phases. The six dimensions of GLOVAL are (1) functional value of the travel agency, (2) functional value of the contact personnel of the travel agency, (3) functional value of the tourism package purchased, (4) functional value price, (5) emotional value, and (6) social value.

Satisfaction

In the last three decades academics and practitioners alike have shown great interest in defining the concept of customer satisfaction in view of its capability in making or breaking a company's financial position, i.e., positive customer satisfaction has the potency to raise a company's revenue by stimulating customers' repurchase intention and generating positive word of mouth while a negative one will persuade customers to switch company (Bearden & Teel, 1983; Tam, 2004). Nonetheless, not unlike quality and value, the concept of customer satisfaction remains a puzzle to many (Ekinci, Dawes, & Massey, 2008).

Oliver (1980) stated that satisfaction was the result of a comparison process between two attitudinal components: preexposure (expectation) and postexposure (performance). This satisfaction evaluation process is termed disconfirmation and is commonly used for assessing satisfaction. To elaborate further, the disconfirmation paradigm describes that it is the discrepancies between the perceived expectation and actual performance of a product/service that dictates whether a consumer is satisfied (positively disconfirming) or dissatisfied (negatively disconfirming) about the purchase (Churchill & Surprenant, 1982; Eggert & Ulaga, 2002; Parasuraman et al., 1988). Churchill & Surprenant (1982) tested the concept and found that the concept applied very well to non-durable product but for durable product, seemingly the

customers' satisfaction toward the product was generated mainly from its performance and although perceived expectation still worked with actual performance in the disconfirmation process, its magnitude did not affect the perceived satisfaction level.

Churchill & Surprenant (1982) further stated that since satisfaction is a result of the disconfirmation process, i.e., "an outcome of purchase and use resulting from the buyer's comparison of the rewards and costs of the purchase in relation to the anticipated consequences," (p.493) it should be considered as a postpurchase construct. In the context of service industry, Woodside, Frey, and Daly (1989) concurred that satisfaction should be regarded as a postpurchase phenomenon since it reflects how much a person likes or dislikes a service after experiencing it.

The disconfirmation paradigm for satisfaction measurement is considered as a cognitive process in evaluating the construct, and the body of literature discussing satisfaction assessment is overwhelmed with work describing and measuring satisfaction level in a cognitive manner, paying little if no attention to the affective component of the satisfaction construct (Martin, O'Neill, Hubbard, and Palmer, 2008), i.e., viewing satisfaction as an emotional feeling resulting from an evaluative process (Tam, 2004). Martin et al. (2008) argued that more attention should be paid to the role emotion played in a buying process, i.e., the affective component of the satisfaction construct, like its counterpart cognitive component, should be used in assessing satisfaction. By investigating into the facilities and service processes at a major American league football stadium, Martin et al. (2008) confirmed that a customer's degree of emotionally-based satisfaction does have significant effect on his/her service quality perception, overall satisfaction and future behavioral intentions.

Apart from the disconfirmation paradigm and the cognitive and affective perspectives, other definitions have also been proposed contesting for the scholastic supremacy in characterizing the

construct satisfaction. Heskett, Sasser, and Hart (1990) defined customer satisfaction as a transaction done right the first time. If a company could do things right the first time, the authors claimed, customers are satisfied and more likely to return for subsequent purchases or services (repurchase). Also, satisfied customers would be more willing to tell other people about their experiences (positive word of mouth), stimulating them to purchase product or use the service provided by the same company.

Spreng and Olshavsky (1993) advanced their desires congruency model and argued that the disconfirmation paradigm is not comprehensive enough for measuring customer satisfaction. The authors reasoned that when a buyer evaluates the attributes of a product he/she purchased, it is very likely that new attributes will be found in the product of which the buyer has not expected before buying it. Hence the disconfirmation process of comparing only the known, i.e., the comparison between the perceived expectation of the known attributes of a product and their actual performance, does not represent the whole picture, as unknown and new attributes were waiting for the buyer to discover. The many desirable attributes of a product, whether they are expected or unexpected, give rise to the concept that their subsequent performance have to be congruent with these desires, and the buyer will compare these desires against the actual performance of the product to give sense to how satisfied he/she is with the product purchased (Spreng & Olshavsky, 1993).

Oliver (1997, 1999) defined satisfaction as an experience of pleasurable fulfillment, i.e., a consumer utilized the consumption process to fulfill some need, desire, or goal which are pleasurable. As such, satisfaction could be defined as "the consumer's sense that consumption provides outcomes against a standard of pleasure versus displeasure." Furthermore, Oliver (1999) stated that for satisfaction to affect loyalty, satisfaction in the fashion of frequent or cumulative is both required to forge aggregated or blended satisfaction episodes.

In the context of service industry, Jones and Suh (2000) distinguished satisfaction into two distinct types: transaction-specific satisfaction and overall satisfaction. According to the authors, transaction-specific satisfaction or dissatisfaction was generated from a discrete service encounter with a company (e.g. a contact with an employee of the company) while overall satisfaction or dissatisfaction was based on all encounters and experiences with the same company (e.g. the service failure rate of the company). Jones and Suh (2000) also suggested that overall satisfaction exerts a direct influence on customers' repurchase intentions. However, when overall satisfaction is low, say, for new customers who do not yet have much experience with the company, transaction-specific satisfaction could make it up by exercising its positive influence on repurchase intentions.

Before ending the discussions on the definition of satisfaction, it is worthwhile to take a brief look at the debate on whether quality is the antecedent of satisfaction or vice versa. Despite most research evidence that quality is the antecedent to satisfaction, voices have been raised that it should be the other way round (O'Neill, 2001). To support the school that advocate quality is the antecedent to satisfaction, Huber et al. (2007) pointed out that from numerous models presented in both the Swedish Customer Satisfaction Barometer and the American Customer Satisfaction Index indicate that quality does determines satisfaction (Anderson, Fornell, and Lehmann, 1994; Johnson, 1997).

In this study, quality is defined as the antecedent of satisfaction.

Behavioral Intentions

Early definitions of loyalty to a large extent focus on its behavioral dimension. Loyalty in the earlier literature is regarded as a form of customer behavior reflected purely by activities such as

repeat purchasing directed toward a particular brand over time. Day (1969) questioned the comprehensiveness in measuring customer loyalty by depending solely on checking their behavioral activities like repurchasing from the same brand. Day's (1969) argument on the importance of customers' attitude towards a certain brand was received well by other scholars. Gradually, the behavioral dimension of loyalty was joined by another dimension known as the attitudinal dimension that includes consumers' preferences or intentions (Gremler and Brown, 1996). Attitude indicates consumers' endorsement on a brand, their loyalty towards it, and it is reflected by activities such as the customers recommending service providers to other consumers (Dimitriades, 2006; Gremler and Brown, 1996).

To distinguish the conceptual differences of the attitudinal and behavioral loyalty, Chahal and Bala (2010) suggested that the former refers to strong cognitive elements (e.g. word of mouth intention) of the customers to continue to repurchase the same brand, while the latter denotes the action of repeat purchasing of a brand over a period of time.

In the following, the attitude of word of mouth will first be reviewed, followed by a discussion on repurchase behavior.

Word of Mouth

With literally no cost involved and its multiple effect, word of mouth can be considered as the most valuable, effective and persuasive promotional means as well as the biggest source of new business (C. Ellis, 2008; Reisinger, 2001). Word of mouth in the service business context means customers' attitude toward discussing and sharing with others who are not directly involved in the service encounter about their experience, and a satisfied customer will have the intention to spread more favorable word of mouth (Swanson & Davis, 2003) and make recommendation

(Ladhari & Morales, 2008). As such to a large extent a company's profitability will hinge on its customers' attitude towards sharing their purchasing experience, as the audience of these word of mouth recommendations are the customers' family members, friends, co-workers, and others, a big group of potential buyers whose purchasing decisions are to be influenced by these recommendations (Molinari et la., 2008).

Positive, neutral or negative word of mouth information is constantly used by people for exchanging their purchasing/consumption experience. While the desirable outcomes of positive word of mouth can keep a company thriving, the undesirable consequences of negative word of mouth can be disastrous, as a negative word of mouth is most effective in subsiding or altering a buying intention and effectively keeping a company potential customers at bay (Arsal, 2008).

Service providers might also want to know the tendency in giving positive, neutral or negative word of mouth by expert and novice consumers. For expert consumers, very likely drawn by the need to defend why they repeatedly purchase a certain product, tend to communicate more positive than negative word of mouth. For novice consumers, because they do not have much knowledge about the product they have just purchased, are inclined to scrutinize the various functions of the product and are particular sensitive and even overestimate the negative product performance. As such, novice consumers might tend to deliver either negative word of mouth or neutral comments (Arsal, 2008; Hirschman & Wallendorf, 1982; Sohn & Leckeny, 2005).

In the context of service industry, word of mouth intention is especially important. A service consumption process is filled with high degree of experience, credence qualities (Datta, Showdury, & Chakraborty, 2005), and is difficult to evaluate before actually purchasing the service, word of mouth so naturally becomes a tool used by the customers to lower down the risks involved in the purchasing process (Harrison-Walker, 2001). Also, word of mouth

communication will be most useful when formal communication channel is lacking and the services are complex and not easy to evaluate (File, Judd, & Prince, 1992).

Repurchase Intention

There is no better way of capturing more business than by getting repeat purchase and higher spending from existing customers (Kim, Crompton, and Botha, 2000). Besides, to find a new business is always more difficult than to retain an old one (C. Ellis, 2008) and it is more costly to enlist a new customer than to entice an existing one (Szmigin & Bourne, 1998). Qin and Prybutok (2008) indicated that service managers must have a good idea regarding to what extent the quality and value of the services they provide are perceived by their customers and how these perceptions are influencing customer satisfaction and retention. To retain customers, a spa, like other service companies, must do its best to concentrate its resources on providing the kinds of quality and value that its customers will appreciate in order to keep them coming back and at the same time, recommend the spa to others (C. Ellis, 2008).

Taking into account a consumer's current situation and likely circumstances, Hume and Mort (2010) argued that repeat intention "is one of the most appropriate dependent variables in any system of relationships designed to develop management insight and improved strategic planning and service delivery" (p.174). To conceptualize the development of repurchase intention, it could be depicted as the decision made about whether to purchase a service again by a consumer, i.e., a decision to continue some future activities with the service provider and the form these activities would take (Hume & Mort, 2010).

Yet what actually drive a consumer to consider engaging in a repurchase activity? Numerous research have been performed to answer this question, and it is widely agreed on that the

constructs quality and value have either direct or indirect (through the construct satisfaction) influences on behavioral intentions. The interrelationships and interactions among these constructs and how they operationalize in affecting behavioral intentions are discussed in the next section. However, it is worthwhile to point out here that although an act of repurchase is commonly regarded as a consequence of a satisfied purchase experience, but a satisfied purchase experience does not always lead to repurchase intents.

Walsh, Evanschitzky, and Wunderlich (2008) commented that due to the efforts customers expended in interacting with a particular provider, the emotional bonds created, and the structural ties established, most researchers incline to conclude that highly satisfied customers do not have much incentive to search for alternatives and are unlikely to be affected by prices. However, this assumed relationship between satisfaction and loyalty does not always exist. In their investigation into tourist's intention to return to a destination, Rittichainuwat, Qu and Leong (2003) discovered that when the tourists visiting Thailand were asked to consider their travel experience simultaneously with other travel determinants such as destination image, travel motivation and travel inhibitors, some respondents reported that even though they were satisfied with their travel experience, the satisfaction resulted might not have the potency to call forth their desires to return, in particular in those who were categorized as high novelty-seeking travelers. Indeed, more and more studies have demonstrated that the impact of customer satisfaction on customer loyalty is in fact pretty complicated, suggesting possible influences coming from moderator variables (Walsh et al., 2008), in particular the effects exerted by gender and age. The moderating effects of gender and age are covered in the section after next.

Relationship of Motivation, Service Quality, Service Value, Satisfaction, & Behavioral Intentions

Quality, Satisfaction and Behavioral Intentions

The quality and satisfaction as perceived by customers, together with the behavioral intentions resulted, can determine the profitability of a company (Anderson et al., 1994). Woodside et al. (1989) tested the interrelationships of these three constructs in the U.S. hospital industry and found that being mediated by overall satisfaction, quality had an indirect effect on behavioral intention. In the context of fast-food industry, Brady and Robertson (2001) reaffirmed Woodside et al.'s (1989) findings concerning the interrelationships among the three constructs in the U.S. and Ecuadorian fast-food industries (i.e., quality → satisfaction → behavioral intentions), while Qin and Prybutok (2008) uncovered both the quality and satisfaction constructs had direct and positive effects on behavioral intentions in the U.S. fast-food industry.

Quality, Value, Satisfaction, and Behavioral Intentions

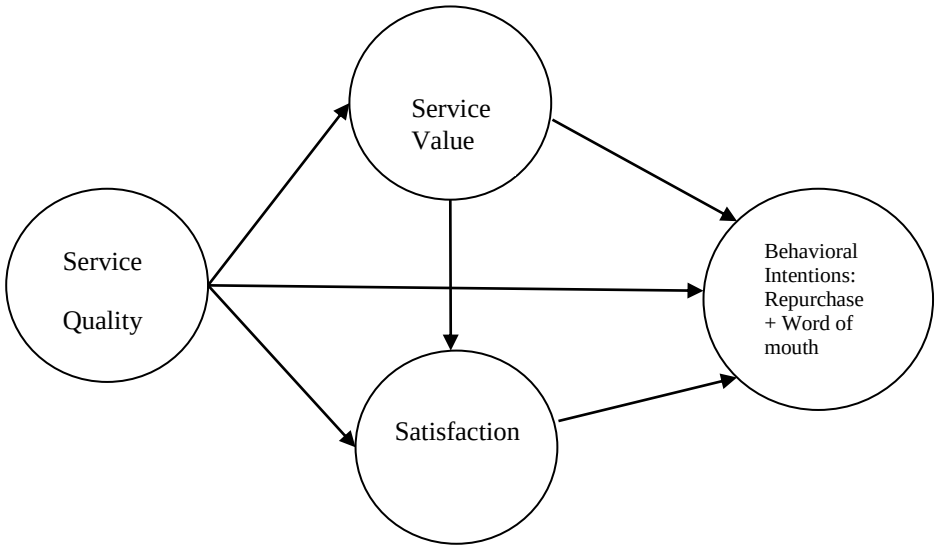
Besides examining the relationships of the three constructs mentioned above, Cronin, Brady, and Hult (2000) added another construct service value into the system and explored their interactions in six service industries (fast food, long distance carriers, health care, spectator sports, participation sports, and entertainment). The findings of the study are outlined below:

1. Service quality exerted direct influences on service value and satisfaction.
2. Service quality had a direct effect on behavioral intentions (in four out of the six industries only: no effect on health care and long-distance carriers).
3. Service value had direct effects on both satisfaction and behavioral intention
4. Satisfaction had a direct influence on behavioral intentions (except health care).

5. Service quality and service value had indirect effects on behavioral intentions via satisfaction. (the link value → satisfaction → behavioral intentions were found significant in all industries except for health care).
6. Service quality had indirect effect on behavioral intentions via service value.

The model proposed and confirmed by Cronin et al. (2000) is shown in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1: Relationship of Service Quality, Service Value, Satisfaction & Behavioral Intentions



Source: Cronin, J. J. Jr., Brady, M., & Hult, G. T. M. (2000). Assessing the effects of quality, value, and customer satisfaction on consumer behavioral intentions in service environment. *Journal of Retailing*, *76*(2), 193-218.

Quality, Satisfaction and Repurchase Intentions

To check specifically how the quality and satisfaction constructs might affect the repurchase intention component of the behavioral intention construct, Cronin and Taylor (1992) checked

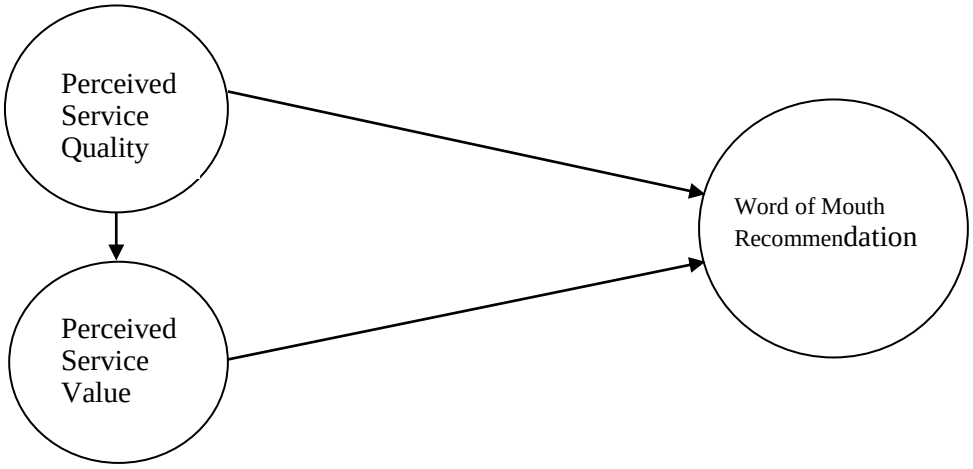
across four different industries (fast food, banking, pest-control, and dry cleaning) to see how these variables would interact and revealed that although quality did not have a direct influence on customers' repurchase intentions, it nonetheless indirectly affected these intentions through its effect on satisfaction.

Quality, Value, Satisfaction, and Word of mouth

Paying particular attention to how the constructs value and satisfaction might affect the word of mouth component of the behavioral intention construct, Babin, Lee, Kim, and Griffin (2005) checked his hypotheses in Korean family-style chain dinner houses and reported that while both value and satisfaction had direct positive effect on word of mouth intention, the construct value also had an indirect effect on word of mouth mediated by satisfaction. An examination into how freight customers evaluated the services provided by freight service providers and the resulted behavioral intentions, Molinari et al. (2008) discovered that while the constructs value and satisfaction had a positive link to repurchase intention, the construct quality exhibited a positive link to word of mouth instead.

Hartline & Jones (1996) studied how the performance cues of different hotel operational departments might influence hotel guests' behavioral intentions and found that while both perceived quality and perceived value increased word of mouth intentions, the perceived value construct exerted a much larger influence on word of mouth than the perceived quality construct. Furthermore, the construct perceived service quality had an indirect influence on word of mouth intention through perceived service value. A selected part of Hartline & Jones's (1996) model is shown in Figure 2.2.

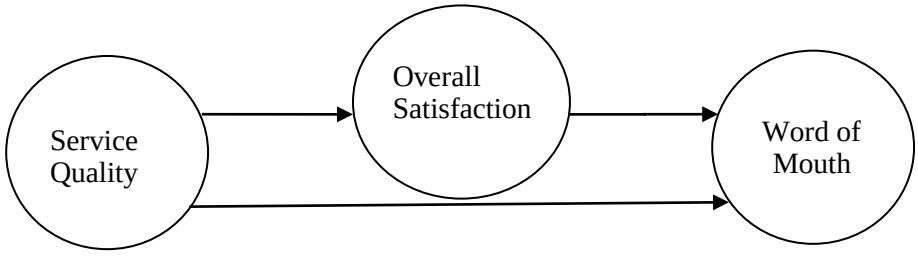
Figure 2.2: Relationship of Perceived Service Quality, Perceived Service Value & Word of Mouth Recommendation



Source: Hartline, M. D. & Jones, K. C. (1996). Employee performance cues in a hotel service environment: Influence on perceived service quality, value, and word of mouth intentions. *Journal of Business Research*, *35*(3), 207-215.

While Hartline & Jones's (1996) work had not taken the construct satisfaction into consideration in their model, Chaniotakis and Lymperopoulos (2009) did when they examined the relationship of service quality and word of mouth in the maternity sector in Greece. Their work revealed that service quality had direct influence on overall satisfaction and word of mouth as well as an indirect effect on word of mouth through overall satisfaction. The relationships among these constructs are shown in the Figure 2.3.

Figure 2.3: Relationships of Service Quality, Overall Satisfaction and Word of Mouth



Source: Chaniotakis, I. E. & Lymperopoulos, C. (2009). Service quality effect on satisfaction and word of mouth in the health care industry. *Managing Service Quality,19*(2), 229-242.

Word of Mouth and Repurchase Intention

As discussed earlier, the intensity of both the attitude towards initiating word of mouth activities and commanding a repurchase behavior by customers reflects how loyal these customers are towards a brand. It is very likely that customers' attitude towards a certain service provider will influence their intention to repurchase services from the same provider. In fact, public commitment can lead to unswerving and consistent future actions and word of mouth can certainly be regarded as a form of public commitment (Cialdini, 1993). For example, unless there were no alternatives, it will be very difficult psychologically for a customer who has spread negative word of mouth about a service provider to repurchase and claim to be satisfied with the service bought from that same provider. In other words, once customers have initiated a word of mouth activity, they will face internal pressure to behave consistently with that commitment (Cialdini, 1993), i.e., to purchase service from the same service provider.

Motivation, Quality and Behavioral Intentions

As evidenced in the above paragraphs and the related sub-sections before them, much have been written about what motivate buyers to consume and travelers to travel, and tremendous efforts have been dedicated to explore the relationships among quality, value, satisfaction, and behavioral intentions by researchers, yet to date not much have been written about how the motivation construct might interact with the others constructs discussed. McCabe et al.'s (2007) work is among the very few attempts that have made to investigate into the interrelationships among the constructs of motivation, quality and behavioral intentions. McCabe et al. (2007) studied why consumers shopped at favored retail organizations and three types of shoppers with different kinds of motivations were identified in their study and they were (1) sociable, (2) goal-

oriented and (3) bargain shoppers. These three types of shoppers have the following perceived quality and behavioral intentions towards their favorite retailers:

1. Sociable and goal-oriented shoppers perceive higher level of interaction quality and physical environment quality compared with bargain shoppers.
2. Goal-oriented shoppers are more likely than bargain and sociable shoppers to perceive higher level of outcome quality.
3. All shoppers are equally likely to intend to spread positive word of mouth.
4. Upon service breakdown, sociable shoppers are more likely than either goal-oriented or bargain shoppers to intend to leave the retailers or to complain to others.

The Moderating Effects of Gender and Age on the Relationship between Motivation & Service Quality

Despite lately researchers have acknowledged the importance of moderators for predicting consumer behavior, the potential effects of these moderators, such as consumers' psychological, situational and demographic characteristics, remain largely unstudied (Walsh et al., 2008; Zhang & Bloemer, 2011). The importance of moderators comes from their potential ability to enhance understanding of the relationships among various independent and dependent variables, as well as seemingly established relationships (Walsh et al., 2008). In the following the moderating effects of gender and age may have on the relationship between motivation and service quality are discussed.

Gender

Speaking of customer buying behavior, when compared with men, women tend to treasure more about personal interaction processes and are also more involved in purchasing activities (Homburg and Giering, 2001), such as employing a comprehensive strategy in gathering information to aid them to make a buying decision (Barber, 2009). Men, however, have a strong preference in relying on their own past experience and subjective knowledge to make buying decisions (Barber, 2009). Furthermore, while women are more inclined to appreciate goods or services for symbolic and emotional reasons (Dittmar, Beattie, & Friese, 1995), men welcome more the functional and activity-related aspects that come with the goods or service purchased. When making travel decisions, influenced by their risk-taking character, men tend to be motivated to search for action and adventure. Women, on the other hand, are more likely to be attracted by cultural and educational experiences, and always put security as a top priority (Mceczkowski, 1990).

To check how different hotel-selection and service-use criteria are for male and female business travelers, McCleary, Weaver, & Lan (1994) found that men value business services and facilities while women pay more attention to security, personal services and low price. In the area of impulse buying, Dittmar et al. (1995) discovered that men tend to buy instrumental items and women symbolic and self-expressive goods with concerns given to appearance and emotional aspects of self. From a vantage point of gender, McGehee, Loker-Murphy, and Uysal (1996) investigated into the differences in push and pull motivational factors of Australian leisure travelers. The authors reported that women are more likely to be motivated by the pull factors of ‘heritage and culture,’ ‘comfort and relaxation’ and ‘budgetary environs,’ and rated push factors such as ‘cultural experience,’ ‘family and kinship,’ and ‘prestige’ (safe/secure, report on trip, being entertained, maximize experience, new places, and homelike feel) more important than do

men. Conversely, men place their focus on the push factors of 'sports and adventure' instead. Furthermore, the authors discovered that both genders appreciate the importance of the push factor 'escape' (avoid demand, do nothing, escape job).

At the turn of the new millennium Collins and Tisdell (2002) examined life cycle travel patterns of outbound Australian travelers according to both gender and purpose of travel and realized that there are major differences in terms of the travel patterns between men and women. For example, women tend to travel more for leisure purposes and visiting friends and relatives while men for business and work-related travel.

When choosing nature-based vacation destination, Meng & Uysal (2008) reported that female visitors have a higher overall expectation than males when considering nature resort destinations, with particular concerns they will give to the quality of 'security,' 'feeling of self-respect and being respected by others,' and 'warm relations presented in the destination.' For male visitors, they instead focus more on 'fun and enjoyment in life' and 'sense of accomplishment' upon choosing a destination. When selecting wine, Barber (2009) realized that men have a much stronger propensity than women to resort to interpersonal sources to make the choice. Women, on the contrary, prefer to use personal sources of information to make the selection. Upon examining product aspects that would be valued by different buyer groups, Creusen (2010) found out that female buyers attach more significance on the functionality and expressive aspects such as aesthetics and in particular symbolic aspects of a product than male buyers.

Age

It is commonly known that different customer age groups have different preferences for the media they use, where they shop, how they use a product/service, as well as how they think and

feel about the product/service quality level (Hawkins, Best, & Coney, 2004). Wallendorf and Arnould (1988) found that younger people tend to pay more attention to hedonic pleasures when selecting their favorite objects and older people enjoy purchasing display items such as art objects rather than functional products. Assael (1998) discovered that as people aged, they become more experienced and their expectations of product quality and service become higher. For younger customers, Henry (2002) stated that young people use more expressive purchase criteria than older people. In addition, in research into object attachment, Hsieh, Pan, and Setiono (2004) found that younger customers are less sensitive to utilitarian brand image than older customers. Creusen (2010) realized that, as age advanced, the importance people attached to symbolic aspects of social significant products decreases, and older people attach more importance to the functionality, easy-of-use and quality aspects of a product instead.

The major gender- and age-based product/service purchasing criteria that have moderating effects on influencing the relationship between motivation and service product/quality discussed above are summarized in Table 2.4.

Table 2.4: Summary of Gender- and Age-based Purchasing Criteria

	Topic Investigated	**Purchasing Criteria Exhibited by Male Customers**	**Purchasing Criteria Exhibited by Female Customers**	**Purchasing Criteria Exhibited by Male and Female Customers**	**Purchasing Criteria Exhibited by Age Groups**
McCleary et al. (1994)	Business travelers' hotel selection criteria (U.S.A.)	Business services and facilities	Security Personal services Low price		
Dittmar et al. (1995)	Impulse buying (South England)	Uniqueness Personal identity Functionality Value for money	Mood Enjoyment Stylistic and physical features of products Aspects related to emotional responses		
McGehee et al. (1996)	Examined female leisure travelers and their motivations (Australia)		Prestige (including safe/secure, report on trip, maximize experience, etc.) Comfort and relaxation Budgetary environs	Escape (avoid demand, do nothing, escape job)	
Assael (1998)	General				Older people placed higher expectation on quality and service
Homburg, & Giering, (2001)	Car buyers (Germany)				Older buyers focused on their experiences and product's key features Younger buyers focused on the satisfaction level of the buying process
Meng & Uysal (2008)	Nature-based resort visitors' perceptions and attitudes (U.S.A.)	Fun and enjoyment in life Sense of accomplishment	Security Feeling of self-respected and being respected by others (prestige) Warm relations presented	Quality and convenience	

	Topic Investigated	**Purchasing Criteria Exhibited by Male Customers**	**Purchasing Criteria Exhibited by Female Customers**	**Purchasing Criteria Exhibited by Male and Female Customers**	**Purchasing Criteria Exhibited by Age Groups**
Barber (2009)	Product knowledge and gender differences during purchase decision (U.S.A.)	Past experience and subjective knowledge in purchase decision making Interpersonal sources in purchase decision making	Personal sources in purchase decision making Use all available sources in purchase decision making Less concerned about information sharing	Purchasing recommendation given by friends and family members	
Creusen (2010)	Product aspects for different consumer groups (The Netherlands)		Aesthetics Symbolic and expressive aspects Functionalities		Invert relationship between age and symbolic aspects of social significant products Older people focused on quality, functionalities and ease of use Younger people focused on symbolic aspects for socially significant products

Conceptual Framework and Research Hypotheses of the Study

The conceptual framework of this study contains two main building blocks, i.e., two commonly studied consumer behavior topics titled "consumer motivation for purchasing" and "consumer behavioral intention determinants." As discussed earlier, researchers have spared no effort in studying the motivators that stimulate consumers to engage in an act of purchasing, and they have worked equally enthusiastically in exploring the effects of various determinants such as quality, value and satisfaction have on behavioral intentions. However, very seldom have researchers look into the possible means to link motivation, the starting point of a purchasing act,

and behavioral intentions, the conclusion part of the purchasing act, together. Perhaps the most crucial construct in the model that will be developed in this study is quality. There are a few reasons to justify this claim. First, it is the linkage between motivation (the beginning point of an act of purchase) and service quality. McCabe et al. (2007) stated that consumers' motivation for making a buying decision will definitely influence how they evaluate an organization's service quality (motivation → service quality).

Second, it is widely accepted that the variable service quality is the antecedent to value and satisfaction and ultimately, behavioral intentions. About the linkage between quality and satisfaction, Qin and Prybutok (2008) pointed out that the dominant view in literatures is that service quality is the "superordinate" construct, the main determinant of customer satisfaction (service quality → satisfaction). For the relationship between quality and value, Ladhari and Morales (2008) indicated that numerous empirical studies have confirmed that perceived service quality leads to perceived service value (service quality → service value). Furthermore, a substantial amount of literatures have shown that the relationship of service quality to behavioral intentions is entirely mediated through customer satisfaction (service quality → satisfaction → behavioral intentions) (Brady & Robertson, 2001; Cronin et al., 2000; Hume & Mort, 2010; Patterson, Johnson, & Spreng, 1997). Besides, service quality also exert its indirect influences on satisfaction and behavioral intentions through the variable service value (service quality → service value → satisfaction and service quality → service value → behavioral intentions) (Huber et al., 2007; Petrick, 2002a; Tam, 2004).

In the proposed framework, the relationships among service value, satisfaction and behavioral intentions will also be explored. The possible relationships among these variables have been discussed in the previous sub-section "Relationship of Motivation, Service Quality, Service Value, Satisfaction, and Behavioral Intentions" and they are summarized below:

1. Service value has direct influence on satisfaction (service value → satisfaction)
2. Service value has indirect effects on behavioral intentions through satisfaction (service value → satisfaction → behavioral intentions)
3. Satisfaction has direct influence on behavioral intentions (satisfaction → behavioral intentions)

Furthermore, the moderating effects of gender and age on the relationship between motivation and service quality are explored as well.

Based on the discussions in this chapter and with particular reference to Cronin et al.'s (2000) work (see Figure 2.1), the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: Spa guests' motivations of visiting resort/hotel spas positively influence their perceived service quality of resort/hotel spas.

H2: Spa guests' perceived service quality of resort/hotel spa visits positively influences their perceived service value of such visits.

H3: Spa guests' perceived service quality of resort/hotel spa visits positively influences their level of satisfaction of such visits.

H4: Spa guests' perceived service value of resort/hotel spa visits positively influences their perceived satisfaction of such visits.

H5: Spa guests' perceived service value of resort/hotel spa visits positively influences their word of mouth communication.

H6: Spa guests' perceived service value of resort/hotel spa visits positively influences their repurchase intention.

H7: Spa guests' level of satisfaction positively influences their word of mouth communication.

H8: *Spa guests' level of satisfaction positively influences their repurchase intention.*

H9: *Word of mouth of spa guests positively influences their repurchase intentions.*

H10: *Gender has a moderating effect on the relationship between spa guests' motivations and the service quality they perceived.*

H11: *Age has a moderating effect on the relationship between spa guests' motivations and the service quality they perceived.*

The proposed model for this study and the research framework are illustrated in Figure 2.4 and Figure 2.5 respectively.

Figure 2.4: Conceptual Framework for the Proposed Hypotheses

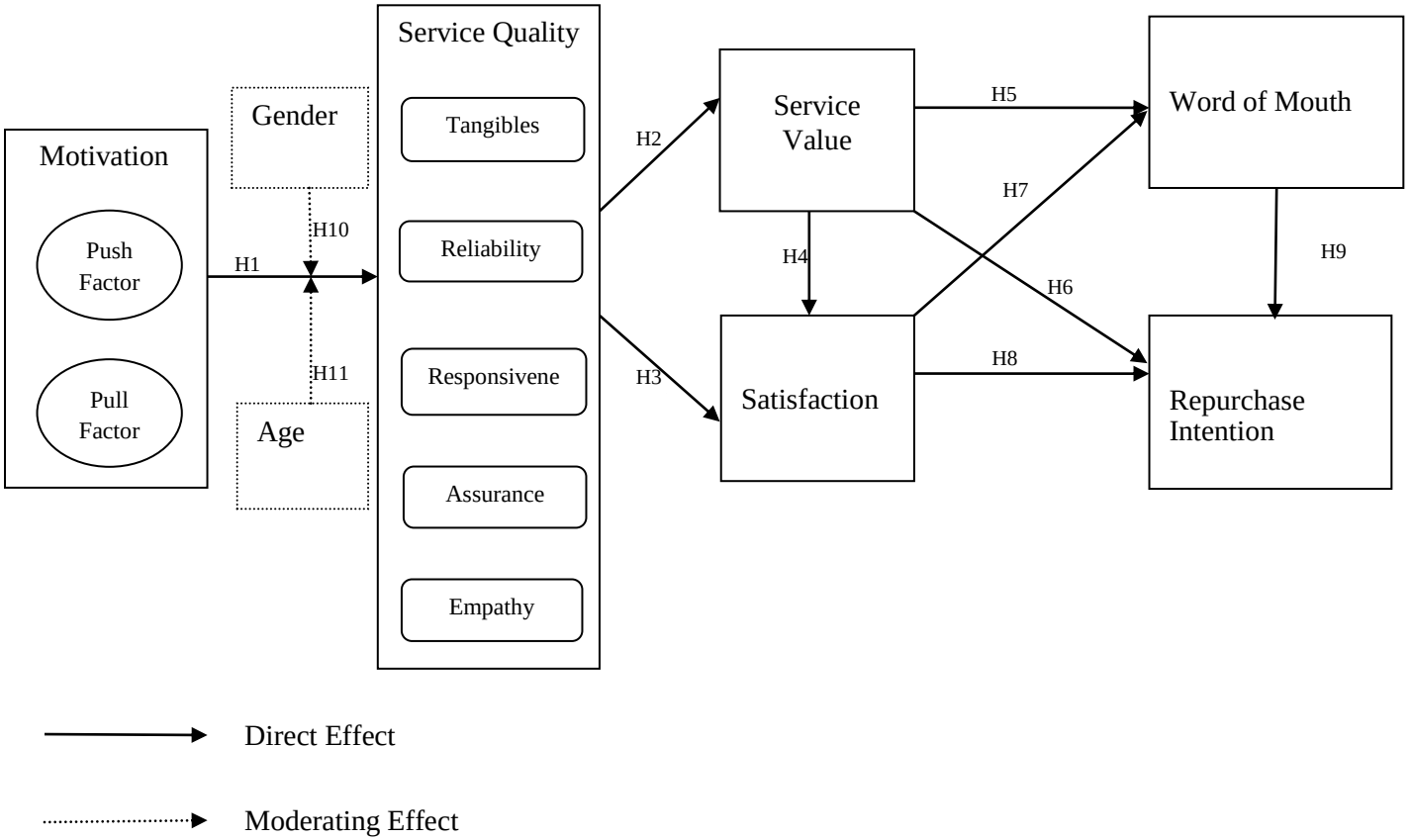
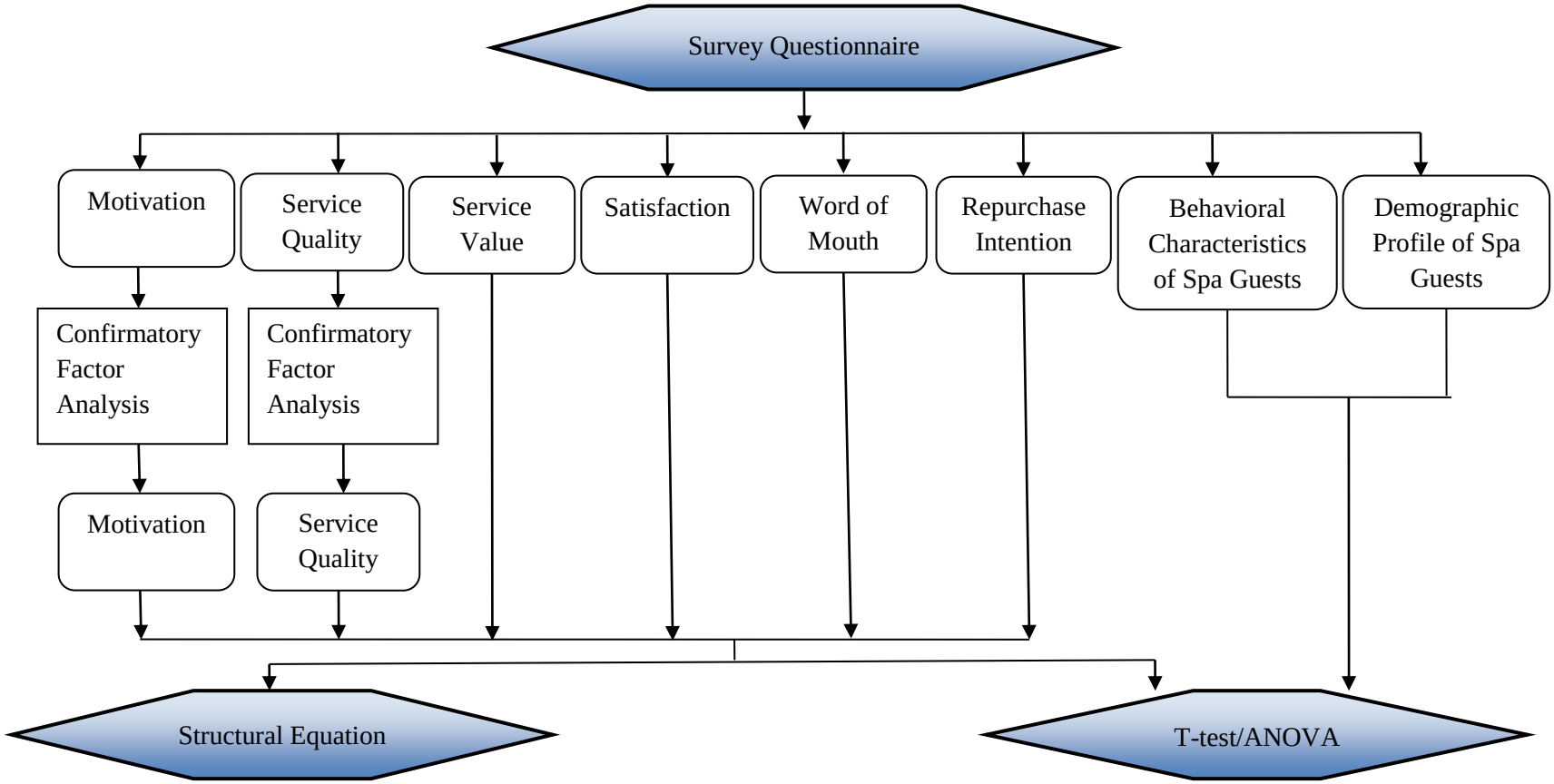


Figure 2.5: Research Framework



CHAPTER III

METHODS

This chapter focuses on describing the research methods used for achieving the purposes and objectives of this study stated in the previous chapter. In the following the research design, the research instrument, the sampling plan, the data collection and analysis procedures are discussed.

Research Design

The main purposes and objectives of this study are to examine and test the conceptual framework and hypotheses described in the previous chapter, i.e., in the context of the U.S. resort/hotel spa sector, the interrelationships among the constructs motivation, service quality, service value, satisfaction, behavioral intentions, and the moderating effects of gender and age upon the motivation-quality link. Both descriptive and causal research designs were used to achieve the mentioned purposes and objectives. This was a cross-sectional study in which an online survey was conducted. The target population was American spa visitors who had visited at least one resort or hotel spa in the U.S. during the last two years.

Research Instrument

An online questionnaire was developed after a review of literature on the subjects of motivation, service quality, service value, satisfaction, behavioral intentions, and the moderating effects of gender and age. To ascertain the content validity of a questionnaire, a small sample of typical respondents or experts should be asked to pass judgment on the suitability of the items selected to represent the constructs included in the questionnaire (Hair, Celsi, Money, Samouel, & Page, 2011). For this study, comments were sought from four faculty members of a Midwest state university and two spa consultants with respect to the content wording of the questionnaire. The questionnaire was refined after collating the comments and advice given by the faculty members and the consultants.

Survey Questionnaire

Excluding the screening question, the questionnaire that used to gather data for this study contained a total of seven sections. The first section was used to collect information concerning the behavioral characteristics of the respondents. In this section information regarding how often these respondents visited resort/hotel spas, and data regarding whether these spa guests were visiting resort/hotel spas alone as well as the average amount they spent in each visit were collected.

Section two of the questionnaire was a 15-question instrument designed for examining the motivating factors of spa guests for visiting resort/hotel spas. Included in this instrument were 10 push factors and 5 pull factors, most of these questions were adopted and/or modified from previous work by ISPA (2008) and Mak et al. (2009), with a couple of new questions developed by the author for this study. The respondents were asked to indicate their agreement to the

motivating factors listed in a seven-point Likert-type scale, where 1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree. The 15-question instrument is shown in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Push and Pull Motivating Factors of Resort/Hotel Spa Guests

Push Factors			**Source**
1.	Relaxation & relief*	I visited this spa for relaxation and stress reduction.	a & b
2.		I visited this spa to refresh myself.	c
3.	Self-reward & Indulgence*	I sought a pampering experience by visiting this spa.	a
4.		I visited this spa to reward myself for working hard.	a
5.		I desired to be seen fashionable by visiting this spa.	a
6.		I visited this spa to indulge myself with a luxurious experience.	a
7.	Health & beauty*	I visited this spa to enhance my physical wellbeing.	a
8.		I visited this spa to rejuvenate my appearance.	a
9.		I visited this spa for therapeutic reasons.	b
10.		I visited this spa to soothe sore joints and muscles.	b
Pull Factors			
11.	Convenience#	I visited this spa because the appointment time(s) met my schedule and needs.	b
12.		I visited this spa in order to save time from looking for and traveling to an outside spa.	d
13.	Brand#	I visited this spa because it carried my preferred product line(s).	d
14.		I visited this spa because it offered my preferred treatment(s).	d
15.		I visited this spa because of its brand name.	d

a) Mak, A., Wong, K., & Chang R. (2009). Health or self-indulgence? The motivations and characteristics of spa-goers. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, *11*(2), 185-199.
b) International Spa Association. (2008). *ISPA 2008 Global Consumer Facts*. International Spa Association.
c) Azman, I & Chan, J. (2010). Health and spa tourism business: Tourists' profiles and motivational factors. In *Proceedings of the Travel and Tourism Research Association Europe 2010 Annual Conference* (pp. 9-25). Dalarna, Sweden: Travel and Tourism Research Association Europe.
d) Developed by the author.
* The factor titles are borrowed from Mak et al.'s work.
\# The factor titles are created by the author

Section three of the questionnaire aimed at extracting information from the respondents regarding their perceived service quality on resort/hotel spa visits. Five statements selected for the 15-item instrument in this section were adopted and/or modified from the work of Snoj & Mumel (2002), whose work in turn was based on Parasuraman et al.'s (1988) 5-dimension 22-item SERVQUAL instrument. For the other ten statements, seven were borrowed from the 22-item SERVQUAL

instrument, one was from the work of McCabe et al. (2007), and the remaining two were developed by the author. Each statement was rated on a seven-point Likert-type scale, where 1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree. The 15-item questionnaire used for this study is show in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2: Perceived Service Quality Items

Service quality dimensions	**Service quality components**		**Source**
Tangibles	1.	The physical facilities and the design of this spa were sensibly appealing.	b
	2.	The appearance of the physical facilities was in keeping with the design and theme of this spa.	b
	3.	The spa employees were professionally dressed and appeared neat.	b
Reliability	1.	The spa employees were knowledgeable about the resort/hotel spa services, treatments and products.	a
	2.	The spa employees provided adequate, clear and fair information about the spa.	a
	3.	The spa employees were professional and skillful.	d
Responsiveness	1.	The spa employees provided prompt service.	b
	2.	The spa employees told me exactly when and what treatment(s) and services(s) would be performed.	b
	3.	The spa employees demonstrated their willingness to help me.	c
Assurance	1.	I could trust the spa employees.	b
	2.	Measures were taken by this spa to ensure personal physical safety and security of my valuables.	a
	3.	I felt safe in my financial transactions with this spa.	b
Empathy	1.	The spa employees recognized my needs.	a
	2.	The employees were committed to fulfilling my comfort needs.	a
	3.	The spa employees gave me personal attention.	d

a) Snoj, B. & Mumel, D. (2002). The measurement of perceived differences in service quality - The case of health spas in Slovenia. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, *8*(4), 362-379

b) Parasuraman, A., Zeithaml, V., & Berry, L. (1988). SERVQUAL: A multiple-item scale for measuring consumer perceptions of service quality. *Journal of Retailing*, *64*(1), 12-40.

c) McCabe, D, Rosenbaum, S., & Yurchisin, J. (2007). Perceived service quality and shopping motivations: A dynamic relationship. *Services Marketing Quarterly*, *29*(1), 1-21.

d) Developed by the author.

Sections four to six were created for getting data with respect to the constructs perceived service value, satisfaction level, and behavioral intentions. For each construct, three questions were composed for checking its specific hypothesized characteristics. Except for the two questions that were developed by the author, all the other questions were adopted from previous studies. The items included in Table 3.3 were measured by seven-point Likert-type scales anchored by 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree.

Table 3.3: Service Value, Satisfaction Level and Behavioral Intentions Items

Section 4: Service Value		**Source**
1.	Compared with the price I paid, this spa provided good service value.	a
2.	Compared with the time I spent and the price I paid, visiting this spa was worthwhile.	a
3.	I received good value for the money I spent.	a
Section 5: Satisfaction		
1.	I was satisfied with my decision to visit this spa.	a
2.	This spa visit exceeded my expectation.	c
3.	Overall I was satisfied with my visit to this spa	b
Section 6: Behavioral Intention – Word of Mouth		
1.	I would say positive things about this spa to other people.	a
2.	I would recommend this spa to someone who seeks my advice.	a
3.	I would encourage friends and relatives to try out this spa.	a
Section 6: Behavioral Intention – Repurchase		
1.	I consider this spa my first choice when I visit a resort/hotel spa again.	a
2.	I would like to increase the frequency of visit to this spa.	c
3.	I am more than willing to increase spending for my next visits to this spa.	a

a) Lin, C.H., Sher, P., & Shih, H.Y. (2005). Past progress and future directions in conceptualizing customer perceived value. *Journal of Service Management*, *16*(4), 318-336.

b) McCabe, D, Rosenbaum, S., & Yurchisin, J. (2007). Perceived service quality and shopping motivations: A dynamic relationship. *Services Marketing Quarterly*, *29*(1), 1-21.

c) Developed by the author.

The last section, section seven, was compiled for gathering the demographic information of the respondents in terms of gender, age, marital status, occupation, level of education, and annual household income.

Pilot Test

A pilot test was conducted for the purpose of confirming the reliability of the research instrument introduced in the previous section. Through the personal connection of the author, the self-administered questionnaire was distributed online to 44 respondents, most of whom had an extensive background in the hospitality industry. 14 returns passed the screening question, i.e., they had visited at least one resort/hotel spa in the last two years, and the data collected were analyzed.

To test the reliability of the instrument scales, Cronbach's alpha was used to determine the degree of internal consistency among the multiple measurements. Cronbach's alpha is commonly used to reflect the internal consistency of a scale (Dugard, Todman, & Staines, 2010). To elaborate a bit further, the rationale for internal consistency is that the individual items of the scale should all be measuring the same construct and therefore be highly intercorrelated (Hair, Black, Barry, & Anderson, 2010; Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994), and coefficient alpha should be the first measure to be calculated for ascertaining the quality of these individual items (Churchill, 1979), i.e., the consistency of these items in measuring the same construct. Coefficient alpha ranges from zero to one. In general, researchers regard alpha values range between 0.6 to < 0.7 as moderate; 0.7 to < 0.8 as good; 0.8 to < 0.9 as very good; and ≥ 0.9 as excellent. Unless determined otherwise by research objectives where a lower value may be acceptable, an alpha of 0.7 is considered as the minimum value for quantifying the internal consistency of a construct (Hair et al., 2011).

The results of the reliability test are summarized in Table 3.4. The Cronbach's alphas of the constructs were all above 0.7 with the exception of the construct satisfaction, which was 0.583.

Table 3.4: Reliability of the Dimensions Measured with the Instrument

Constructs		**Cronbach's Alpha**
Motivation	Push factor	0.706
	Pull factor	0.836
Service quality	Tangibles	0.861
	Reliability	0.853
	Responsiveness	0.819
	Assurance	0.736
	Empathy	0.854
Service value		0.876
Satisfaction		0.583
Behavioral intentions	Word of mouth	0.921
	Repurchase Intention	0.819

The low value the construct satisfaction obtained could be the result of the wording used in the second and third statements designed for measuring the construct. As such, the two statements were reworded as follows:

	Original version:	Revised version:
The second statement	This spa visit exceeded my expectation	This spa visit met my expectation
	Rationale for the change: *The word "exceeded" might have induced inconsistent response patterns from the respondents.*	
The third statement	Overall I was satisfied with the service(s), treatments(s) and product(s) provided by the spa.	Overall I was satisfied with my visit to this spa.
	Rationale for the change: *The original version was too lengthy and thus might have hindered the respondents to give measurably consistent answers.*	

Sampling

Population

The target population of this study was spa visitors who had visited at least one resort or hotel spa in the U.S. in the last two years. The data was to be collected from two groups of target respondents. The first cohort was a group of U.S. frequent travelers whose email addresses were stored at the Center for Hospitality and Tourism Research of the School of Hotel and Restaurant Administration at Oklahoma State University. The second cohort was members of the Oklahoma State University community.

Sample Size

Upon deciding the right sample size in structural equation modeling, many factors are required to be taken into account simultaneously, and this could make the estimation task complex and difficult (Hair et al., 2011; Kline, 2011). To determine a 'large enough' sample size is not easy, but commonly it is accepted that the minimum sample size should be between 100 to 150, with anything smaller than 100 will lead to the difficulties of yielding tenable results, particularly in the case of performing structural equation modeling (SEM), which is considered as a large-sample technique. A small sample size will prevent making accurate statistical estimations, such as for standard errors, and elevate the likelihood of technical problems for SEM. It is recommended that the sample size should actually go beyond 150, and it is more ideal to set the minimum size at 200 or above (Kline, 2011), with the need to increase the number of cases if the model is woven together by many parameters, for under such circumstances more estimates are needed for attaining reasonably stable results (Hair et al., 2011).

There are a couple of ways to determine the right sample size for SEM. However, regardless of how the size is determined, in order to deliver accurate and consistence results, a sufficient size is indispensable (Hair et al., 2011). One of the methods used to make appropriate estimation is by referring to the number of constructs contained in a model. Hair et al. (2010) opined that as SEM matures, guideline such as "always maximizes the sample size" is no longer appropriated, in particular when estimation techniques such as maximum likelihood estimation (MLE) is used. Hair et al. (2010) further explained that when sample size is bigger than, say 400, MLE becomes more sensitive and almost any difference is detected, making goodness-of-fit measures suggest poor fit. Hence, sample sizes in the range of 100 to 400 are recommended by the authors. Bentler and Chou (1987) suggested including error terms and path coefficients, the minimum cases will be 5 per parameter estimate. In this study, there were 15 error items for the construct motivation; 15 for service quality; and for service value, satisfaction, word of mouth and repurchase intention, each have three error terms. For the path coefficients, there were 9 in the model (one from "motivation" to "service quality"; two from "service quality" to "service value" and "satisfaction"; three from "service value" to "satisfaction," "word of mouth" and "repurchase intention"; two from "satisfaction" to "word of mouth" and "repurchase intention"; one from " word of mouth" to "repurchase intention"). By using Bentler and Chou's (1987) suggestion, the minimum sample size for this study was 255 ({[15 + 15 + 3 + 3 +3 +3 error terms] + [9 path coefficients]} X 5] = 255). However, unlike a face-to-face administered survey in which chances are high in getting all questions answered, an online survey bears the risk that some respondents might fail to complete the whole questionnaire. In this online survey consideration is given to about 20% of the returns might contain missing data and thus making them unusable. As such the minimum number of returns required for this study was 306 (255 X 1.2 = 306).

Survey Administration

A convenience sampling approach was adopted for this online survey. Collecting data via web-based survey offers a number of advantages. Evans and Mathur (2005) summarized these advantages as follows:

1. It can be administered in a time-efficient manner, the period required to take the survey into the field to a large extent shortened.
2. Offers real-time access to geographically diverse respondent groups.
3. Respondents can choose a convenient time to answer the survey.
4. Relatively easy for respondents to complete the survey and their responses are readily to be tabulated and analyzed.
5. Once the last question is completed, the researcher instantaneously has the data of the finished questionnaire stored in a data base.
6. To increase the response rate, follow-up reminders can be sent in the most efficient and economical way.
7. Very low administrative cost.

However, online survery is not without weaknesses. Evans and Mathur (2005) further pointed out that there are three main weaknesses working with online survey: (1) perception of junk mail; (2) unclear answering instructions; and (3) low response rate. The first weakness can be tackled by allowing the respondents to opt-out and the contact email should be short and able to direct the respondent to the survey effortlessly. For unclear answering instructions, this can be addressed by adequate pretests and pop-up windows to make the answering process more respondent-friendly (Evans & Mathur, 2005). Regarding the issue of low response rate, good survey techniques such as limiting the length of the survey, making it relevant and of interest to the targeted respondents and offering incentives will help (Ray & Tabor, 2003). To address the low response rate issue, in

this survey the respondents were informed in the introduction email that after the survey was concluded, a lottery would be conducted and a spa basket would be mailed to three lucky winners.

The online survey was conducted at the Center for Hospitality and Tourism Research of the School of Hotel and Restaurant Administration at Oklahoma State University which contains an online email survey databank that has over 650,000 U.S. traveler email addresses. However, previous online surveys conducted at the Center have recorded low response rates, some are even less than 1%. With reference to these low response rates, all the available email addresses contained in the databank were used. The uncertainty in getting the required number of responses from the frequent traveler cohort prompted the measure in creating another cohort of respondents – an additional 5,000 email addresses of the members of the university community were obtained from the Oklahoma State University Communication Services for this survey.

To design the web pages for the survey, the Qualtrics software was used. The online survey was accompanied by an invitation email explaining the purpose of this survey. The survey was uploaded to the Qualtrics website (qualtrics.com) for two weeks from 1 to 15 December, 2011. To increase the response rate, follow-up emails were sent twice to remind and request the respondents to complete the survey.

Data Analysis

Descriptive Statistics

Frequency distributions were used to examine the data obtained in respect to the respondents' demographic characteristics and behavioral characteristics. In respect of the demographic characteristics, the respondents' information on gender, age, marital status, level of education,

occupation, and annual household income were checked. The different age groups were formed with attention given to baby boomers, Generation X and Generation Y who were born between 1946 to 1964, 1965 to 1976, and 1977 to 1994 respectively. Age group 47-65 was created for the baby boomer respondents, 35-46 for Generation X, and 18-34 for Generation Y. As it was expected that the baby boomers and those who were over 65 would have distinctive differences in terms of what motivated them to visit spas and how they evaluated their experience from Generations X and Y, the line was drawn at age 47 to distinguish the older generation and younger generation, i.e., respondents of age 47 and above were categorized as the older generation group in this study and they were the "baby boomers" and "above 65," while respondents who were under 47 were considered in this study as the younger generation and they were the "Generation X" and "Generation Y."

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

There are three main reasons for using factor analytic methods. First, these methods can be used to check the validity of the scores obtained statistically. Second, they can be used to build theories for the constructs that are under examination. Third, by using these methods, the relationships among the observed factors can be grouped in a parsimonious fashion for subsequent analyses (Thompson, 2004). There are two different factor analysis methods and they are exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA).

The primary purpose of EFA is to define the underlying structure among the variables in the analysis, i.e., "to analyze the structure of the interrelationships among a number of variables by defining sets of variables that are highly interrelated, known as factors" (Hair et al., 2010, p.94).

In this study, EFA was not performed for the motivation's and service quality's variables/indicators for the reasons that both the "push" and "pull" factors of the motivation construct and the five dimensions of the SERVQUAL instrument, i.e., "tangibles," "reliability," "responsiveness," "assurance," and "empathy" of the construct service quality are well defined and proven factors/dimensions that have been widely tested empirically by a substantial number of work before.

For CFA, it is a factor analytic method, a type of SEM that deals specifically with the relationships between observed measure or indicators and latent variables or factors. For CFA, a priori hypotheses are required, i.e., a researcher will need to pre-specify all aspects involved in the model. Furthermore, CFA should be conducted before the specification of a SEM model (Brown, 2006).

To investigate the overall fit of the model, four absolute fit indices, three incremental fit indices, and one parsimony fit indices were used.

Absolute Fit Indices

Absolute fit indices examines how good the model is able to reproduce the observed data, in another words, they check how well the theories established fit into the sample data (Hair et al., 2010). The four absolute fit indices used in this study included chi-square statistic (χ^2 statistic), normed chi-square (χ^2/df), goodness-of-fit index (GFI), and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA). In the following these four indices are briefly described.

χ^2 statistic, a statistically based SEM fit measure, is the most fundamental absolute fit index and is used to look for no differences between the observed and the estimated covariance matrices to support the model as representative of the data collected. As such, the retention of the null

hypothesis is desirable, i.e., to show there is no difference between the two matrices. The aim of χ^2 statistic, therefore, is to search for an insignificant chi-square index (p value > 0.05), as a significant index implies an imperfect model fit and will lead to the rejection of the null hypothesis (Diamantopoulos & Siguaw, 2000; Hair et al., 2010). In addition, normed chi-square (chi-square/degree of freedom, χ^2/df) is also used in this study and the ratio should fall into the range of 2.0 to 5.0 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007; Wheaton, Muthen, Alwin, & Summers, 1977).

GFI is an indicator of the relevant amount of variances and covariances accounted for by the model, it shows how closely the model comes to perfectly reproducing the observed covariance matrix. GFI aims to produce a fit statistic that is less sensitive to sample size. No statistical test is linked to GFI, only guidelines to fit: Within the possible range of GFI values, which is 0 to 1, the higher the value the better fit the model is. Traditionally, a value equal to or higher than 0.9 is considered good (Diamantopoulos & Siguaw, 2000; Hair et al., 2010).

RMSEA is generally regarded as one of the most informative fit indices and is used to show how well the model, with unknown but optimally chosen parameter values, fits the population covariance matrix if they are available. Although some statisticians regard values less than 0.05 are considered good fit, between 0.05 and under 0.08 of reasonable fit, between 0.08 and 0.1 of mediocre fit and over 0.1 of poor fit, others treat values between 0.3 and 0.8 as good fit (Brown & Cudeck, 1993; Diamantopoulos & Siguaw, 2000; Hair et al., 2010).

Incremental Fit Indices

Incremental fit indices evaluate how good the estimated model fits relative to some alternative baseline model such as a null model (Hair et al., 2010). The three incremental fit indices used in

this study were normed fit index (NFI), comparative fit index (CFI), and Tucker Lewis Index (TLI).

NFI is a ratio of the difference in the χ^2 value for the fitted model and a null model divided by the χ^2 value for the null model. The values of NFI range from 0 to 1, a model of perfect fit would generate a value of 1. For CFI, it is an improved version of NFI and is one of the most widely used indices. Like NFI, CFI values range between 0 and 1, with higher values representing better fit, with values equal to or above 0.9 indicate good fit (Hair et al., 2010). For TLI, the possible range is from zero to one, and the higher the value, the better the model fit (Hair et al., 2010)

Parsimony Fit Indices

Parsimony fit indices are created specifically for providing information about which model among a set of competing models is best, with consideration given to the model's fit relative and complexity (Hair et al., 2010). The parsimony fit index applied in this study was adjusted goodness of fit index (AGFI).

AGFI deals with the different degrees of complexity exhibited in a model by adjusting GFI by a ratio of the degrees of freedom used in a model to the total degrees of freedom available. Proportionate to model complexity, AGFI values are usually lower than GFI values. No statistical test is associated with AGFI, only guidelines to fit. Like GFI, a value equal to or higher than 0.9 is considered good (Hair et al., 2010).

A summary of the fit indices used in the study and their relative fit ranges are shown in Table 3.5.

Table 3.5: Fit Indices and their Range of Acceptance

Fit Index	Range
Absolute fit index	
Chi-square (χ^2)	p-value > 0.05
Normed chi-square (χ^2/df)	2 to 5
Goodness-of-fit (GFI)	≥ 0.9
Root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA)	Between 0.03 and 0.08
Incremental fit index	
Normed fit index (NFI)	≥ 0.9
Comparative fit index (CFI)	≥ 0.9
Tucker Lewis Index (TLI)	Models with good fit have a values that approach 1
Parsimony fit index	
Adjusted goodness of fit (AGFI)	≥ 0.9

After examining the model fit, the construct reliability was examined by the means of Cronbach's alpha (≥0.7), squared multiple correlations (SMC/R^2, the value is ranged between 0 and 1, the closer to 1 the better) and composite reliability (≥0.6). These values will be further elaborated in the Findings Chapter. Checking of the validity of each construct contained in the model was followed to ensure that each set of measured items designed for each construct was in fact reflecting the construct these items were set to measure (Hair et al, 2010). Each construct's validity in the measurement model was validated by checking its convergent validity and discriminant validity.

The convergent validity was assessed by factor loadings and their respective *t*-values and average variance extracted (AVE). For factor loading, high loadings on a factor represent that they converge on the common latent construct. All factor loadings should be statistically significant with standardized loading estimates of 0.5 or higher, a loading value of 0.7 is considered ideal (Hair et al., 2010). Also, if the absolute value of the *t*-statistic is above 1.96, then convergent validity is evident. In respect of AVE, it is a summary indicator of convergence, computed as the

mean variance extracted for the items loading on a construct. If an AVE test generated a less than 0.5 score, that means the variance due to the measurement error is larger than the variance captured by the construct, and this will put the validity of the individual indicators as well as the construct in question. As such, an AVE of over 0.5 is preferred (Fornell & Larcker, 1981, Hair et al., 2010).

The discriminate validity was examined by comparing the AVE values with the square of the correlations between pair of constructs. The AVE values should exceed the squared correlations values. To check the distinctiveness of each construct, discriminate validity was tested by checking the AVE values against the square of the correlations estimate between any two constructs included in the model. The AVE values were expected to have a larger value than the squared correlation estimates (Hair et al., 2010).

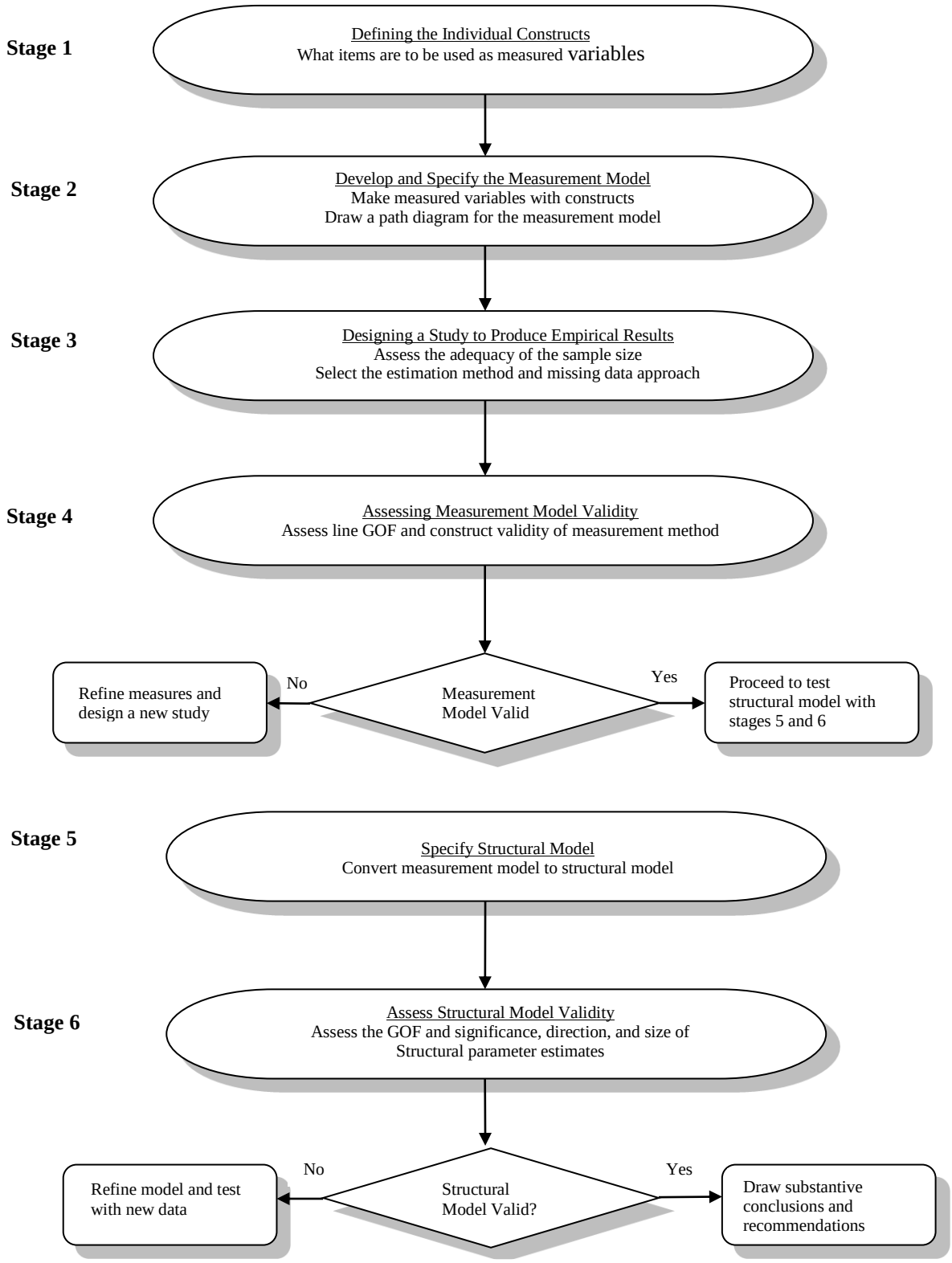
Structural Equation Modeling

SEM was used in this study to examine the interrelationship structure among the constructs included in the proposed model for its ability in estimating multiple and interrelated dependence relationships, representing unobserved concepts in these relationships and account for measurement error in the estimation process, and defining a model to explain the entire set of relationships (Hair et al., 2010).

To apply SEM in a systematic fashion, the six stages in SEM as recommended by Hair et al. (2010) were followed. The first stage is to define individual constructs, followed by stage two to develop and specify the measurement model. The third and fourth stages are to design a study to produce empirical results and to assess the measurement model validity respectively. The last two

stages are to specify the structural model and to assess structural model validity. These six stages are illustrated in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1: The Six-stage Process for Structural Equation Modeling



Source: Hair, J. F., Black, W. C., Barry, J. B., & Anderson, R. E. (2010). *Multivariate Data Analysis* (7th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Stage One: Defining Individual Constructs

The constructs included in the model were selected after a thorough review of literature. The constructs were made operationalized by attaching measurable Likert scales to their respective observed indicators (Hair et al., 2010). Most of these observed indicators, same as the constructs selected for this model, were adopted from previous work. The exogenous construct, or independent variable, included in the model was motivation. The endogenous constructs, or dependent variables, were service quality, service value, satisfaction, word of mouth, and repurchase intention. The exogenous and endogenous variables theorized in the model are listed in Table 3.6.

Table 3.6: Exogenous and Endogenous Variable Theorized in the Model

Exogenous Construct	**Endogenous Construct**
ξ_1 Motivation	η_1 Service quality
	η_2 Service value
	η_3 Satisfaction
	η_4 Word of mouth
	η_5 Repurchase intention

Stage Two: Developing and Specifying the Measurement Model

Stage two is about measurement model specification. In this stage all the involved latent constructs are identified and all the indicators representing these constructs defined. With respect to the number of indicators per latent construct, good practice requires a minimum of three items per construct, preferably four. This minimum number not only provides minimum coverage of the construct's theoretical domain, but also gives adequate identification for the constructs. On the other hand, a big number of indicators does not necessarily yields good findings statistically, as

the expected higher reliability estimates and generalizability would be upset by the inability to produce a truly unidimensional construct, not to say a larger sample size that is required (Hair et al, 2010). In this measurement model, 15 indicators were attached to the exogenous construct motivation. For the endogenous constructs, 15 were attached to service quality, 3 each to service value, satisfaction, word of mouth, and repurchase intention.

Stage Three: Designing a Study to Produce Empirical Results

Stage three deals with the issues concerning research design and estimation. Regarding the selection of whether covariance matrix or correlation matrix was to be used, the former was adopted mainly for two reasons. First, covariance is flexible due to the relatively greater information content it contains. Second, any comparisons between samples call for the use of covariance as input (Hair et al., 2010). Moreover, if correlation is used as input, this may pose statistical risks in producing errors in standard error computations. Also, correlation is not capable in retaining information related to the scale or magnitude of values asked by hypotheses concern questions (Hair et al., 2010).

In respect of sample size, as discussed earlier, 306 samples would be collected for this study. To tackle the issue of missing data, mean substitution, one of the most commonly used imputation techniques, was chosen (Kline, 2011).

For the selection of estimation technique – the mathematical algorithm that is used to identify estimates for each free parameter, maximum likelihood estimation (MLE) was chosen. MLE is a flexible means for parameter estimation in which the “most likely” parameter values to achieve the best model fit are found (Hair et al., 2010). The computer program used for this study was Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) AMOS version 18.

Stage Four: Assessing Measurement Model Validity

Stage four takes care of the validity issues of the measurement model. The validity of a measurement model depends on establishing acceptable levels of goodness-of-fit for the model. Goodness-of-fit denotes how well the specified model reproduces the observed covariance matrix among the indicator items, i.e., the similarity of the observed and estimated covariance matrices (Hair et al., 2010). The steps taken in confirming the validity of the model and the goodness-of-fit indices selected are described in the previous section "Confirmatory Factor Analysis." The indices used are indicated in Table 3.5.

Stage Five: Specifying the Structural Model

Stage five addresses issues about structural model specifying. Based on the proposed theoretical model, the structural model is to be specified by signifying the dependence relationships that are hypothesized to exist among the constructs by adding single-headed, directional arrows from one construct to another (Hair et al., 2010). The path diagrams for the proposed model are shown in Figure 3.2.

Stage Six: Assessing the Structural Model Validity

Stage six deals with the validity of the structural model and its corresponding hypothesized theoretical relationships. The tests for assessing the validity of the structural model proposed for this study were proceeded after both the validity and reliability of the measurement model had been examined.

Moderating Effect

In general statistical terms, a moderator is defined as an independent variable that has moderating effect on the form of the relationship between another independent variable and the dependent variable. In SEM, a moderator picks up the role as a third variable that changes the relationship between two related variables or constructs. A moderator can be metric or nonmetric. Common types of moderators are respondent characteristics, such as gender and age (Hair et al., 2010).

A chi-square difference test is commonly used to evaluate moderation effects between multiple groups (English, Morrison, & Chalon, 2010). First, an unconstraint model is computed, in which path coefficients are allowed to vary across the cross-group data sets. Second, based on the notion of cross-group variance in model relationships, a constrained model is estimated by requiring that all path coefficients are constrained to be equal for across subgroup (Evanschitzky & Wunderlich, 2006; Lin & Deng, 2003). If the change in the chi-square value is significant, it indicates that a moderating effect does exist (Evanschitzky & Wunderlich, 2006).

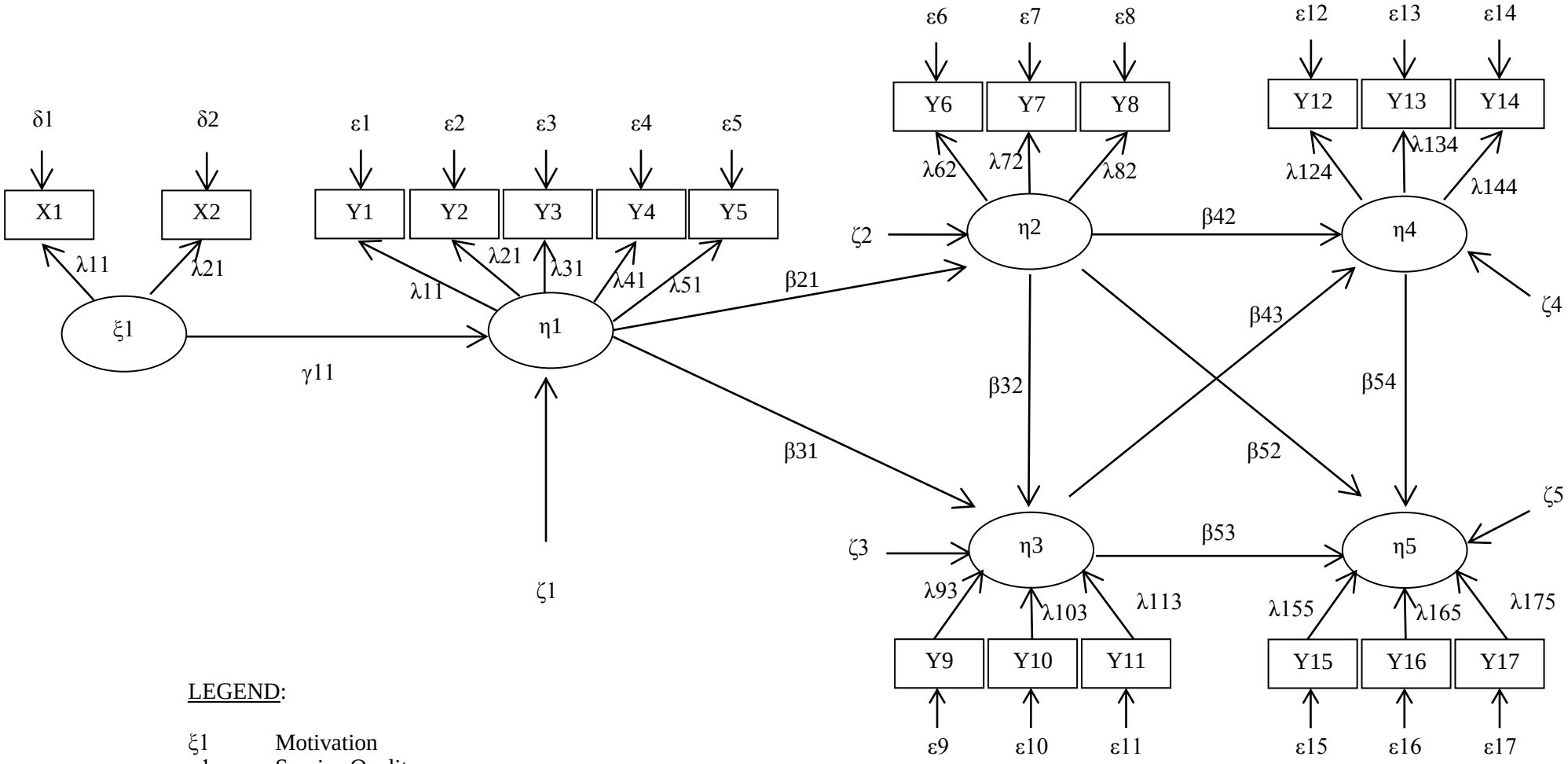
Independent Sample T-test and One-way ANOVA

A t-test is used for determining whether a set or sets of scores are from the same population by assessing the statistical significance of the difference between two independent sample means for a single dependent variable (Coakes and Steed, 2003; Hair, et al., 2010). In a t-test, if the value of the generated p value is smaller than 0.05 ($p<0.05$), it reflects the difference between the means is significant (Coakes and Steed, 2003). In this study, t-tests were performed to study whether the means of the two groups of gender (male and female) were statistically different from each other on the items motivation, service quality, service value, satisfaction, word of mouth and repurchase intention.

A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) is used for finding out whether samples from two or more groups come from populations with equal means (Hair et al., 2010). ANOVA is operated by comparing the means of more than two groups or levels of an independent variable. First, two different estimates (between-groups variance and within-groups variance) of population variance are formed from the data, followed by calculating a statistic from the ratio of these two estimates. The ratio is titled F-ratio, i.e., the ratio of between-groups variance to within-groups variance (Coakes and Steed, 2003). A large value of F indicates that the null hypothesis of equal population means should be rejected (Weiss, 2008).

In this study, ANOVA was used to compare the mean differences of the various constructs included in the model with respect of the respondents' demographic and spa visit characteristics to see if the differences were statistically significant.

Figure 3.2: Path Diagram for the Measurement and Structural Models



LEGEND:

ξ1	Motivation
η1	Service Quality
η2	Service Value
η3	Satisfaction
η4	Word of Mouth
η5	Repurchase Intention
X1-X2:	Endogenous indicators
Y1-Y17:	Exogenous indicators

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

This chapter reports the findings of this study and is made up of five main sections. In the first section a general review of the data collected is presented and the demographic and resort/hotel spa visiting profiles of the respondents discussed. In the second section the confirmatory factor analyses of the motivation and service quality constructs are described. The third section reports the assessment results of the measurement and structural models of the hypothesized model and verifications of the proposed hypotheses. The fourth section reveals whether the two proposed moderator variables gender and age have any moderating effect on the model. The last section presents the comparison results of the different groups of respondents in respect of their demographic and resort/hotel spa visiting profiles.

Profile of the Respondents

A total of 855 responses were received from this internet survey. Among these 855 responses, 491 passed the screening question, i.e., 491 respondents had visited at least one resort/hotel spa in the U.S. in the last two years. However, among these 491 cases 142 were found bearing too few complete data hence deeming them unusable, leaving finally 349 cases for analysis.

These 349 responses came from two cohorts of respondents. During the survey period, 650,000 and 5,000 questionnaires were sent electronically to a group of U.S. travelers and the OSU community respectively. The survey completion rates of the U.S. traveler group and the OSU community, respectively, were 0.026% (168 valid responses) and 3.6% (181 valid responses).

Demographic Profile of the Respondents

The demographic profile of the respondents is summarized in Table 4.1. Close to 65% of the respondents were females. The result mirrors an industry fact that women frequent spas more often than men do. ISPA reported in its 2010 U. S. Spa Industry Study that 72% of the resort/hotel spa guests were females (ISPA, 2010). In terms of age, 57% of the respondents were 47 years old or older.

As for the age demographic, it was dominated by the 47-65 age group which made up a little more than half of the total sample population. A quarter of the respondents were between 35 to 46 years of age (24.9%). The 18-34 age group constituted another 18.3% of the sample group while the remaining 6.3% belonged to the above 65 age group. Regarding the marital status of the respondents, two-thirds (66%) of them were married and 15% of these married respondents were without children. 27% of the respondents were bachelor's degree holders, a further 30.7% held a master's degree and 15.5% a PhD, resulting in over 70% of the respondents held a bachelor's degree or higher.

In terms of occupation, the two largest groups of respondents were professionals (24.4%), and educators (19.5%). 15.3% of the respondents held either chief executive or managerial positions while close to 11% were clerical, administrative or secretarial workers. Public

administrator/official and skilled/technical personnel made up 6.3% of the total number of respondents while self-employed, housewife, retiree and other constituted 23.6%.

For annual household income, except for the below $25,000 and $125,000-150,000 groups, which constituted 6.6% and 9.3% of the total number of the respondents respectively, the percentage range for the remaining five groups were in the range of 15.2% and 18.2%, a mere 3% difference. Despite the results reveal that people from different social strata enjoy visiting resort/hotel spas, those with an annual household income exceeding $100,000 (the $100,000-124,999, $125,00-150,000 and more than $150,000 groups) represented 42% of the respondent group, a 17.2 percentage points higher than those having an annual income of less than $50,000 (the below $25,000 and $25,000-49,999 groups, representing 24.8% of the respondents) and 9 percentage points higher than those earning between $50,000-99,999 annually (the $50,000-74,999 and $75,000-99,999 groups, representing 33.1% if the respondents). ISPA (2010) reported that in average a spa patron should expect to pay $83 per spa service, a price tag that most of the less affluent might not find too appealing.

Table 4.1: Demographic Profile of the Respondents

	Frequency	**Valid Percentage**	**Cumulative Percentage**
Gender:			
Male	123	35.2	35.2
Female	226	64.8	100
Total	349	100	
Age:			
18-34	64	18.3	18.3
35-46	87	24.9	43.3
47-65	176	50.4	93.7
Above 65	22	6.3	100
Total	349	100	
Marital Status:			
Single	118	34	34

	Frequency	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Married with Children	177	51	85
Married without Children	52	15	100
Total	347	100	
Education:			
Less than High School	0	0	0
Vocational or Technical Certificate/Diploma	19	5.5	5.5
Associate College Degree	20	5.7	11.2
Some College/University	40	11.5	22.7
Bachelor	94	27	49.7
Master	107	30.7	80.5
PhD	54	15.5	96
Other	14	4	100
Total	348	100	
Occupation:			
Chief Executive	10	2.9	2.9
Managerial	43	12.4	15.3
Clerical/Administrative/Secretarial	38	10.9	26.2
Educator	68	19.5	45.7
Public Administrator/Official	7	2	47.7
Military	0	0	47.7
Professional	85	24.4	72.1
Skilled/Technical Personnel	15	4.3	76.4
Self-employed	22	6.3	82.7
Housewife	6	1.7	84.4
Retiree	15	4.3	88.7
Other	39	11.3	100
Total	348	100	
Annual Household Income:			
Below $25,000	22	6.6	6.6
$25,000 – 49,999	61	18.2	24.8
$50,000 – 74,999	60	17.9	42.7
$75,000 – 99,999	51	15.2	57.9
$100,000 – 124,999	55	16.4	74.3
$125,000 – 150,000	31	9.3	83.6
More than $150,000	55	16.4	100
Total	335	100	

Resort/Hotel Spa Visitor Characteristics

Table 4.2 presents the spa visit patterns of the respondents. As show in the table, close to 60% of the respondents had visited resort/hotel spas once or twice in the last two years (30% once and 28% twice). These spa guests might be looking for some novel activities while on vacation or traveling so they chose an on-premises spa to add a new and thrilling experience to their itinerary. However, these travelers might plan something else for their next travel itinerary rather than visiting a spa again.

Over one quarter (28%) of the respondents had three to five resort/hotel spa experiences (3 times:13.2%; 4 times:11.2%; and 5 times:3.6%). This cohort of spa guests merits the attention of resort/hotel spa operators, as this group of spa guests might have developed an interest in visiting spas, thereby if in-house spa ads and promotional materials are strategically displayed, these guests would likely be attracted and stimulated to visit an on-premises spa.

14% of the respondents reported that they visited resort/hotel spa for more than six times or more in the last two years (6-10 times: 9.6%; 11 or more: 4.4%). In this group of enthusiastic spa patrons, especially those who had visited resort/hotel spas for 11 times or more, might contain members of some resort/hotel spas, and members of urban hotel spas in particular, i.e., they bought membership or treatment packages from resort/hotel spas and visited them on a regular basis, treating these spas as day spas more than resort/hotel spas.

When visiting resort/hotel spas, 23.3% of the respondents reported that they spent their time in spa alone. The majority of the respondents, however, stated that they visited resort/hotel spas either with their family members (51.1%) or friends (23.6%). Only 2% was accompanied by relatives.

A little over 68% of the respondents spent averagely $250 or below per resort/hotel spa visit (35.9% spent $150 or below and 32.2% between $151 and $250). As mentioned earlier, ISPA (2010) reported that in average a spa charges $83 per spa service, and since a spa service normally lasts within 60 minutes, an assumption could be made that a substantial amount of those respondents who spent $250 or less in this study either spent more than an hour or bought more than one treatment when attending a resort/hotel spa. Resort/hotel spa operators may want to know that many of their guests visit their spas for more than an hour and may purchase two different treatments, a fact to take note of when packaging their services.

About 11% of the respondents spent more than $450 per visits ($451-550: 4%; more than $550: 7.2%), very possible that they spent their money on buying a three- to four-hour long spa treatment package.

Respondents who spent over $250 but not exceeding $450 ($251-350: 13.8%; $351-450: 6.9%) constituted 20.7% of the respondent group. This is a unique group of spa guests who would not settle for either a common hour-long treatment or a traditional half-day spa package. Instead, they might look for some novel and extraordinary spa experiences that require them to spend a little bit more time and money on (salt glow with Vichy Shower, music or color therapy, Indian Ayurvedic treatments, for examples). The resort/hotel spa operators may want to ensure that they have a couple of specialty treatments included in their spa menu to satisfy the exploring spirit of this group of spa guests.

Table 4.2: Spa Visit Patterns of the Respondents

	Frequency	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Number of Resort/Hotel Spa Visits over the Last 2 Years:			
1	75	30	30
2	70	28	58
3	33	13.2	71.2
4	28	11.2	82.4
5	9	3.6	86
6-10	24	9.6	95.6
11 or more	11	4.4	100
Total	250	100	
Visiting Resort/Hotel Spas:			
Alone	81	23.3	23.3
With Family Members	178	51.1	74.4
With Relatives	7	2	76.4
With Friends	82	23.6	100
Total	348	100	
Average Spending:			
$150 or Below	125	35.9	35.9
$151 – $250	112	32.2	68.1
$251 – $350	48	13.8	81.9
$351 – $450	24	6.9	88.8
$451 – $550	14	4	92.8
More than $550	25	7.2	100
Total	348	100	

Missing Data

Descriptive analysis revealed that 38 cases in the dataset had missing data, which represented 10.8% of the 349 filtered responses. Also the missing data were randomly distributed. Hair et al. (2010) recommended four approaches to deal with missing data and they are complete case approach (listwise deletion), all-available approach (pairwise deletion), imputation techniques (e.g. mean substitution), and model-based approaches. Hair et al. (2010) further stated that if missing data are random, less than 10 percent of observations, and the factor loadings are relatively high (0.7 or greater), then any one of the four approaches suggested can be used.

Since the missing data percentage in this survey was only 0.8% over the 10% missing data guidelines recommended by Hair et al. (2010), the missing data were randomly distributed in the dataset, and the majority of the factor loadings were relatively high, any of the four missing data remedy methods as suggested by Hair et al. (2010) can be applied. Mean substitution, the most basic imputation technique that involves replacing a missing score with the overall sample mean (Kline, 2011), was used to give complete information to all the cases in this study.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis of the Motivation Construct

To evaluate the measurement scale of motivation, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted by examining the relationship between the latent variables and their respective indicators. There were two latent variables in the hypothesized measurement model of the motivation construct and they were the push and pull factors, and ten indicators were created for the former and five for the latter. Since normality is the most fundamental assumption in multivariate analysis (Hair et al., 2010), before conducting the CFA for the motivation construct, the construct's normality was first examined.

Data Normality

To examine the normality of a construct, usually univariate and multivariate normality tests are recommended to be conducted. However, since no "direct test" is available for multivariate normality and if all variables are univariate normal, then "any departure from multivariate normality are usually inconsequential" (Hair et al., 2010, p.366), thus in the current study the multivariate normality was not examined. In this study, statistical software Statistical Package for

Social Science (SPSS) AMOS version 18 was employed to check the univariate normality of the 15 variables included in the motivation construct.

Skewness and kurtosis are two practical means for testing univariate normality – skewness "implies that the shape of a unimodal distribution is asymmetrical about its mean" and "positive kurtosis indicates heavier tails and a higher peak and negative kurtosis indicates just the opposite" in a unimodal, symmetrical distribution (Kline, 2011, p.60). Kline (2011) recommended that the skew index and kurtosis index for a variable should not be greater than 3 and 10 respectively in order to state that the data distribution of a certain variable is not extremely deviate from normality.

As shown in Table 4.3, all the values of univariate skewness were below 3 and all univariate kurtosis did not exceed the threshold of 10 as recommended by Kline (2011), thus the data were not irregularly distributed, i.e., abnormally skewed or peaked distribution of data was not found.

Table 4.3: Univariate Test for the Push and Pull Factors

	Skewness	Kurtosis
Motivating Factor: Push Factors		
Relaxation & Relief		
1. I visited this spa for relaxation and stress reduction	-1.929	4.117
2. I visited this spa to refresh myself	-1.495	2.349
Self-reward & Indulgence		
3. I sought a pampering experience by visiting this spa	-1.083	0.515
4. I visited this spa to reward myself for working hard	-0.848	0.046
5. I desired to be seen fashionable by visiting this spa	1.119	0.536
6. I visited this spa to indulge myself with a luxurious experience	-0.623	-0.770
Health & Beauty		
7. I visited this spa to enhance my physical wellbeing	-1.011	0.712
8. I visited this spa to rejuvenate my appearance	-0.216	-0.950
9. I visited this spa for therapeutic reasons	-0.681	-0.387
10. I visited this spa to soothe sore joints and muscles	-0.855	-0.199
Motivating Factor: Pull Factors		
Convenience		
1. I visited this spa because the appointment time(s) met my schedule and needs	-0.297	-0.885
2. I visited this spa in order to save time from looking for and traveling to an outside spa	0.080	-1.035
Brand		
3. I visited this spa because it carried my preferred product line(s)	0.563	-0.519
4. I visited this spa because it offered my preferred treatment(s)	-0.325	-1.009
5. I visited this spa because of its brand name	0.414	-0.768

Since a variable's low loading value (below the 0.5 threshold) suggests that the variable should be eliminated from a model (Hair et al., 2010), the factor loading of "I desired to be seen as fashionable by visiting this spa" was deleted because its factor loading of 0.193 was quite low. Although the spa industry, as mentioned before in chapter one, is a relatively new sector in the hospitality industry, the deletion of the indicator "I desired to be seen as fashionable by visiting this spa" suggested that people visiting resort/hotel spas do not consider this activity a fashionable one. This phenomenon might due to the fact that the modern resort/hotel spa sector has been blossomed for close to two decades since the mid-1990s, hence it is not considered "fashionable" anymore by its patrons, or for the reason that despite the ups and downs of the spa industry in the western culture, the spa industry nonetheless has a long history since Ancient Roman time, so the respondents did not consider it as "fashionable."

A further check on the loading value reviewed that another variable "I visited this spa to soothe sore joints and muscles" exhibited a marginal value of 0.563.This variable was also removed from subsequent analyses as the marginal loading value of this indicator may pose difficulty for using it as a manifest variable for the latent push factor. Although spa guests may expect that visiting a spa can help them relieve joint and muscle problems, this particular health benefit might be regarded by them as an ancillary benefit of such visit. Indeed, when compared with other spa visit reasons such as to get relaxed and relieved, this ancillary benefit may not be strong enough to "push" them to patronize a resort/hotel spa, as seeing a physiotherapist could be a more effective means to cure joint and muscle problems.

As shown in Table 4.4, the fit indices of the initial model were not satisfactory. Upon reviewing the modification indices, it was noticed that the error variances of a couple of indicators should be correlated and they are listed as follows:

1. “I visited this spa for relaxation and stress reduction” and “I visited this spa to refresh myself”;
2. “I visited this spa to indulge myself with a luxurious experience” and “I sought a pampering experience by visiting this spa”;
3. “I visited this spa because the appointment time(s) met my schedule and needs” and “I visited this spa in order to save time from looking for traveling to an outside spa” and
4. “I visited this spa because it carried my preferred product lines” and “I visited this spa because of its brand name”

For the first pair of related indicators, they were related perhaps for the reason that one of the ultimate outcomes a spa guest wants to attain after visiting a spa is to get herself “refreshed,” and “relaxation and stress reduction” is the precondition through which the spa guest can get refreshed. In regard to the second paired relationship, “to indulge [oneself] with a luxurious experience” seems to be a great means of self-pampering. With respect to the third pairing, when making a spa “appointment” during either a business or leisure trip, whether the appointment will help save “traveling time” could be a concern to spa guests. For the last correlated pair, “brand product lines” and “brand spas,” their relationship could possibly explained by two reasons. First it is that a recognized brand, whether it is a spa product or a spa establishment, provides confidence to its users in the quality it delivers. Second, experienced spa guests may know very well which brand spa carries which types of brand spa products.

After linking the above four pairs of error variances, the modified model yielded satisfactory fit indices. In Table 4.4, the four model fit indices of the modified model matched their respective fit guidelines well (GFI = 0.910; TLI = 0.908; NFI = 0.903; CFI = 0.929; χ^2/df = 3.411). In respect of RMSEA, the value exceeded the recommended upper bound value of 0.08 by 0.003. As for AGFI, the index was very close to the suggested fit value of ≥0.9, missing it by 0.037 only. In general, the indices supported the assumption that the observed data fit reasonably well with the proposed motivation construct.

Table 4.4: Comparison of the Fit Indices of the Initial and Modified Models of the Motivation Construct

	Initial Model	**Modified Model**	**Fit Guidelines**
χ^2 with degrees of freedom	406.641 (P=0.000) with 64 df	204.68 (P=0.000) with 60 df	
GFI	0.830	0.910	≥0.9
RMSEA	0.124	0.083	Between 0.03 & 0.08
TLI	0.795	0.908	models with good fit have values that approach 1
NFI	0.808	0.903	≥0.9
CFI	0.832	0.929	≥0.9
χ^2/df	6.354	3.411	2 to 5
AGFI	0.758	0.863	≥0.9

Measurement Model Evaluation for the Motivation Construct

To validate a measurement model is to assess the reliability and validity of the indicators created for measuring their respective latent constructs. Reliability refers to "the consistency among the variables in a summated scale, [i.e.,] the indicators of the scale should all be measuring the same construct and thus be highly intercorrelated" (Hair et al., 2010, p. 125). Cronbach's alpha is the most frequently used reliability coefficient for measuring the consistency of a scale. The generally agreed cut-off point for Cronbach's alpha is 0.7 (Hair et al., 2010). As it is shown in Table 4.5, the relatively high Cronbach's alpha of the push and pull motivating factors, which were 0.874 and 0.791 respectively, suggested good internal consistency of the measuring scales.

Other measures used in this study to assess the reliability of the motivation construct included squared multiple correlations (SMC, R^2) and composite reliability (CR). SMC is a statistical tool used to confirm the reliability of the indicators (Diamantopoulos & Siguaw, 2000). The value of SMC indicates "the extent to which a measured variable's variance is explained by a latent factor" (Hair et al., 2010, p.685). SMC's value ranges from 0 to 1, the closer the value is to 1, the better the representativeness of an indicator is to its latent variable (Reisinger & Turner, 1999). Three

SMC values, as reported in Table 4.5, were relatively low and they are items PH5, PL1 and PL5. However, more than half of the 13 items had a SMC values either above or close to 0.5, meaning that 50% or more of each of these individual item's variances could be explained by its respective latent factor.

To further measuring the internal consistency of the motivation construct, i.e., the reliability of the motivation construct, CR values for the push and pull factors were examined. The CR values for the push and pull factors, as reported in Table 4.5, were 0.876 and 0.767 respectively. Since a CR value of 0.6 is considered desirable and a value 0.7 or higher indicates the existence of strong construct reliability (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988; Diamantopoulos & Siguaw, 2000; Hair et al., 2010), the reported CR values provided good support for the overall reliability of the construct.

Validity, on the other hand, deals with measurement accuracy, and it is the extent to which a scale or set of measures accurately represents the theoretical latent construct it intends to measure (Hair et al., 2010). The validity of the motivating construct was checked by evaluating its convergent validity and discriminant validity. Convergent validity states that the indicators of a specific construct should converge or share a high proportion of variance in common and discriminant validity refers to the extent to which a construct is truly distinct from other constructs (Hair et al., 2010).

Average variance extracted (AVE) is a summary measure of convergence among a set of items representing a latent construct (Hair et al., 2010). In Fornell and Larcker's (1981) test, convergent validity of the data is established when the variance extracted is 0.5 or above. The AVE values of the push and pull factors in this study were mediocre. As reported in Table 4.5, the AVEs of push and pull missed the recommended threshold value of 0.5 by 0.03 and 0.099 respectively.

To further checking the convergent validity of the motivation construct, factor loadings and their respective *t*-values were examined. Hair et al. (2010) commented that the standardized factor loadings of a proposed model should be at least 0.5 and ideally 0.7 or higher as high loadings are

persuasive evidence for supporting that "the indicators are strongly related to their associated constructs and are one indication of construct validity" (Hair et al., 2010, p.685). The loading values of the indicators were reported in Table 4.5, all reported values were over 0.5 and six of them were either equal to or exceeded the ideal level of 0.7. The *t*-values for the loadings were also examined. If the *t*-values are significant, it confirms that the indicators are truly measuring the construct it intends to measure, and convergent validity is exhibited if the absolute value of the *t* statistic of an indicator is above 1.96 (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988; Diamantopoulos & Siguaw, 2000; Hatcher, 1994). As shown in Table 4.5, the absolute values of the *t* statistics associated with the factor loadings were well above 1.96, thus assumption could be made that the indicators measured their respective latent motivating factors well.

Table 4.5: AMOS Results of the Motivation Measurement Model

		Stand'd. Factor Loading	Robust t-value (p=.000)	SMC (R^2)	CA[#]	CR[##]	AVE[###]
Motivating Factor: Push Factors					0.874	0.876	0.470
Item	***Relaxation & Relief***						
PH1	I visited this spa for relaxation and stress reduction	0.715	10.525	0.512			
PH2	I visited this spa to refresh myself	0.757	10.932	0.573			
	Self-reward & Indulgence						
PH3	I sought a pampering experience by visiting this spa	0.722	10.485	0.522			
PH4	I visited this spa to reward myself for working hard	0.689	10.283	0.475			
PH5	I visited this spa to indulge myself with a luxurious experience	0.576	8.923	0.332			
	Health & Beauty						
PH6	I visited this spa to enhance my physical wellbeing	0.726	11.024	0.527			
PH7	I visited this spa to rejuvenate my appearance	0.647	10.119	0.419			
PH8	I visited this spa for therapeutic reasons	0.632	NA	0.400			
Motivating Factor: Pull Factors					0.791	0.767	0.401
	Convenience						
PL1	I visited this spa because the appointment time(s) met my schedule and needs	0.522	6.605	0.272			
PL2	I visited this spa in order to save time from looking for and traveling to an outside spa	0.649	7.801	0.421			
	Brand						
PL3	I visited this spa because it carried my preferred product line(s)	0.700	10.287	0.490			
PL4	I visited this spa because it offered my preferred treatment(s)	0.725	7.829	0.526			
PL5	I visited this spa because of its brand name	0.544	NA	0.295			

CA [#]: Cronbach's Alpha; CR [##]: Composite Reliability; AVE[###]: Average Variance Extracted

For discriminant validity, the AVE estimates for each factor were compared with the squared correlation estimates associated with that factor, and the AVE values should exceed the squared correlations values (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Hair et al, 2010). Table 4.6 displays the comparison and the AVE estimates were greater than the squared correlation estimates, thus confirming the distinctiveness of the push and pull motivating factors.

Table 4.6: Correlation among the Push and Pull Motivating Factors

	Push	**Pull**
Push	1	
Pull	0.47[a] (0.221)[b]	1
AVE	0.470	0.401
Mean	5.121	3.545
SD	1.199	1.302

a: correlation estimates; b: squared correlation estimates

In summary, the above performed assessments offer support for the existence of acceptable degrees of reliability and validity in the motivation construct.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis of Service Quality Variables

Data Normality

To perform CFA for the service quality construct, the steps used in the confirmation of the motivation construct were repeated. First, the univariate normality test was performed. As shown in Table 4.7, no skew index was above 3 and no kurtosis index was above 10, thus confirming the normality of the data collected for the service quality construct.

Table 4.7: Univariate Test for the Service Quality Construct

	Skew	Kurtosis
Service Quality Dimension: *Tangibles*		
- The physical facilities and the design of this spa were sensibly appealing	-1.628	4.073
- The appearance of the physical facilities was in keeping with the design and theme of this spa	-1.474	3.534
- The spa employees were professionally dressed and appeared neat	-1.690	4.463
Service Quality Dimension: *Reliability*		
- The spa employees were knowledgeable about the resort/hotel spa services, treatments and products	-1.443	3.390
- The spa employees provided adequate, clear and fair information about the spa	-1.389	3.022
- The spa employees were professional and skillful	-1.679	4.290
Service Quality Dimension: *Responsiveness*		
- The spa employees provided prompt service	-1.611	3.966
- The spa employees told me exactly when and what treatment(s) and services(s) would be performed	-1.565	3.446
- The spa employees demonstrated their willingness to help me	-1.446	3.095
Service Quality Dimension: *Assurance*		
- I could trust the spa employees	-1.044	1.342
- Measures were taken by this spa to ensure personal physical safety and security of my valuables	-1.161	1.610
- I felt safe in my financial transactions with this spa	-1.362	2.625
Service Quality Dimension: *Empathy*		
- The spa employees recognized my needs	-0.975	1.481
- The employees were committed to fulfilling my comfort needs	-1.424	2.725
- The spa employees gave me personal attention	-1.543	3.164

Model Fit of the Service Quality Construct

To examine the model fit of the service quality model, first the loading values of all the variables concerned were reviewed and confirmed that they were all over the suggested threshold value of 0.5. Next, the modification indices were checked and discovered that the error variances of two indicators should be related and they were “the physical facilities and design of this spa were sensibly appealing” and “the appearance of the physical facilities was in keeping with the design and theme of this spa.” This relationship recommended that resort/hotel spa visitors would find a

spa “appealing” if they perceived the “design and theme” of the spa “was in keeping with its theme.”

The fit indices of the service quality dimensions were reported in Table 4.8. All the fit indices, with the exception of RMSEA and AGFI, were either above or very close to their respective cut-off points (GFI=0.853; TLI=0.931; NFI=0.931; CFI=0.944) or was within the recommended range (χ^2/df=4.89). For RMSEA, it was 0.106, surpassing the suggested upper bound value by 0.026. For AGFI, its value of 0.793 was below the suggested cut-off point by 0.107. In conclusion, the indices signified a relatively good fit between the proposed model and the observed data.

Table 4.8: Fit Indices of the Service Quality Dimensions

χ^2 with degrees of freedom	528.709 (P=0.000) with 85df	Fit Guidelines
GFI	0.853	≥0.9
RMSEA	0.106	Between 0.03 & 0.08
TLI	0.931	Models with good fit have values that approach 1
NFI	0.931	≥0.9
CFI	0.944	≥0.9
χ^2/df	4.89	2 to 5
AGFI	.793	≥0.9

Measurement Model Evaluation for the Service Quality Construct

First the reliability of the measurement model of the service quality construct was checked by using Cronbach’s alpha, SMC and CR. As presented in Table 4.9, the Cronbach’s alphas of the various dimensions of the service quality construct were all over the cut-off point 0.7. Table 4.9 also displayed the values of SMC and CR. In respect of the SMC values of the indicators, except for TA1 and TA2 of which the SMC values were 0.599 and 0.616 respectively, all other values were over 0.7, indicating that 70% or more of these indicator’s variances could be described by its respective latent factor. Regarding the CR values of the five dimensions (tangibles, reliability,

responsiveness, assurance, and empathy), they were in the range of 0.876 and 0.950. As these values were all over 0.7, a relatively strong construct reliability of the model was evident.

The AVE, factor loadings and their respective *t*-values were displayed in Table 4.9 and were used to examine the convergent validity of the service quality model. Concerning the AVE values of the five service quality dimensions, the largest value was 0.864 (reliability) and the smallest one was 0.703 (tangibles). As these values were above the 0.5 threshold suggested by Fornell & Larcker (1981), the convergent validity of the model was confirmed, and the confirmation was supported further by the related factor loadings and *t*-values – all factor loadings of the indicators and their respective *t*-values in the model were above the cut-off values of 0.7 and 1.96 respectively.

Table 4.9: AMOS Results for the Service Quality Measurement Model

		Stand'd Factor Loading	Robust t-value (p=.000)	SMC (R^2)	CA[#]	CR[##]	AVE
Endogenous Variable							
Item	***Tangibles***				0.898	0.876	0.703
TA1	- The physical facilities and the design of this spa were sensibly appealing	0.774	18.347	0.599			
TA2	- The appearance of the physical facilities was in keeping with the design and theme of this spa	0.785	19.118	0.616			
TA3	- The spa employees were professionally dressed and appeared neat	0.946	NA	0.894			
	Reliability				0.943	0.950	0.864
RY1	- The spa employees were knowledgeable about the resort/hotel spa services, treatments and products	0.944	30.535	0.892			
RY2	- The spa employees provided adequate, clear and fair information about the spa	0.922	28.162	0.850			
RY3	- The spa employees were professional and skillful	0.923	NA	0.852			
	Responsiveness				0.883	0.896	0.742
RS1	- The spa employees provided prompt service	0.869	21.633	0.784			
RS2	- The spa employees told me exactly when and what treatment(s) and services(s) would be performed	0.833	19.373	0.693			
RS3	- The spa employees demonstrated their willingness to help me	0.864	NA	0.746			
	Assurance				0.889	0.901	0.752
AS1	- I could trust the spa employees	0.871	20.217	0.758			
AS2	- Measures were taken by this spa to ensure personal physical safety and security of my valuables	0.866	20.504	0.751			
AS3	- I felt safe in my financial transactions with this spa	0.865	NA	0.748			

		Stand'd Factor Loading	Robust t-value (p=.000)	SMC (R^2)	CA[#]	CR[##]	AVE
	Empathy				0.915	0.928	0.811
EM1	- The spa employees recognized my needs	0.874	21.565	0.764			
EM2	- The employees were committed to fulfilling my comfort needs	0.948	26.105	0.899			
EM3	- The spa employees gave me personal attention	0.878	NA	0.771			

CA [#]: Cronbach's Alpha; CR [##]: Composite Reliability; AVE[###]: Average Variance Extracted

To check the discriminant validity of the service quality model, the AVE values of each dimension was compared against the squared correlation estimates associated with that dimension. As indicated in Table 4.10, with the exception of the pair comprising empathy and responsiveness, of which the associated AVE value was 0.027 below the squared correlation estimate, all other values of AVE were larger than their associated squared correlation estimates.

Table 4.10: Correlation among Service Quality Variables

	Tangible	**Reliability**	**Responsiveness**	**Assurance**	**Empathy**
Tangible	1				
Reliability	0.816[a] (0.666)[b]	1			
Responsiveness	0.758 (0.574)	0.887 (0.787)	1		
Assurance	0.745 (0.555)	0.811 (0.658)	0.842 (0.709)	1	
Empathy	0.718 (0.516)	0.829 (0.687)	0.877 (0.769)	0.865 (0.748)	1
AVE	0.703	0.864	0.742	0.752	0.811
Mean	5.851	5.860	5.842	5.702	5.670
SD	0.965	1.020	1.012	1.069	1.095

a: correlation estimates; b: squared correlation estimates

In conclusion, the statistical examinations performed above helped confirm the reliability and validity of the service quality construct.

Assessment of the Full Measurement Model

Data Normality of the Service Value, Satisfaction, Word of Mouth, and Repurchase Constructs

Repeating the steps taken in confirming the motivation and service quality constructs, first the data normality of the remaining four constructs in the full hypothesized model was examined. Table 4.11 summarized the skew and kurtosis indices of these four constructs. Since the skewness and kurtosis values were below their respective cut-off points of 3 and 10 respectively, the univariate normality of these constructs were confirmed.

Table 4.11: Univariate Test for the Service Value, Satisfaction, Word of Mouth, and Repurchase Constructs

	Skew	**Kurtosis**
Service Value:		
- Compared with the price I paid, this spa provided good service value	-1.488	3.148
- Compared with the time I spent and the price I paid, visiting this spa was worthwhile	-1.423	2.819
- I received good value for the money I spent	-1.350	2.177
Satisfaction:		
- I was satisfied with my decision to visit this spa	-1.775	4.431
- This spa visit met my expectation	-1.642	3.741
- Overall I was satisfied with my visit to this spa	-1.918	4.925
Behavioral Intention: Word of Mouth		
- I would say positive things about this spa to other people	-1.654	3.369
- I would recommend this spa to someone who seeks my advice	-1.640	3.134
- I would encourage friends and relatives to try out this spa	-1.325	1.764
Behavioral Intention: Repurchase		
- I consider this spa my first choice when I visit a resort/hotel spa again	-0.819	0.310
- I would like to increase the frequency of visit to this spa	-0.676	-0.175
- I am more than willing to increase spending for my next visits to this spa	-0.141	-0.748

Model Fit of the Full Model

The next step is to examine the loading values of the variables and it was verified that all the loading values were above 0.5. Then the fit indices of the full model were examined and the values of the various fit indices used are summarized in Table 4.12.

Table 4.12: Fit Indices of the Full Model

χ^2 with degrees of freedom	476.604 (P=0.000) with 138 df	Fit Guidelines
GFI	0.875	≥0.9
RMSEA	0.084	Between 0.03 & 0.08
TLI	0.950	Models with good fit have values that approach 1
NFI	0.944	≥0.9
CFI	0.960	≥0.9
χ^2/df	3.454	2 to 5
AGFI	0.828	≥0.9

The values of the TLI (0.950), NFI (0.944), CFI (0.960) and χ^2/df (3.454) were either above their respective recommended cut-off points or within the suggested range. For the values of GFI (0.875) and AGFI (0.828), the estimates missed the recommended thresholds by 0.025 and 0.072 respectively. For the RMSEA value (0.084), it was 0.004 over the upper bound value. The results indicated a good degree of statistical fit between the observed data and the measurement model.

Measurement Model Evaluation for the Full Model

In evaluating the measurement model for the full model, with respect to the constructs motivation and service quality, composite scores (sums of scores divided by the number of items) were used to represent the constructs as a partial aggregation model to recognize its

multidimensional nature (Babakus, Yavas, Karatepe, & Avci, 2003; Bagozzi and Heatherton 1994).

The reliability tests for the measurement model of the full measurement were carried out and the results were summarized in Table 4.13. All the Cronbach's alpha values of the constructs involved were above the threshold of 0.7 with the exception of the motivation construct (0.619). As mentioned in the Methods Chapter, although researchers regard alpha values range between 0.6 to < 0.7 as moderate, an alpha of 0.7 is regarded as the minimum value for confirming the internal consistency of a construct (Hair et al., 2011). The alpha coefficient of 0.619 of the motivation construct, despite could be considered as a moderate value, was generally regarded as insufficient to quantify the construct's internal consistency. However, research has proposed that a 0.6 or higher alpha coefficient for scales with item number smaller than six can still be regarded as satisfactory (Cortina, 1993; Petrick, 2002b). The fact that only two composite score items were included in the motivation construct, the 0.619 value could be accepted as a moderate affirmation of the internal consistency of the construct.

Regarding the SMC values of the variables, apart from two values (Pull factor = 0.445; indicator RP3 = 0.395), all values ranged from 0.689 to 0.953 with 8 of them over 0.8 and 6 above 0.9. The CR values of the variables were also examined and the values were found ranging from 0.76 to 0.97, well over the suggested cut-off point of 0.6 and thus helped confirming the reliability of the overall measurement model.

Next the convergent validity of the overall measurement model was checked by assessing the AVE, factor loadings and their respective *t*-values of the model's variables. As reported in Table 4.13, all the AVE values were over the recommended threshold of 0.5, ranging from 0.618 to 0.916. For the standardized factor loading values, they ranged from 0.629 to 0.976. All the loading values were above the suggested threshold of 0.5 and 17 out of the 19 loading values

surpassed the ideal estimate of 0.7 and the *t* statistics associated with these values were all above 1.96.

Table 4.13: AMOS Results for the Overall Measurement Model

		Stand'd Factor Loading	Robust t-value (p=.000)	SMC (R^2)	CA*	CR**	AVE
Motivation					0.619	0.760	0.618
Push		0.889	13.603	0.790			
Pull		0.667	NA	0.445			
Service Quality					0.956	0.959	0.825
Tangibles		0.830	22.404	0.689			
Reliability		0.926	30.429	0.857			
Responsiveness		0.948	33.576	0.899			
Assurance		0.905	28.798	0.819			
Empathy		0.929	NA	0.864			
Item	***Service Value***				0.952	0.956	0.878
SV1	- Compared with the price I paid, this spa provided good service value	0.905	30.722	0.820			
SV2	- Compared with the time I spent and the price I paid, visiting this spa was worthwhile	0.955	38.057	0.912			
SV3	- I received good value for the money I spent	0.950	NA	0.902			
	Satisfaction				0.966	0.969	0.911
SA1	- I was satisfied with my decision to visit this spa	0.944	40.010	0.890			
SA2	- This spa visit met my expectation	0.953	42.950	0.909			
SA3	- Overall I was satisfied with my visit to this spa	0.967	NA	0.935			
	Behavioral Intention: Word of Mouth				0.967	0.970	0.916
WM1	- I would say positive things about this spa to other people	0.962	37.259	0.926			
WM2	- I would recommend this spa to someone who seeks my advice	0.976	39.919	0.953			
WM3	- I would encourage friends and relatives to try out this spa	0.933	NA	0.870			
	Behavioral Intention: Repurchase				0.846	0.857	0.672
RP1	- I consider this spa my first choice when I visit a resort/hotel spa again	0.916	12.922	0.838			
RP2	- I would like to increase the frequency of visit to this spa	0.884	12.942	0.782			
RP3	- I am more than willing to increase spending for my next visits to this spa	0.629	NA	0.395			

*CA: Cronbach's Alpha; **CR: Composite Reliability

The discriminant validity of the overall measurement model was also evaluated by comparing the AVE values of each variable with its associated squared correlation value. Table 4.14 reports the

findings – all AVE values were greater than their associated squared correlation values, thus validating the distinctiveness of the variables included in the model.

Table 4.14: Correlation among the Variables of the Overall Measurement Model

	Motivation	Service Quality	Service Value	Satisfaction	Word of Mouth	Repurchase
Motivation	1					
Service Quality	0.471[a] (0.222)[b]	1				
Service Value	0.425 (0.180)	0.732 (0.535)	1			
Satisfaction	0.417 (0.174)	0.769 (0.591)	0.858 (0.736)	1		
Word of Mouth	0.395 (0.156)	0.768 (0.589)	0.819 (0.670)	0.866 (0.749)	1	
Repurchase	0.406 (0.165)	0.547 (0.299)	0.654 (0.428)	0.670 (0.449)	0.750 (0.563)	1
AVE	0.642	0.817	0.873	0.907	0.913	0.663
Mean	4.552	5.785	5.669	5.823	5.722	4784
SD	1.063	0.953	1.110	1.109	1.198	1.340

a: correlation estimates; b: squared correlation estimates

Assessment of the Structural Model

To validate the structural part of a model is to check upon the linkages between the different endogenous and exogenous latent variables, and the objective is to see if the data support the theoretical relationships stated at the conceptualization stage (Diamantopoulos & Siguaw, 2000). Hair et al. (2010) suggested that structural model assessment should only be proceeded if the reliability and validity of the measurement model are confirmed. In this study, both the reliability and the validity of the measurement model were confirmed in the previous sections, thereby the structural modal assessment could be carried out.

In confirming the structural model of this study, i.e., the structural relationships among the constructs, first the standardized factor loading estimates and error variances in the structural models were evaluated to ascertain that no substantial deviation would be found between these estimates with those of the CFA model. The loading and error variance values of the structural model in Table 4.15 were compared with those of the measurement model in Table 4.13. All variations were found below 0.016, thus validating the parameter stability among the measured items in the model.

Table 4.15: AMOS Results for the Structural Model

		Stand'd Factor Loading	Robust t-value (p=.000)	SMC (R^2)	CA*	CR**	AVE
Motivation					0.637	0.768	0.629
Push		0.905	13.764	0.820			
Pull		0.663	NA	0.439			
Service Quality					0.956	0.959	0.825
Tangibles		0.827	22.347	0.684			
Reliability		0.924	30.485	0.853			
Responsiveness		0.948	33.877	0.899			
Assurance		0.905	29.084	0.820			
Empathy		0.932	NA	0.870			
Item	***Service Value***				0.952	0.953	0.872
SV1	- Compared with the price I paid, this spa provided good service value	0.901	30.701	0.812			
SV2	- Compared with the time I spent and the price I paid, visiting this spa was worthwhile	0.953	38.088	0.908			
SV3	- I received good value for the money I spent	0.947	NA	0.897			
	Satisfaction				0.966	0.967	0.906
SA1	- I was satisfied with my decision to visit this spa	0.942	39.938	0.887			
SA2	- This spa visit met my expectation	0.950	42.460	0.903			
SA3	- Overall I was satisfied with my visit to this spa	0.964	NA	0.930			
	Behavioral Intention: Word of Mouth				0.967	0.969	0.913
WM1	- I would say positive things about this spa to other people	0.960	37.276	0.921			
WM2	- I would recommend this spa to someone who seeks my advice	0.975	40.109	0.951			
WM3	- I would encourage friends and relatives to try out this spa	0.931	NA	0.867			
	Behavioral Intention: Repurchase				0.846	0.851	0.662
RP1	- I consider this spa my first choice when I visit a resort/hotel spa again	0.916	12.871	0.839			
RP2	- I would like to increase the frequency of visit to this spa	0.875	12.856	0.766			
RP3	- I am more than willing to increase spending for my next visits to this spa	0.618	NA	0.381			

To further ascertain the structural model's stability, the various fit indices of the measurement and structural model were compared and the results were summarized in Table 4.16. There were very slight differences among the fit indices of the measurement and structural model: The variations of the values of RMSEA, TLI, NFI and CFI were either equal to or less than 0.004, the differences of the GFI and AGFI were about 0.01, and the change in the χ^2/df value was 0.106. The very minor variations in terms of value of these fit indices provided sufficient support to the stability of the structural model.

Table 4.16: Comparison of the Fit Indices of the Measurement and Structural Models

	Measurement Model	Structural Model	Fit Guidelines
χ^2 with degrees of freedom	476.604 (P=0.000) with 138 df	512.606 (P=0.000) with 144 df	
GFI	0.875	0.862	≥0.9
RMSEA	0.084	0.086	Between 0.03 & 0.08
TLI	0.950	0.948	Models with good fit have values that approach 1
NFI	0.944	0.940	≥0.9
CFI	0.960	0.956	≥0.9
χ^2/df	3.454	3.560	2 to 5
AGFI	0.828	0.818	≥0.9

Testing of the Hypotheses

The individual parameter estimates were appraised after confirming the full structural model. The hypothesized relationships of all the constructs included in the model as reviewed by their respective standardized path coefficients and *t*-values are summarized in Table 4.17.

Table 4.17: Structural Path Estimates

Hypothesis		Path Coefficient	t-value	Result
H1:	Spa guests' motivations of visiting resort/hotel spas positively influence their perceived service quality of resort/hotel spas.			
Path	Motivation → Service Quality	0.62	10.449**	Support
H2:	Spa guests' perceived service quality of resort/hotel spa visits positively influences their perceived service value of such visits.			
Path	Service Quality → Service Value	0.78	18.451**	Support
H3:	Spa guests' perceived service quality of resort/hotel spa visits positively influences their level of satisfaction of such visits.			
Path	Service Quality → Satisfaction	0.31	6.840**	Support
H4:	Spa guests' perceived service value of resort/hotel spa visits positively influences their perceived satisfaction of such visits.			
Path	Service Value → Satisfaction	0.65	14.226**	Support
H5:	Spa guests' perceived service value of resort/hotel spa visits positively influences their word of mouth communication.			
Path	Service Value → Word of Mouth	0.25	3.807**	Support
H6:	Spa guests' perceived service value of resort/hotel spa visits positively influences their repurchase intention.			
Path	Service Value→ Repurchase Intention	0.08	0.886	Not Support
H7:	Spa guests' level of satisfaction positively influences their word of mouth communication.			
Path	Satisfaction→ Word of Mouth	0.68	10.137**	Support
H8:	Spa guests' level of satisfaction positively influences their repurchase intention.			
Path	Satisfaction→ Repurchase Intention	-0.03	-0.311	Not Support
H9:	Word of mouth of spa guests positively influences their repurchase intentions.			
Path	Word of Mouth → Repurchase Intention	0.81	7.503**	Support

**Significance at the 0.01 level

Hypotheses H1 to H5

As shown in Table 4.17, the first five proposed hypotheses in this study, i.e., H1 to H5, were all confirmed statistically by their respective significant path estimates. These five hypotheses revealed that motivation positively influenced the perceptions spa guests had on the service quality of the resort/hotel spa visited (H1); service quality of such visits in turn positively influenced the service value and satisfaction perceived (H2 and H3); and service value positively influenced the satisfaction perceived and word of mouth (H4 and H5).

Hypotheses H6 and H8

For H6 and H8, respectively they posited that "spa guests' perceived service value of resort/hotel spa visits positively influences their repurchase intention" and "spa guests' level of satisfaction positively influences their repurchase intention." Since their associated path estimates were found statistically insignificant, these two hypotheses were not supported. It is indeed interesting to see that in the context of resort/hotel spa sector, satisfaction and perceived service value did not prompt a repurchase intention.

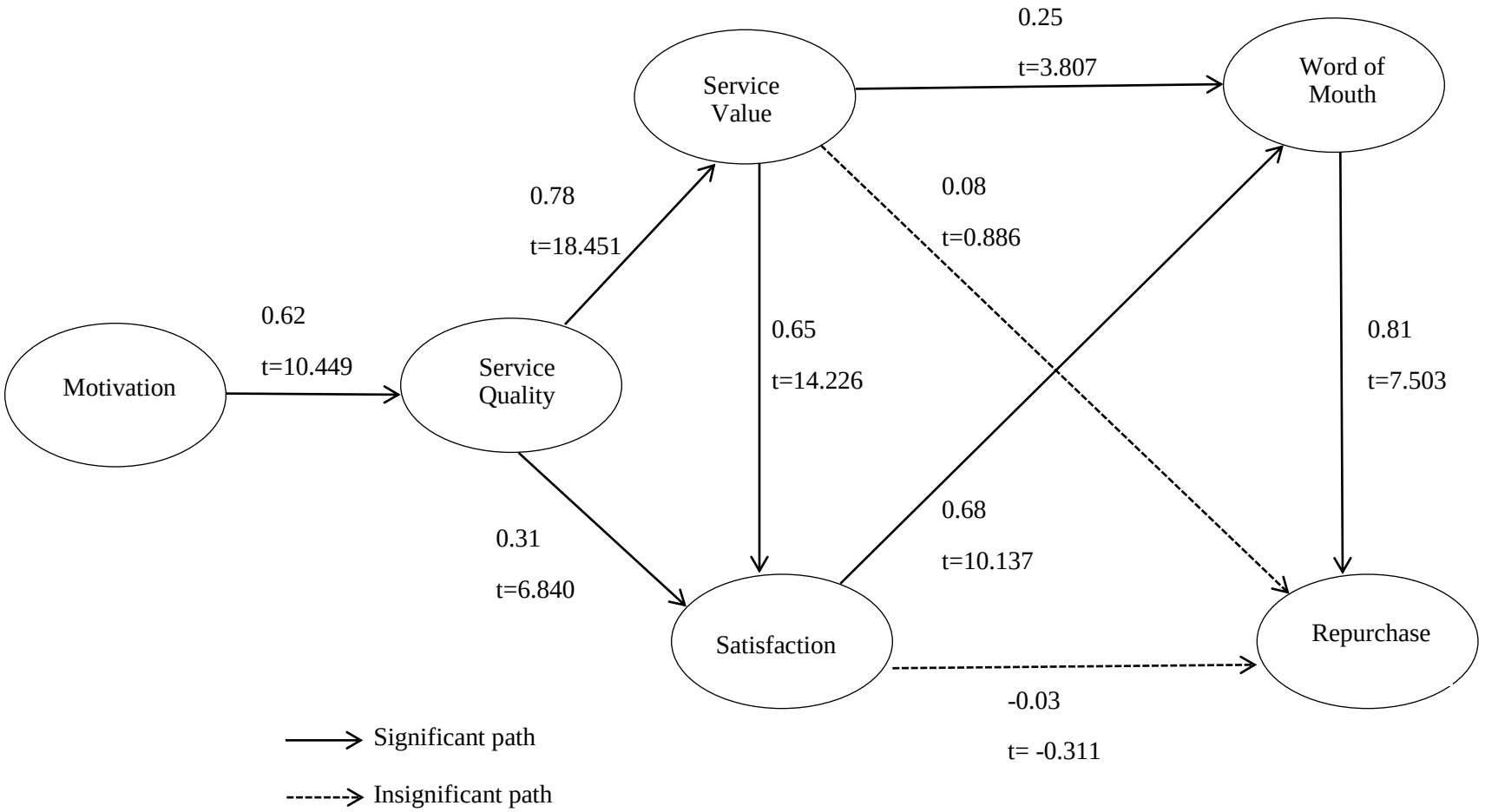
Hypotheses H7 and H9

While satisfaction was unable to generate a repurchase intention, it nonetheless influenced positively on word of mouth intention (H7). Also, it is amusing to notice that although both satisfaction and service value failed in influencing a repurchase intention, word of mouth, on the other hand, had a direct and positive influence on such intention, as suggested by the statistical

confirmation of H9, which stated “word of mouth of spa guests positively influences their repurchase intentions.”

The results of the above hypotheses tests are summarized in Figure 4.1. In the next chapter, these results are analyzed and their possible causes are proposed and discussed.

Figure 4.1: The Structural Model



Moderating Effect of Age and Gender

To see if a certain proposed variable has any moderating effect upon a model, first a measurement invariance test of the model itself should be performed. Measurement invariance concerns the stability in psychometric properties of a measure across groups, it is the degree to which the items of a measurement instrument should have the same meaning and measure the same constructs in similar ways across different groups of respondents. Examples of different respondent groups include gender, age, ethnicity, academic achievement, and work (Cheung & Rensvold, 2002; Meade, Johnson, & Braddy, 2008; Saban, Bryant, Reda, Stroupe, & Hynes, 2010).

A common method used to examine measurement invariance across two respondent groups is by checking the chi-square difference between an unconstrained measurement (no restriction is placed on model parameters such as factor loadings, which are free to assume different values for each group model) and a constrained model (one or more parameters have the same value across group) (Cheung & Rensvold, 2000; Lee & Back, 2009). A non-significant value of chi-square indicates "the null hypothesis that the hypothesized covariance matrix is identical to the observed covariance matrix" should not be rejected (Cheung & Rensvold, 2002, p.234). However, owing to the dependence of chi-square on sample size, in particular when the sample size is relatively large, the chi-square statistic might produce a sensitive statistical test rather than a practical test of model fit (Cheung & Rensvold, 2002). Because of this, different goodness-of-fit (GFI) indices are recommended as alternatives to chi-square. Among the different GFI indices proposed (e.g. CFI, REMSEA, TLI, and NNFI), CFI is found to be the most reliable because it is less sensitive to sample size than chi-square, is more powerful to detect a lack of invariance, and seems to result in similar power across conditions (Cheung & Rensvold, 2002; Meade et al., 2008). A value of ΔCFI equals to or smaller than 0.01 between an unconstrained and the constrained models

provides support of measurement invariance, indicating that the null hypothesis of invariance should not be rejected (Cheung & Rensvold, 2002; Saban et al., 2010).

After confirming the measurement invariance of the model, structural invariance test is conducted to see if a proposed structural model is equivalent across groups. The procedure for examining structural invariance is analogous to that used for testing measurement invariance (Lee & Back, 2009) but first insignificant paths should be deleted from the model. The chi-square difference test between a baseline model (the structural path parameters that represent the relationships between exogenous and endogenous latent variables are freely estimated across groups, whereas the invariant parameters of the measures realized in the measurement invariance test (to be equal across groups) are fixed) and a full path invariance of structural model (the structural path parameters are specified to be equal) is then followed. The structural model is invariant across two groups if significant difference is not discovered between the baseline and constrained models. On the other hand, if the two models are found significantly different from each other, then it can be assumed that the structural model is different across two groups, signifying the effect of a moderator. After the discovery of a moderating effect the significance of the differences in parameter estimates (paths) will be examined by conducting chi-square difference tests (Lee & Back, 2009; Yi & La, 2004; Yoo, 2002)

The above discussed procedures were applied in exploring whether the proposed moderator variables gender and age would have any moderating effect upon the model. The effects of the moderator variables gender and age are reported below.

Moderator Variable: Gender

Measurement invariance was first examined by reviewing the significance level of the chi-square difference between the unconstrained and constrained models to confirm the equivalence of measured constructs across the two gender groups, i.e., "the measures forming [the] measurement model have the same meaning and are used in the same way" (Hair et al., 2010, p.734) by the two gender groups in this study.

As reported in Table 4.18, the unconstrained model provided adequate goodness-of-fit indices (χ^2=725.522, *df*=276, RMSEA = 0.069, CFI = 0.947, NFI=0.918), suggesting the model fits the data reasonably well. Although the chi-square difference between the unconstrained measurement model and the constrained model was significant ($\Delta\chi2(13) = 22.705$, p(0.045)<0.05), the ΔCFI between the two models reported a 0.001 difference, which was smaller than the suggested threshold of equal to or smaller than 0.01, a support for not rejecting the null hypothesis of measurement invariance between models.

Table 4.18: Testing for Measurement Invariance Across Groups (Gender)

	Chi-square	df	RMSEA	CFI	NFI
Unconstrained Model	725.522	276	0.069	0.947	0.918
Constrained Model	748.227	289	0.068	0.946	0.915
Difference	22.705	13	-0.001	-0.001	-0.003

Testing for structural invariance across male and female was followed and first the insignificant paths with p-value greater than 0.05 were deleted. As such, three insignificant paths were deleted from the model and they were the paths between "service value and repurchase," "satisfaction and repurchase," and "service value and word of mouth." The remaining paths were significant with p<0.05. Chi-square difference was then computed between the unconstrained baseline model

and the constrained models to test the structural invariance across groups. As reported in Table 4.19, the baseline model yielded satisfactory goodness-of-fit indices (χ^2=799.423, *df*=294, RMSEA = 0.070, CFI = 0.941, NFI=0.910). Upon examining the chi-square difference between the baseline model and the constrained model, the result revealed a value of $\Delta\chi^2(19)$ =34.175, which exceeded the critical value of 30.14 at the significant level of 0.05. The structural invariance was therefore not supported, meaning that gender had a moderating effect on the hypothesized model. The next step was to check if hypothesis 10 "Gender has a moderating effect on the relationship between spa guests' motivations and the service quality they perceived" was supported.

Table 4.19: Testing for Structural Invariance Across Groups (Gender)

	Chi-square	df	RMSEA	CFI	NFI
Unconstrained Model	799.423	294	0.070	0.941	0.910
Constrained Model	833.598	313	0.069	0.939	0.906
Difference	34.175	19	-0.001	-0.002	-0.004

The results of the tests on whether the structural path variances were statistically significant across the two gender groups were summarized in Table 4.20. Each pair of corresponding paths between the baseline model and the nested model were computed and compared separately. The computations and comparisons revealed that the chi-square difference of the path "service quality→satisfaction" was statistically significant ($\Delta\chi^2$ = 7.451, p<0.006), with the female group showing a higher path coefficient (0.38) than that of the male group (0.17). The results showed that although gender had a moderating effect on the hypothesized model, the significant effect was found on the relationship between service quality and satisfaction, as shown in Table 4.20, instead of on the original proposed relationship between motivation and service quality or on other paths included in the model.

Table 4.20: Chi-square Difference Tests for Paths (Gender)

Path	Fit of the model with the path		Test of variance		Path Coefficient		Path Comparison
	Baseline Model	Nested Model	$\Delta\chi^2$ test	p-value	M	F	
MO→SQ	$\chi^2(294)=799.423$	$\chi^2(295)=799.579$	0.156	0.693	0.57	0.62	M<F
SQ→SV	$\chi^2(294)=799.423$	$\chi^2(295)=800.092$	0.669	0.413	0.70	0.65	M>F
SQ→SAT	$\chi^2(294)=799.423$	$\chi^2(295)=806.874$	7.451	0.006	0.17	0.38	M<F
SV→SAT	$\chi^2(294)=799.423$	$\chi^2(295)=801.394$	0.971	0.160	0.81	0.58	M>F
SAT→WOM	$\chi^2(294)=799.423$	$\chi^2(295)=802.990$	3.567	0.059	0.97	0.87	M>F
WOM→REP	$\chi^2(294)=799.423$	$\chi^2(295)=799.696$	0.273	0.601	0.82	0.86	M<F

MO=Motivation; SQ=Service Quality; SV=Service Value; SAT=Satisfaction; WOM=Word of Mouth; RE=Repurchase; M=Male; F=Female

Moderator Variable: Age

The age groups, as mentioned in the previous chapter, were divided into two groups with those under 47 years of age categorized as the "younger generation (YG)" and those of 47 and above the "older generation (OG)." Procedures for examining whether the moderator variable age had any moderating effect on the relationship of motivation and service quality, as proposed by hypothesis 11, were exactly the same as those employed in checking the moderating effect of gender described in the previous section.

First measurement invariance test across groups was conducted. The results of the test were summarized in Table 4.21. The goodness-of-fit indices generated by the unconstrained model were acceptable (χ^2=680.332, *df*=276, RMSEA = 0.065, CFI = 0.953, NFI=0.924). The chi-square difference between the unconstrained and constrained models, as shown in Table 4.21, was significant ($\Delta\chi^2(13) = 36.313$, p(0.001)<0.05), yet since the ΔCFI between the two models reported a 0.003 difference, the null hypothesis of measurement invariance between models should not be rejected.

Table 4.21: Testing for Measurement Invariance Across Groups (Age)

	Chi-square	df	RMSEA	CFI	NFI
Unconstrained Model	680.332	276	0.065	0.953	0.924
Constrained Model	716.645	289	0.065	0.950	0.919
Difference	36.313	13	0	-0.003	-0.005

Second, three insignificant paths were removed from the model and they were the paths between "satisfaction and repurchase," "service value and word of mouth" and "service value and repurchase." Structural invariance test was then conducted by calculating the chi-square difference between the unconstrained baseline model and the constrained model. As shown in Table 4.22, the baseline model reported adequate goodness-of-fit indices (χ2=740.432, *df*=294, RMSEA = 0.066, CFI = 0.948, NFI=0.917). The chi-square difference between the two models yielded a value of $\Delta\chi^2(19)$ =43.633, which exceeded the critical value of 30.14 at the significant level of 0.05. Therefore, the structural invariance was not supported, reflecting the existence of a moderating effect and implying that the moderator variable age did exert its influence on the proposed model.

Table 4.22: Testing for Structural Invariance Across Groups (Age)

	Chi-square	df	RMSEA	CFI	NFI
Unconstrained Model	740.432	294	0.066	0.948	0.917
Constrained Model	784.065	313	0.066	0.945	0.912
Difference	43.633	19	0	-0.003	-0.005

The confirmation of structural invariance was followed by checking whether age had a moderating effect on the relationship of motivation and service quality. Chi-square difference tests were used to examine if differences in the structural paths were statistically significant across the two age groups. In Table 4.23 the computation results were presented. Same as the results revealed in the moderating analysis of the moderator variable gender, the path "service quality→satisfaction" once again showed a statistically significant chi-square difference ($\Delta\chi^2$ = 4.424, p<0.035), with the younger generation group demonstrated a higher path coefficient (0.39)

than that of the older generation (0.21). The results did not support hypothesis 11, yet age nonetheless exhibited its moderating effect upon the path of service quality and satisfaction.

Table 4.23: Chi-square Difference Tests for Paths (Age)

Path	Fit of the model with the path		Test of variance		Path Coefficient		Path Comparison
	Baseline Model	Nested Model	$\Delta\chi^2$ test	p-value	YG	OG	
MO→SQ	$\chi^2(294)=740.432$	$\chi^2(295)=740.509$	0.077	0.781	0.60	0.63	YG<OG
SQ→SV	$\chi^2(294)=740.432$	$\chi^2(295)=743.370$	2.938	0.087	0.66	0.71	YG<OG
SQ→SAT	$\chi^2(294)=740.432$	$\chi^2(295)=744.856$	4.424	0.035	0.39	0.21	YG>OG
SV→SAT	$\chi^2(294)=740.432$	$\chi^2(295)=741.867$	1.435	0.231	0.60	0.75	YG<OG
SAT→WOM	$\chi^2(294)=740.432$	$\chi^2(295)=741.505$	1.073	0.300	0.88	0.93	YG<OG
WOM→REP	$\chi^2(294)=740.432$	$\chi^2(295)=741.771$	1.339	0.247	0.80	0.88	YG<OG

MO=Motivation; SQ=Service Quality; SV=Service Value; SAT=Satisfaction; WOM=Word of Mouth; RE=Repurchase; YG=Younger Generation; OG=Older Generation

Comparison of Respondents' Demographic & Resort/Hotel Spa Visiting Characteristics

Respondents with different demographic profiles and resort/hotel spa visit characteristics might be motivated to visit resort/hotel spas by different reasons. In addition, these respondents might also perceive service quality, service value and satisfaction differently, and possibly exhibit different behavioral intentions. To determine if any such differences existed, *t*-test and one way analysis of variance (ANOVA) were performed on these profiles and characteristics. The results revealed that differences were not found in terms of the respondents' marital status, household income, visit frequency, visitor's companion, and average spending. However, significant differences were found based on the respondents' gender, age, education level, and occupation. The findings are summarized in Table 4.24.

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Table 4.24: The Results of ANOVA Analyses with Post Hoc Test

Demographic Characteristics	1[a]	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Gender											
Male	4.80	3.66	5.54	5.63	5.59	5.47	5.45	5.47	5.65	5.52	4.68
Female	5.28	3.48	6.02	5.93	5.98	5.78	5.85	5.77	5.92	5.83	4.84
t-value	-3.69**	1.21	-4.46**	-3.10**	-3.38**	-2.55*	-3.55**	-2.37*	-2.125*	-2.33*	-1.063
Age											
18-34 (Group 1)	5.14	3.50	5.98	5.86	5.83	5.68	5.74	5.73	5.95	5.74	4.95
35-46 (Group 2)	5.15	3.36	5.82	5.96	5.92	5.66	5.69	5.51	5.77	5.71	4.66
47-65 (Group 3)	5.17	3.66	5.89	5.87	5.86	5.70	5.73	5.73	5.82	5.74	4.77
Above 65 (Group 4)	4.45	3.52	5.30	5.36	5.44	5.45	5.41	5.61	5.68	5.55	4.90
Post Hoc Test[b]			1>4								
p-value	0.061	0.357	0.04*	0.11	0.26	0.79	0.59	0.45	0.69	0.90	0.59
Education											
Vocational/Technical (Group 1)	4.96	3.59	5.70	5.84	5.82	5.66	5.63	5.68	5.87	5.86	5.49
Associate College Degree (Group2)	5.80	3.51	5.58	6.00	6.08	5.71	6.00	5.92	5.77	5.85	4.87
Some College/University (Group 3)	5.05	3.80	5.92	5.93	5.81	5.71	5.73	5.71	5.69	5.61	4.78
Bachelor (Group 4)	5.15	3.46	5.83	5.81	5.79	5.58	5.62	5.63	5.83	5.71	4.76
Master (Group 5)	5.20	3.78	5.90	5.86	5.87	5.82	5.82	5.73	5.95	5.82	4.90
PhD (Group 6)	4.77	3.16	5.69	5.75	5.722	5.46	5.58	5.51	5.68	5.59	4.35
Other (Group7)	5.02	3.14	6.24	6.17	6.14	5.64	5.40	5.54	5.71	5.50	4.55
Post Hoc Test	2>6										1>6
p-value	0.05*	0.71	0.59	0.85	0.74	0.52	0.58	0.84	0.81	0.85	0.05*
Occupation											
Chief Executive (Group 1)	5.74	3.89	5.40	5.13	4.73	4.87	4.47	4.57	5.02	4.80	4.20
Managerial (Group 2)	5.53	3.57	6.04	6.09	6.06	5.94	5.91	5.98	6.03	5.90	4.98
Clerical/Adm/Secretarial (Group 3)	5.20	3.81	6.00	6.14	6.04	5.80	5.78	6.04	6.12	5.99	4.95
Educator (Group 4)	5.12	3.57	5.97	5.91	5.86	5.63	5.66	5.70	5.83	5.76	4.68
Public Admin/Official (Group 5)	4.94	3.91	5.43	5.52	5.67	5.71	5.62	5.48	5.62	5.48	5.10
Professional (Group 6)	5.05	3.38	5.85	5.91	5.89	5.67	5.81	5.53	5.91	5.79	4.60
Skilled/Technical (Group 7)	4.53	3.44	5.69	5.66	5.57	5.48	5.49	5.58	5.69	5.62	4.98
Self Employed (Group 8)	5.22	3.63	5.97	5.82	5.88	5.77	5.99	5.73	5.62	5.68	4.89
Housewife (Group 9)	5.48	4.19	6.17	6.06	6.11	6.11	6.06	6.00	5.94	5.61	4.94
Retiree (Group 10)	4.84	3.75	5.67	5.87	5.89	5.88	5.84	5.89	5.88	5.91	5.20
Other (Group 11)	5.15	3.30	5.64	5.59	5.73	5.50	5.49	5.52	5.60	5.45	4.86
Post Hoc Test					2,3,4,6>1		2,3,4,6, 8,10>1	2,3>1			
p-value	0.26	0.67	0.32	0.11	0.04*	0.27	0.01**	0.01**	0.19	0.25	0.633

Note: a. 1: Push Factor; 2: Pull Factor; 3: Tangibles; 4: Reliability; 5: Responsiveness; 6: Empathy; 7: Assurance; 8: Service Value; 9: Satisfaction; 10: Word of Mouth; 11: Repurchase Intention

b. Post Hoc Test: Tukey Test with significance level at $p<.05$.

* Significant at $p<.05$; ** Significant at $p<.01$.

Gender and Age

With the exception of the pull factor and repurchase intention, the female group gave significantly higher scores to all the variables reported in Table 4.24 than the male group did.

With regard to age, there was a significant difference in the tangibles dimension of the service quality construct. The Tukey's Post Hoc test revealed that a significant difference existed between the 18-34 and Above 65 age groups, with the former age group appreciated the tangible components of resort/hotel spas more than the latter group did.

Education Level

As shown in Table 4.24, a significant difference in mean scores existed in the push factor. By running a series of Tukey's Post Hoc tests significant mean score differences were found between the Associate degree group and the PhD group. Apparently the Associate degree group was more motivated by the push factor to visit resort/hotel spas than the PhD group. Significant difference between mean scores was also found in the vocational/technical group and the PhD group, with the former group exhibited a stronger repurchase tendency than the latter group.

Occupation

In Table 4.24, significant mean score differences were observed in the two service quality dimensions of responsiveness and assurance as well as in the service value variable. In respect of the responsiveness dimension, Tukey's Post Hoc tests revealed that the managerial group, the

clerical/administrative/secretarial group, the educator group, and the professional group all gave a higher rating to this dimension than the chief executive group did. As for the assurance dimension, it was found that the managerial group, the clerical/administrative/secretarial group, the educator group, the professional group, the self-employed group, and the retiree group they all accorded a higher rating to this dimension than the chief executive group did.

Significant mean score differences were also found in the service value variable as well. Tukey's Post Hoc tests revealed that the managerial and clerical/administrative/secretarial groups gave higher ratings to the service value they perceived in their resort/hotel spa visits than the chief executive group did.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

A model is proposed in this study to link the different stages of a service buying process from beginning to end within the context of the U.S. resort/hotel spa sector, i.e., from what motivate consumers to purchase to what influence their subsequent post-purchase behavioral intentions. In the model nine relationships among the constructs were hypothesized and examined. In addition, two more hypotheses were put forth proposing that age and gender might have moderating effects on the relationship between motivation and service quality. Furthermore, resort/hotel spa guests with different demographic and resort/hotel spa visit characteristics were checked to see if these different groups would have different perceptions of the various constructs included in the model. In the following the results of the different research objectives of this study are analyzed and discussed.

Research Objective 1: To Understand the Relationship of the Motivating Factors and Perceived Service Quality of Resort/hotel Spa Guests

Albeit many literatures have been written on the subject of what motivate people to purchase,

very few have studied how consumer purchase motivations might influence the perceived service quality of the buying experience. Instead, since the 1950s most motivation researchers have put their focus on categorizing shoppers into different shopper types (e.g. Stephenson & Willett, 1969; Stone, 1954; Tauber, 1972) and studying the interrelationship of shopping environment and the emotional states of buyers (e.g. Dawson et al., 1990; Donovan & Rossiter, 1982; Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982). In the context of tourism and spa consumer behavior, different push and pull motivators have been proposed and widely used by researchers for exploring what motivate people to travel (e.g. Crompton, 1979; Dann, 1977; Iso-Ahola, 1990). The study by McCabe et al. (2007) was one of the very handful of studies investigating into the relationship between motivation and service quality. In this study, spa guests' motivation to visit resort/hotel spa was hypothesized to positively influence their perceived service quality of the resort/hotel spas they visited. This hypothesis was statistically supported by the findings, and the result was similar to that of McCabe et al. (2007), i.e., a consumer's buying motivation has a positive influencing effect on his/her buying experience.

Psychologically speaking, a person's motivation will affect his/her perception about an experience, and people tend to construct justifications for beliefs they desire to accept because they are sensitive to and limited by the nature and availability of evidence (Klein & Kunda, 1992). Besides, people are motivated to justify desired conclusions: It is difficult to persuade people to believe what they are motivated to disbelieve and is relatively easy to convince them to believe what they are motivated to believe (Kunda, 1987; Lord, Ross, & Lepper, 1979). This "motivation to justification to conclusion" formula can be used to explain why in this study it was found that a spa guest's motivation to visit a resort/hotel spa influenced positively the perceived service quality of the spa visited. Before visiting a resort/hotel spa, a patron's knowledge about the spa's service quality could be limited. However, the guest's readiness to approve the spa's service quality could be high – when supported by, say, a desire to get relaxed and refreshed (the

"motivation" component of the formula) and upon the surfacing of justifiable evidence such as a sensibly appealing environment and a team of professional staff (the "justification" component of the formula), the guest may approve the service quality of the spa (the "conclusion" component of the formula) without too much reservation.

Research Objective 2: To Examine the Effect of Service Quality on Service Value as well as on Satisfaction of Resort/hotel Spa Visits

The present study revealed that service quality had significant positive influences on the perceived value and the satisfaction level of a service experience, lending support to other similar findings such as those of Cronin et al. (2000) and Hartline & Jones (1996).

The result of the current study suggested empirically that the resort/hotel spa patrons tended to use their perceived service quality to evaluate the service value of the spas they visited. This result is similar to that of Hartline & Jones (1996) in which the service quality of hotel service staff was found influencing the perceived service value significantly.

In respect of service quality, Woodside et al. (1989) reiterated that service quality is to be determined by the comparison between service expectations and service performance, while satisfaction is a special form of consumer attitude, a post-purchase reflection concerning the degree of which the consumer likes or dislikes the service after experiencing it. As such, service quality should be treated as an antecedent of satisfaction, if satisfaction is to be considered as a post-purchase reflection, i.e., a reflection on comparing service expectation and service performance. This study gives support to the claim that service quality should be regarded as the antecedent of satisfaction by confirming statistically that service quality acted as a determinant of satisfaction. In the context of resort/hotel spa sector, this study proved statistically that the

perceived service quality of a resort/hotel spa visit had significant positive influence on the level of satisfaction experienced by the spa guests.

Research Objective 3: To Test how the Perceived Service Value of Resort/hotel Spa Visits Influences Guests' Satisfaction

As mentioned in the previous section, whether a customer is satisfied or not about a service experience is largely dependent on the comparison of service expectation and service performance. Ekinci et al. (2008) suggested that the intensity of the discrepancy between expectation and performance was evaluated according to the value judgments of consumers. Hence, consumer satisfaction can be seen as a "cognitive and pleasurable emotional state resulting from the appraisal of a good or service leading to or achieving one's values" (Ekinci et al., 2008, p. 45). The perceived service value of a resort/hotel spa visit was found in this study to have significant positive influence on spa guest's satisfaction. The result supports the assumption that if desired service values are achieved, post-purchase satisfaction will be resulted.

Research Objectives 4 & 5: To Investigate into how the Perceived Service Value of Resort/hotel Spa Visits Affects Spa Guests' Repurchase and Word of Mouth Activities; To Discover how the Satisfaction Level of Resort/hotel Spa Visits Determines Repurchase and Word of Mouth Intentions

In terms of service value, as quoted in the work of Molinari et al. (2008), previous research such as those by Dubrovski (2001), Schneider and Bowen (1995) and Frenzen and Nakamoto (1993) discovered that value is correlated to positive word of mouth. Cronin and Morris (1989) also reported that value is positively correlated to repurchase as well. It is very likely that customers will stay loyal to a service provider if they have experienced great value from them (Molinari et

al., 2008). In regard to satisfaction, Woodside et al. (1989) opined that satisfaction is an experienced-based, global attitude construct that will exert strong influence on some conative constructs such as behavioral intention and repeat purchase behavior.

Many studies, such as those quoted above, have proved that value and satisfaction have direct and positive influences on customers' behavioral intentions. In the present study, although service value and satisfaction were found to have significant positive influence on word of mouth communication, these two constructs produced no direct influence on repurchase intention.

The finding regarding the non-existence of influence satisfaction had on repurchase is similar to the finding of the work by Rittichainuwat et al. (2003): In the context of tourism, a satisfied travel experience might not guarantee future repurchase intention, i.e., a satisfied tourist might not return to the same destination twice, especially if the tourist is a high novelty-seeking traveler. In the present study it was found that the chances for a "satisfied" resort/hotel spa patron to return to a resort/hotel spa where good "value" was perceived were slim, in particular if the patron is a high novelty-seeker, as when he/she plans to travel again, very likely he/she would visit other destinations to look for new experiences. Having said so, a satisfied resort/hotel spa patron may still appreciate the service value they perceived by spreading positive "word of mouth" about their spa experience, as proved statistically by the current study.

Research Objective 6: To Examine how Word of Mouth Activities Influence Repurchase Intention

Cialdini (1993) commented that word of mouth is an act of public commitment, i.e., if a person has praised a product or service publicly, he/she will feel obliged psychologically to repurchase such product or service. Empirically, Kassim & Abdullah (2010) proved that word of mouth in fact affects repeat visits or repurchase intention. In this study, word of mouth was found to have significant positive influence on resort/hotel spa patrons' repurchase intention, implying that if

spa guests initiate positive word of mouth about a resort/hotel spa, they will feel psychologically impelled to select it again even other options are available. However, this word of mouth→repurchase phenomenon might manifest only when a spa patron is returning to the destination where the resort/hotel spa is located.

Research Objective 7: To Test the Moderating Effects of Age and Gender on the Relationship of Spa Guests' Motivating Factors and Perceived Service Quality

Although the two moderator variables gender and age exerted moderating effects on the model, the effect was not manifested as originally thought on the relationship of motivation and service quality but on the relationship between service quality and satisfaction instead.

Men depend less heavily on tangible evidence when assessing a service environment and process information less comprehensively than women do, hence they are more likely to leave out subtle cues (Darley and Smith, 1995; Laroche, Saad, Cleveland, & Browne, 2000). In terms of social interaction, women tend to connect to others, are more social-relationship oriented, and pay more attention to their interaction with service employees. As a result, they are more intensively influenced by their perceptions on the personal interactions they have with the service staff and the consulting services the staff provide (Danaher, 1998; Sharma, Chen, & Luk, 2012). Male, on the other hand, are task-oriented and focus more on the outcome instead of on the process, regarding the buying process as nothing more than a need-fulfilling activity (Campbell, 1997; Danaher, 1998). With reference to the above discussions, it is very likely that female resort/hotel spa patrons will pay heavier concerns on the interactions they have with the spa staff than their male counterparts do, and since by nature female spa patrons are good observers of service quality and male spa patrons tend to miss out subtle service quality cues, female patrons will feel

more satisfied than their male counterparts when good service quality is evident in a resort/hotel spa visit, as confirmed by this study.

Concerning the moderating effect of age on the relationship between service quality and satisfaction, it can possibly be explained by the different perceptions older and younger consumers have on service quality. Dagger and Sweeney (2007) commented that older customers are more experienced, familiar, and knowledgeable about the products and services they purchased and consumed. These accumulated experience and knowledge might produce a set of complicated expectations and perceptions on service encounters (O'Neill & Palmer, 2003). Less experienced consumers, on the other hand, are hindered by their limited knowledge about the product or service they purchased, and it is more difficult for them to identify the vital quality cues of the purchased product or service. As such, many younger consumers are judging their buying experience by observing hints that are more readily to be identified, such as some tangible and perceptual features like the quality of the physical environment and the service provided (Ganesan-Lim, Russell-Bennett, & Dagger, 2008; Sharma et al., 2012). Within the context of resort/hotel spa sector, the older patrons in this study were found less easy to please mainly due to the extensive experience they had had in service consumption. On the other hand, based on a less complicated set of service quality evaluation criteria, the younger resort/hotel spa guests were more easily to get satisfied as long as they perceived good quality such as an aesthetically pleasing spa environment and hospitable and professional services.

Research Objective 8: To Explore whether the Different Demographic Characteristics of Spa Guests have Different Types of Motivations for Visiting Resort/hotel Spas, and the Kinds of Influences these Characteristics have on Perceived Service Quality, Perceived Service Value, Satisfaction and Behavioral Intentions (Word of Mouth and Repurchase Intentions)

Female and male spa patrons displayed different levels of intensity in terms of their motivation to visit resort/hotel spas, and they also showed different perceptions on service quality, value, satisfaction and word of mouth, with the female patrons gave higher ratings to all these constructs than the male patrons did. Besides seeing themselves as part of an interdependent group, women are, as discussed earlier, capable information processors as well (Cross & Madson, 1997; Sharma et al., 2012). These characteristics of women help explain why the female resort/hotel spa guests in this study gave higher ratings to the perceived service quality, value and satisfaction of the spas they visited, as they observed and decoded information more intensely and value good customer service more highly than the male spa guests did.

While the two gender groups showed no significant difference in terms of being motivated by the pull factors to visit resort/hotel spas, women were more motivated than men by the push factors (e.g. to get "refreshed" and "rejuvenated") to visit resort/hotel spas. With over 70% of the U.S. spa patrons are women (ISPA, 2010), it was of no surprise to see in this study that female spa patrons were more motivated by the push factors to visit resort/hotel spas.

Regarding the five service quality dimensions, the female group gave significant higher ratings to all these dimensions unanimously. The fact that the female spa patrons praised the tangible and assurance cues more than their male counterparts did might hint to their better capability in discovering and interpreting information, which rendered them with more things to appreciate with. The results might also gave evidence to that the female spa patrons were more concerned

about personal interactions during a spa experience, so they valued good levels of responsiveness, reliability and empathy more highly than their male counterparts.

Furthermore, when compared to males, females are more guided by communal concerns when engaging in daily activities, as they see themselves as connected to others (Sharma et al., 2012). Since in a spa experience many personal interactions are involved, if a female guest experienced good consultation and treatment, they might more prone to see good value and be pleased than a male guest might. Also, the communal concerns female spa guests have might make them feel more obligated to spread around positive word of mouth about their satisfied resort/hotel spa experience than the male spa guests do.

In respect of age, Sharma et al. (2012) argued that due to the limited knowledge younger customers have on a product or service, they will resort to use some more easily detected quality cues such as tangible and perceptual features to form judgments about the quality of a service experience. This study lends support to this argument of Sharma et al. (2012): The youngest age group in this study – the 18-34 age cohort (Generation Y) gave a significantly higher rating to the service quality dimension "tangibles" than the oldest group did (the above 65 age group), implying that they were more concerned about the tangible cues featured in the resort/hotel spas they visited than their older corresponding cohort.

With respect to education level, it was realized that those with lower education attainment (Associate degree group) were more motivated by the push factors to visit resort/hotel spas than the more highly educated group (PhD group). In addition, seemingly the lower educated (Vocational or Technical Certificate/Diploma group) were more prone to show repurchase intention than the highly educated (PhD group). Alderson, Junisbai & Heacock (2007) commented that more highly educated people tend to take part in activities that require interpretation of a relatively large amount of information content. Also, the highly educated are

less prone to engage in activities casually. This set of traits of the more highly educated may make them more cautious about making a purchase (they will collect more information about the product or service they intend to purchase) or repurchase (they will think twice before repurchasing the same product or service). This may explain why the higher educated respondents in this study were less inclined to visit or revisit resort/hotel spas.

Concerning occupations, Williams (2002) stated that different jobs offer different levels of status, and it is not so much about the status but rather the job itself that affects the attitudes and behaviors of the job holder. A person who holds a higher status occupation enjoys greater levels of occupational self-direction as well as ownership and control over matters and people. This set of privileges will affect the characters of the job holder in terms of his/her values, attitudes and motives. In turn, the job holder's characters will affect all aspects of his/her life, including his/her buying behavior (Kohn, Naoi, Schoenbach, Schooler, & Slomczynski, 1990; Williams, 2002). Since those who occupy a high office are used to give orders and expect quick responses, it is of no surprise to see that the chief executive group in this study was more reserved in giving a high rating to the dimension "responsiveness," as they might hold a more stringent standard for good "responsiveness" than others. Besides, by nature these chief executives are cautious about almost everything, in particular if they are from organizations that value prudent as well as rational leadership and decision-making styles (Cameron, Quinn, Degraff, & Thakor 2007; Tomas et al., 2009; Zammuto & O'Connor, 1992). This cautious characteristic of the chief executives could explain why the chief executive group in this study was more reserved than other occupation groups in rating the "assurance" dimension.

Theoretical Contributions

Despite a large body of research has been devoted to understanding what motivate people to purchase, and much has been done in theorizing the relationship of perceived quality and value and how these two variables may influence individually and/or collectively the satisfaction level and behavioral intentions, not many studies have linked the buying process from start to finish. In the context of the U.S. resort/hotel spa sector, this study attempted to investigate the whole buying process from what motivate people to purchase to what influence their behavioral intentions.

In terms of what motivate people to engage in a purchase activity, in the arena of tourism research the decade of 1970s could be regarded as a watershed for studying what motivate travelers to travel – the practice on using mainly pull factors to explain what motivate people to travel was changed gradually to using push factors instead (e.g. Dann, 1977; Crompton, 1979). The focus on using push factors to explain what motivate people to purchase or travel is exemplified by the work of Mak et al. (2009), in which only a set of push factors was used to explore what motivated Hong Kong spa patrons to visit spas, ignoring the pull factors completely. The present study supported the claim that push factors are more powerful than pull factors in motivating a consumer to purchase – with the exception of one indicator included in the push factor set, as shown in Table 5.1, the respondents gave higher ratings to all push factors than to the pull factors.

Table 5.1: Descriptive Statistics of each Dimension Included in the Model

Variable	**Mean (Scale:1-7)**	**SD**
Motivation: Push Factors	**5.11**	**1.186**
Relaxation & Relief	**5.87**	**1.282**
- I visited this spa for relaxation and stress reduction	5.99	1.325
- I visited this spa to refresh myself	5.75	1.370
Self-reward & Indulgence	**4.38**	**1.244**
- I sought a pampering experience by visiting this spa	5.39	1.625
- I visited this spa to reward myself for working hard	5.07	1.648

Variable	Mean (Scale:1-7)	SD
- I desired to be seen fashionable by visiting this spa	2.37	1.515
- I visited this spa to indulge myself with a luxurious experience	4.68	1.940
Health & Beauty	**4.78**	**1.360**
- I visited this spa to enhance my physical wellbeing	5.14	1.569
- I visited this spa to rejuvenate my appearance	4.12	1.814
- I visited this spa for therapeutic reasons	4.82	1.767
- I visited this spa to soothe sore joints and muscles	5.04	1.778
Motivation: Pull Factors	**3.54**	**1.302**
Convenience	**3.90**	**1.599**
- I visited this spa because the appointment time(s) met my schedule and needs	4.21	1.813
- I visited this spa in order to save time from looking for and traveling to an outside spa	3.60	1.817
Brand	**3.31**	**1.400**
- I visited this spa because it carried my preferred product line(s)	2.79	1.595
- I visited this spa because it offered my preferred treatment(s)	4.16	1.903
- I visited this spa because of its brand name	2.97	1.671
Service Quality Dimension: *Tangibles*	**5.85**	**0.964**
- The physical facilities and the design of this spa were sensibly appealing	5.82	1.072
- The appearance of the physical facilities was in keeping with the design and theme of this spa	5.79	1.064
- The spa employees were professionally dressed and appeared neat	5.95	1.039
Service Quality Dimension: *Reliability*	**5.86**	**1.020**
- The spa employees were knowledgeable about the resort/hotel spa services, treatments and products	5.87	1.054
- The spa employees provided adequate, clear and fair information about the spa	5.79	1.085
- The spa employees were professional and skillful	5.92	1.091
Service Quality Dimension: *Responsiveness*	**5.84**	**1.012**
- The spa employees provided prompt service	5.85	1.098
- The spa employees told me exactly when and what treatment(s) and services(s) would be performed	5.81	1.181
- The spa employees demonstrated their willingness to help me	5.86	1.093
Service Quality Dimension: *Assurance*	**5.70**	**1.069**
- I could trust the spa employees	5.65	1.178
- Measures were taken by this spa to ensure personal physical safety and security of my valuables	5.63	1.256
- I felt safe in my financial transactions with this spa	5.83	1.108
Service Quality Dimension: *Empathy*	**5.67**	**1.095**
- The spa employees recognized my needs	5.51	1.163
- The employees were committed to fulfilling my comfort needs	5.73	1.184
- The spa employees gave me personal attention	5.77	1.025

Variable	Mean (Scale:1-7)	SD
Service Value	**5.66**	**1.110**
- Compared with the price I paid, this spa provided good service value	5.63	1.121
- Compared with the time I spent and the price I paid, visiting this spa was worthwhile	5.77	1.132
- I received good value for the money I spent	5.60	1.231
Satisfaction	**5.82**	**1.108**
- I was satisfied with my decision to visit this spa	5.84	1.131
- This spa visit met my expectation	5.78	1.155
- Overall I was satisfied with my visit to this spa	5.85	1.151
Behavioral Intention: Word of Mouth	**5.72**	**1.198**
- I would say positive things about this spa to other people	5.82	1.187
- I would recommend this spa to someone who seeks my advice	5.75	1.220
- I would encourage friends and relatives to try out this spa	5.60	1.300
Behavioral Intention: Repurchase	**4.78**	**1.340**
- I consider this spa my first choice when I visit a resort/hotel spa again	5.15	1.440
- I would like to increase the frequency of visit to this spa	5.02	1.548
- I am more than willing to increase spending for my next visits to this spa	4.18	1.606

In respect to the relationship between motivation and perceived service quality, as mentioned earlier, only a very handful of studies have shown the interest in investigating the relationship between these two variables. In this study, the proposed model confirmed that motivation has a positive influence on the perceived quality of a purchase. Concerning the relationship between perceived quality and satisfaction, the question as to whether quality is the antecedent of satisfaction or satisfaction leads to the confirmation of quality is an interesting academic debate. Apparently the result of this study gave support to the claim that quality is the antecedent of satisfaction in a statistical sense. However, the relatively low path coefficient value of 0.31 between service quality and satisfaction revealed the influence the construct service quality had on the construct satisfaction was moderate. To a certain extent this study supports that the debate over quality and satisfaction in terms of which variable is an antecedent of the other is still academically worthy.

With respect to the relationships among service quality, service value, satisfaction, and behavioral intentions, the results in this study agreed with other previous studies that service quality influences positively service value and satisfaction; service quality and value influence positively satisfaction; and satisfaction and service value influence positively word of mouth. However, this study also revealed statistically that in the context of the U.S. resort/hotel spa sector although satisfaction and perceived service value influenced positively word of mouth intention, they did not prompt a repurchase intention. As explained earlier, this is quite understandable that as much as a "satisfied" resort/hotel spa guest who "perceived good value" of a resort/hotel spa visit has no reservation in spreading positive word of mouth about his/her experience, the reality that he/she seldom visits the same travel destination twice in a certain period of interval, say, within the next two or three years, prevents him/her to have the thought of paying another visit to the same resort/hotel spa.

Regarding the moderating effects of gender and age, it was confirmed empirically that gender and age influenced the relationship between service quality and satisfaction, i.e., when compared to the male and older resort/hotel spa patrons, the female and younger resort/hotel spa patrons were more easily to get satisfied if they perceived good service quality.

Practical Implications

Implications from the Findings of the Push and Pull Factors

Statistically it was found that the push factors were more powerful than the pull factors in stimulating people to visit resort/hotel spas, and the female patrons were more motivated by these factors than the male patrons were. Among the three push factor dimensions, the respondents in this study valued the dimension "relaxation and relief" the most and they reported that the two

main reasons that motivated them to visit resort/hotel spas were to get relaxed and refreshed (see Table 5.1). These results provided empirical evidence to the needs to get relaxed and refreshed exhibited by spa patrons as described in chapter two. Furthermore, the spa patrons also looked for a pampering experience and a chance to enhance their physical wellbeing.

To a certain degree this study is illuminating in that it reveals the weak influence the pull factors have on motivating people to visit resort/hotel spas. Seemingly the respondents in this study did not give much attention to the brands of the spas and the product lines they carried, and they were neutral on whether the spas had their preferred treatments and if they could schedule a spa appointment that fitted their schedule. It was even more interesting to find that they gave no preference to on-premises spas, implying that they did not mind at all to spend extra efforts to visit an outside spa. Today if travelers plan to include a spa visit in their traveling itinerary, they can check out the information about the spas that operate within the vicinity of the place they will stay or visit conveniently over the internet. As such an on-premises resort/hotel spa might hold no advantage in attracting their in-house guests. To compete with other spas nearby, resort/hotel spas should build and maintain a professionally designed website with on-line appointment function. In addition, ads and promotional materials of the resort/hotel spa should be displayed conspicuously and strategically to attract in-house guests. Also, the staff of a resort/hotel spa should be trained to answer email, telephone, and in person enquires informatively and patiently, treating each enquiry as a potential source of business.

Implications from the Findings of the Relationship of Motivation and Service Quality

This study suggested that resort/hotel spa guests are not that hard to please, as they seem motivated mainly intrinsically by a set of push factors to visit the spas and they tend to, though may be unconsciously, to find for themselves evidence to justify the correctness of their decisions

to visit the spas. Furthermore, most spa patrons might find it difficult to judge the quality of the treatments they receive because of their limited knowledge in spa treatment techniques. As such, resort/hotel spa patrons are very likely to use some other more easily detectable cues, such as the spa design and the interactions they have with the spa employees, to assess the quality of their spa visits. Hence as long as the spa is professionally designed and the staff members are serving their guests reasonably well, the resort/hotel spa operators should not find it too difficult to aid their guests, in particular the female and younger patrons, to endorse the quality of their spa experience.

Implications from the Findings of the Interrelationships among Service Quality, Service Value and Satisfaction

The model in this study demonstrated statistically that service quality has direct and positive influences on service value and satisfaction, pointing out the fact that service quality indeed holds the strategic key to a resort/hotel spa's success. In the following, through analyzing the descriptive statistics of the five service quality dimensions summarized in Table 5.1 and the results of the *t*-test and ANOVA tests performed earlier, service quality improvement strategies are recommended for resort/hotel spa operators to consider.

Among the five service quality dimensions, "tangibles" (mean 5.85), "reliability" (mean 5.86) and "responsiveness" (mean 5.84) received the highest ratings, with female spa respondents valued these three dimensions more than the male respondents did. In addition, among the 15 indicators created for the five service quality dimensions, "professionally and neatly dressed employees" received the highest score (mean 5.95). The first impression projected by the resort/hotel spa staff in terms of how they dress, as confirmed in this study, is very important in earning the spa guests' confidence with respect to the service quality the spa provides. This might due to the presumption that a thoughtlessly dressed spa therapist would probably deliver service

thoughtlessly. The "professionally dressed" indicator was closely followed by two other indicators: "professional and skillful employees" (mean 5.92) and "knowledgeable staff" (mean 5.87). Considering the intimate nature of spa services, it is of no surprise to see the respondents gave high ratings to the levels of professionalism, skillfulness and knowledge projected by the spa employees when evaluating the service quality of resort/hotel spas.

Furthermore, Generation Y (the 18-34 age group), the youngest group in this study, valued the dimension "tangibles" more than the oldest group did (the above 65 age group). Also, it is indeed very challenging to please those who are on the top – in this study it was statistically confirmed that the chief executive group gave a lower rating to the dimension "responsiveness" than the managerial, clerical/administrative/secretarial, educator and professional groups did. Besides, when compared to the managerial, clerical/administrative/secretarial, educator, professional, self-employed and retiree groups, the chief executive group extended a lower rating to the dimension "assurance" as well. Referring to the above findings, the resort/hotel spa operators may want to consider the following suggestions when formulating their differentiate strategies:

1. more emphasis should be put on improving the service quality dimensions "tangibles," "reliability" and "responsiveness." Female spa patrons value these dimensions in particular;
2. to provide professionally designed uniform to the staff and require them to wear their uniform neatly and tidily at all times;
3. to hire only professionally trained frontline staff and experienced managers/directors (seems like a common sense suggestion, but the market is fighting for qualified therapists and experienced managers. ISPA (2010) reported that 39% of the spas were in shortage of qualified candidates);
4. management should provide on-going training to the staff to upgrade their knowledge in spa therapies and service skills;

5. Generation Y (the 18-34 age group in this study) gave high score to the dimension "tangibles." They are the next generation of spa guests, resort/hotel spas should investigate into what type of "servicescape" will draw their attention; and
6. chief executives are not easy to please, yet they have the money to spend. Spa employees must give extra attention and efforts to meet the needs of this guest group.

Implications from the Findings of the Gender and Age Moderating Effects

In addition to the service quality improvement recommendations given in the previous section, in the following additional suggestions are proposed based on the moderating effects gender and age have on the relationship between service quality and satisfaction. Older spa patrons, as described before, are more demanding while male spa patrons, when compared to their female counterparts, are more result-oriented and they tend to get bored and irritated easily if they are made to wait or spend a lot of time (Otnes & McGrath, 2001). To take care of these issues, the following suggestions are made for improving resort/hotel spa service quality:

1. since women may want to know the treatments they receive in details, longer time should be spent with them in health consultation as well as treatment procedure and expected effect explanations;
2. for male spa patrons, a more efficient health consultation and a quick treatment explanation that concentrates on its effect are all the male patrons need;
3. a good balance in the time used for health consultation and treatment procedure and effect explanation must be strike when a couple is visiting the spa; and
4. older spa patrons are more demanding. However, their seasoned demeanor may restrain them from voicing out their displeasure directly and explicitly. Resort/hotel spa staff, when serving more mature patrons, should communicate with them proactively to ensure

their needs are well taken care of.

Implications from the Findings of the Interrelationships among Service Value, Satisfaction, Word of Mouth and Repurchase Intentions

Previous studies suggest that satisfaction and service value can initiate positive word of mouth communication and repurchase intentions (e.g. Bearden & Teel, 1983; Tam, 2004). In the context of the U.S. resort/hotel spa sector, although satisfaction and service value positively affect word of mouth communication, they face difficulties in stimulating a repurchase intention for the reason mentioned previously, i.e., seldom will a traveler visit the same destination twice in a relatively short time span, thus when the respondents were asked whether they would return to the good resort/hotel spas they previously visited, they impulsively expressed their reservation.

However, resort/hotel spa operators might want to give an additional perspective to the meaning of repurchase – a repurchase can actually occur during a resort/hotel guest's stay, in particular for resort spas, for most resort guests stay for days or even weeks and therefore the possibilities for a second or even third visit abound. Hence resort/hotel spa operators should treat every first-time patron as a potential repeat customer and formulate strategies that will help foster return visits. The service quality improvement recommendations and suggestions mentioned earlier in this section are some practical means that the resort/hotel spa operators can use to stimulate return visits from in-house guests.

Limitations and Future Research

There were a few limitations in this study. First it was the issue of generalization. Convenience sampling method, a non-probability sampling technique, was the means adopted in the online

survey of this study for data collection. Although this technique is cost and time effective, it presents to this study the difficulty "to generalize to the target population" (Hair, 2011, p.175). Second, email addresses contained in any national or community databanks are limited to those individuals who agreed to be part of online directories (Sheehan, 2002). Thus, the findings of this study can only apply to the respondents included in it. Third, it was the self-report mechanism employed, as respondents might have over-reported on some parts of the questions asked and under-reported others (Thompson, 1999). Fourth, the response rate of this study was very low and there was a non-response limitation. For those who had preferred not to participate might have different attitudes or perceptions comparing to those who had.

For future studies, working with national or international spa associations such as the International Spa Association or International Health, Racquet & Sportsclub Association is a good means for improving the strength in generalizing the target population and increasing the response rate. These associations usually have a large and diverse membership that can help boost the strength in generalizing the target population on the one hand and garner support from enthusiastic members whom will ask their clients to complete as many questionnaires as possible on the other.

Furthermore, this study investigated only the direct effects among the constructs, possible mediating effects that might exist among these constructs were not explored. For examples, the possible mediating effects that service value and satisfaction might have on the relationships between service quality and behavioral intentions as well as the mediating effect word of mouth might have on the relationship of service value and repurchase were not examined. Future studies may want to check upon these mediating effects either in the context of the resort/hotel spa sector alone or on the nation's spa industry as a whole.

In addition, the instruments and model developed by this study can be used for investigating the European and Asian resort/hotel spa sectors. To the Asian consumers, the concept of visiting a spa is still relatively new, but to the Europeans this leisure activity has a two-millennia-old history. It would be interesting to explore the similarities and differences these two groups of spa patrons might have towards their resort/hotel spa experiences, and to compare the findings with those revealed by the present study. Also, this study examined only what motivated the U.S. spa patrons to visit the resort/hotel spas operating within America and how they evaluated these experiences. A follow-up study can be conducted to check upon how the U.S. spa visitors evaluate their non-American resort/hotel spa experiences. Comparisons then can be made between the two studies. Lastly, the non-existence of relationships between satisfaction and repurchase as well as service value and repurchase are two interesting findings. It is suggested to follow these findings up by investigating again into these relationships by specifically checking if satisfaction and value will influence the resort/hotel guests' repurchase intention within their staying period.

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APPPENDIX I Institutional Review Board Review Form

Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board

Date:	Monday, November 28, 2011
IRB Application No	HE1152
Proposal Title:	A Study of the Interrelationship of Spa Guests' Motivation, Perceived Service Quality, Value, Satisfaction and Behavioral Intentions
Reviewed and Processed as:	Exempt

Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved Protocol Expires: 11/27/2012

Principal Investigator(s):

Chun Man Cheung
88 S. University Place, Apt. 1
Stillwater, OK 74078

Hailin Qu
148 HES
Stillwater, OK 74078

The IRB application referenced above has been approved. It is the judgment of the reviewers that the rights and welfare of individuals who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected, and that the research will be conducted in a manner consistent with the IRB requirements as outlined in section 45 CFR 46.

☒ The final versions of any printed recruitment, consent and assent documents bearing the IRB approval stamp are attached to this letter. These are the versions that must be used during the study.

As Principal Investigator, it is your responsibility to do the following:

1. Conduct this study exactly as it has been approved. Any modifications to the research protocol must be submitted with the appropriate signatures for IRB approval.
2. Submit a request for continuation if the study extends beyond the approval period of one calendar year. This continuation must receive IRB review and approval before the research can continue.
3. Report any adverse events to the IRB Chair promptly. Adverse events are those which are unanticipated and impact the subjects during the course of this research; and
4. Notify the IRB office in writing when your research project is complete.

Please note that approved protocols are subject to monitoring by the IRB and that the IRB office has the authority to inspect research records associated with this protocol at any time. If you have questions about the IRB procedures or need any assistance from the Board, please contact Beth McTernan in 219 Cordell North (phone: 405-744-5700, beth.mcternan@okstate.edu).

Sincerely,

Shelia Kennison

Shelia Kennison, Chair
Institutional Review Board

APPPENDIX II Institutional Review Board Modification Request Form

Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board

Date:	Tuesday, December 06, 2011	Protocol Expires:	11/27/2012
IRB Application No:	HE1152		
Proposal Title:	A Study of the Interrelationship of Spa Guests' Motivation, Perceived Service Quality, Value, Satisfaction and Behavioral Intentions		
Reviewed and Processed as:	Exempt **Modification**		

Status Recommended by Reviewer(s) **Approved**

Principal Investigator(s):

Chun Man Cheung
88 S. University Place, Apt. 1
Stillwater, OK 74078

Hailin Qu
148 HES
Stillwater, OK 74078

The requested modification to this IRB protocol has been approved. Please note that the original expiration date of the protocol has not changed. The IRB office MUST be notified in writing when a project is complete. All approved projects are subject to monitoring by the IRB.

☒ The final versions of any printed recruitment, consent and assent documents bearing the IRB approval stamp are attached to this letter. These are the versions that must be used during the study.

The reviewer(s) had these comments:

The modification request to expand the sampling population to include OSU faculty, staff and students is approved.

Signature :

Shelia Kennison, Chair, Institutional Review Board

Tuesday, December 06, 2011
Date

APPPENDIX III Questionnaire

Greetings,

This is Bryan Cheung, a doctoral candidate at Oklahoma State University majoring in Hospitality Administration. I am seeking your participation in an online survey regarding your **resort and/or hotel spa experience in the U.S.** The results generated from this study will help the U.S. resort/hotel spa operators know what motivate spa guests to visit their operations and how to provide better services to their guests.

This online survey will take no more than fifteen minutes to complete, and all responses will be kept *strictly confidential and anonymous. The* record and information collected will be stored securely and privately and only the principal investigator will have access to the research data. No personally identifiable information will be collected and any written results will discuss group findings only.

As a token of appreciation for your participation, at the conclusion of this survey a lottery will be conducted to choose **THREE** lucky winners each of whom will get a **spa basket gift** (please see sample below). The winners will be contacted by email for delivery arrangement.

Your participation in this study is strictly voluntary. There are no known risks associated with this study which are greater than those from daily life. Non-participation will not result in penalty. Your email address was obtained from a purchased publically available database**. If you wish to be removed from the list, please send a reply to this mail with your email address, and "REMOVE" as subject line or fax Attn: "UNSUBSCRIBE-Center" to 405 -744- 6299.**

You should be at least 18 years to participate in this survey and by clicking the survey website link below, you are indicating your consent to participate.

Please kindly complete the survey by December 15, 2011 by clicking the survey website link below:

Take the Survey

Or copy and paste the URL below into your internet browser:
https://okstateches.qualtrics.com/WRQualtricsSurveyEngine/?SID=SV_eLkPrzAhd1q0SZ6&_=1

Follow the link to opt out of future emails:
Click here to unsubscribe

If you have any further questions regarding this survey, you may contact me at (405) 612 9420 or Dr. **Shelia Kennison,** IRB Chair at 219 Cordell North, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK 74078, USA; irb@okstate.edu.

Thank you very much for your assistance!
****

Bryan Cheung, PhD Candidate
Oklahoma State University, School of Hotel & Restaurant Administration
210 HESW, Stillwater, OK 74078
Email: bryan.cheung@okstate.edu
****

Q1 Have you visited any resort spas or hotel spas in the U.S. in the last two years?

- ❍ Yes
- ❍ No

If Yes Is Selected, Then Skip To This Section of the Questionnaire. If No Is Selected, Then Skip To End of Survey

Q2 This section of the questionnaire pertains to your resort/hotel spa experience in the U.S. In the last two years, approximately how many times have you visited resort and/or hotel spas?

_____

Q3 You usually visit resort or hotel spas:

- ❍ by yourself
- ❍ with family members
- ❍ with relatives
- ❍ with friends

Q4 Please indicate below your average spending per person in a resort or hotel spa visit:

- ❍ $150 or below
- ❍ $151 – $250
- ❍ $251 – $350
- ❍ $351 – $450
- ❍ $451 – $550
- ❍ More than $550

Q5 Based on your most recent resort or hotel spa visit in the U.S., please indicate your level of agreement for the following statements that describe what motivated you visiting that spa.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I visited this spa for relaxation and stress reduction.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I visited this spa to refresh myself.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I sought a pampering experience by visiting this spa.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I visited this spa to reward myself for working hard.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I desired to be seen as fashionable by visiting this spa.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I visited this spa to indulge myself with a luxurious experience.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I visited this spa to enhance my physical wellbeing.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I visited this spa to rejuvenate my appearance.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

I visited this spa for therapeutic reasons.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I visited this spa to soothe sore joints and muscles.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I visited this spa because the appointment time(s) met my schedule and needs.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I visited this spa in order to save time from looking for and traveling to an outside spa.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I visited this spa because it carried my preferred product line(s).	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I visited this spa because it offered my preferred treatment(s).	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I visited this spa because of its brand name.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q6 Based on your most recent resort or hotel spa visit in the U.S., please indicate your level of agreement for the following statements that describe the perceived service quality of that spa experience.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The physical facilities and the design of this spa were sensibly appealing.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
The appearance of the physical facilities was in keeping with the design and theme of this spa.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
The spa employees were professionally dressed and appeared neat.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
The spa employees were knowledgeable about the resort/hotel spa services, treatments and products.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
The spa employees provided adequate, clear and fair information about the spa.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
The spa employees were	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

professional and skillful.							
The spa employees provided prompt service.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
The spa employees told me exactly when and what treatment(s) and service(s) would be performed.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
The spa employees demonstrated their willingness to help me.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I could trust the spa employees.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Measures were taken by this spa to ensure personal physical safety and security of my valuables.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I felt safe in my financial transactions with this spa.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
The spa employees recognized my needs.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
The employees were committed to fulfilling my comfort needs.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

The spa employees gave me personal attention.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q7 Based on your most recent resort or hotel spa visit in the U.S., please indicate your level of agreement for the following statements that describe the perceived service value of that spa experience.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Compared with the price I paid, this spa provided good service value.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Compared with the time I spent and the price I paid, visiting this spa was worthwhile.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I received good value for the money I spent.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q8 Based on your most recent resort or hotel spa visit in the U.S., please indicate your level of agreement for the following statements that describe the level of satisfaction of that spa experience.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I was satisfied with my decision to visit this spa.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
This spa visit met my expectation.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Overall I was satisfied with my visit to this spa.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q9 Based on your most recent resort or hotel spa visit in the U.S., please indicate your level of agreement for the following statements that describe your future intentions.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I would say positive things about this spa to other people.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I would recommend this spa to someone who seeks my advice.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I would encourage friends and relatives to try out this spa.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I consider this spa my first choice when I visit a resort/hotel spa again.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I would like to increase the frequency of visit to this spa.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
I am more than willing to increase spending for my next visits to this spa.	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Q10 To conclude this survey, please provide us with some basic information about you. Gender

- ❍ Male
- ❍ Female

Q11 Your age group

- ❍ 18 – 34
- ❍ 35 – 46
- ❍ 47 – 65
- ❍ Above 65

Q12 Marital status:

- ❍ Single
- ❍ Married with children
- ❍ Married without children

Q13 Highest level of education:

- ❍ Less than high school
- ❍ Vocational or technical certificate/diploma
- ❍ Associate college degree
- ❍ Some college/university
- ❍ Bachelor
- ❍ Master
- ❍ PhD
- ❍ Other, please specify: _____

Q14 Occupation:

- ❍ Chief Executive
- ❍ Managerial
- ❍ Clerical/Administrative/Secretarial
- ❍ Educator
- ❍ Public Administrator/Official
- ❍ Military
- ❍ Professional
- ❍ Skilled/technical personnel
- ❍ Self-employed
- ❍ Housewife
- ❍ Retiree
- ❍ Other, please specify _____

Q15 Annual household income:

- ❍ Below $25,000
- ❍ $25,000 – 49,999
- ❍ $50,000 – 74,999
- ❍ $75,000 – 99,999
- ❍ $100,000 – 124,999
- ❍ $125,000 – 150,000
- ❍ More than $150,000

Q17 If you would like to enter an optional drawing for the spa basket, please enter your email address below. Your email address will be kept confidential.

_____

VITA

BRYAN CHUN-MAN CHEUNG

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Thesis: A STUDY OF THE INTERRELATIONSHIP OF SPA GUESTS' MOTIVATION, PERCEIVED SERVICE QUALITY, VALUE, SATISFACTION, AND BEHAVIORAL INTENTIONS

Major Field: Human Sciences, with option in Hospitality Administration

Biographical:

Education:
Completed the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy in Human Sciences at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in December, 2012.

Completed the requirements for the Master of Business Administration at University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, Scotland in November, 2000.

Completed the requirements for the Bachelor of Science in Hotel Administration at Cornell University, Ithaca, New York in May, 1994.

Experience:
Senior Lecturer, Hong Kong Institute of Vocational Education, 2007 – present

Lecturer, Hong Kong Institute of Vocational Education, 1995 – 2007

Manager, Champion Hotel Management Co. Ltd., 1994 – 1995

Property Management Intern, Outrigger Hotels Hawaii, June/1993 – August/1993

Reservations Manager, Grand Hyatt Hong Kong, 1989 – 1991

Reservations Manager, Grand Plaza Hong Kong, 1988 – 1989

Senior Reservations Agent, Grand Tower Hong Kong, 1987 – 1988

Front Office/Senior Reservations Agent, Kowloon Shangri-la Hong Kong, 1981 – 1986