A STUDY OF CUSTOMERS' EXPECTATIONS AND CUSTOMERS' PERCEPTIONS OF SERVICE QUALITY IN THE SELECTED SPAS IN BANGKOK

By

YULIYA AMELCHENKO

A Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of

Master of Business Administration

Graduate School of Business
Assumption University
Bangkok, Thailand

April 2005
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ABSTRACT

The primary aim of this research was to study customers' expectations and customers' perceptions of the service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok, and Gap 5 which is the difference between expectations and perceptions. The selected spas in Bangkok were: 15 day spas, 15 hotel/resort spas, and 3 medical spas.

Another aim of the research was to identify the demographic characteristics of the spa users and to find out whether there is difference in expectations and perceptions of the customers when classified by age, gender, income, occupation and nationality.

The researcher adopted and adapted the questionnaire from the SERVQUAL Model developed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry in 1985. The questionnaires were distributed to 396 spa users in the selected spas in Bangkok. The data obtained from the questionnaires were analysed with the help of SPSS. The researcher applied Descriptive Analysis to describe the demographic characteristics of the respondents as well as the obtained SPSS output tables of the research hypotheses. As the Inferential Analysis, the researcher applied The Paired Samples T-Test to identify whether there is difference between customers' expectations and customers' perceptions of service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok. The One-Way ANOVA Test was applied in order to find whether there is difference in expectations of service quality and difference in perceptions of it when classified by demographic characteristics.

The Results showed that there was a statistically significant gap between customers' expectations and customers' perceptions of service quality regarding all SERVQUAL dimensions. One-Way ANOVA Test results showed that there was no difference in expectations and no difference in perceptions of service quality when classified by demographic characteristics. The only demographic factor which resulted in difference of customers' expectations of service quality was occupation.

As a conclusion of the findings of the research, the researcher stated that Gap 5 which is the discrepancy between Expected and Perceived service quality happened to exist and it resulted into a Negative Disconfirmation- when expectations exceeded perceptions. Hence, the customers of the selected spas in Bangkok were dissatisfied with the services offered.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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I am grateful to my family. My Mother, Antonina, my father, Valeriy, my brother Dmitriy, and my sister, Elina, thanks for the inspiration, concern, and faith.
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Chapter 1
Generalities of the study

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 Overview of the Topic

One of the most important constants among all of us, despite our differences, is that above all we are customers and we play a vital role in the health of the economy—local, national and international. Without customers, the service firm has no reason to exist. Every service business needs to proactively define and measure customer satisfaction. Waiting for customers to complain in order to identify problems in the service delivery system or gauging the firm's progress in customer satisfaction based on the number of complaints received is naive. Customer satisfaction measurement goes far beyond the complain management and it needs a more complex approach rather than investigating a book of complaints. Though, satisfying customers is not an impossible task. In fact, meeting and exceeding customer expectations may reap several valuable benefits for the firm. Positive word-of-mouth generated from existing customers often translates into more new customers. In addition, satisfied current customers often purchase more products more frequently and are less likely to be lost to competitors than are dissatisfied customers.

Companies who command high customer satisfaction ratings also seem to have the ability to insulate themselves from competitive pressures, particularly price competition. Customers are often willing to pay more and stay with a firm that meets their needs than to take the risk associated with moving to a lower-priced service offering. Finally, firms that pride themselves on their customer satisfaction efforts generally provide better environments in which to work. Within these positive work environments, organizational cultures develop where employees are challenged to perform and rewarded for their efforts.

Surveys measuring expectations and perceptions of customers towards service quality and customer satisfaction surveys also provide several worth-while benefits. Such surveys provide a formal means of customer feedback to the firm, which may identify
existing and potential problems. Such surveys also convey the message to customers that a firm cares about their well-being and values customer input concerning its operations.

The role of service quality as an indicator of customer satisfaction and organizational performance is widely acknowledged (Young and Varbel, 1997). Customers form impressions of service quality whenever they come in contact with the service provider. Service firms focus on achieving customer satisfaction and loyalty by delivering superior value, an underlying source of competitive advantage (Woodruff, 1997). Considering the recent trend of increasing consumer quality consciousness, it is imperative that service firms not only satisfy customers but also delight them (Saunders, et al., 1995).

The increasing importance of the service sector and the emphasis on service quality has reached far beyond theoretical discussion (Shank, Walker, and Hayes, 1995). Managers of many service firms have concluded that quality is one of the major contributors to their success (Mefford, 1993). According to Shetty (1998), improved quality can improve the firm’s competitive position.

Spa industry possesses all the characteristics of service industry. Spa services are intangible, heterogeneous, inseparable from the delivery system, variable, perishable and the customer participates in the process. Spas, therefore, should benefit from higher level quality practices because of the increased emphasis on delivering customer value.

Delivering a consistent set of satisfying experiences that result in high perceived quality requires the entire service organization to be focused on the task. The expectations of the customers must be understood in details.

Good service does not naturally occur, rather it is something to be directed and managed. The first component in service quality management is gaining a thorough understanding of the customers’ needs and expectations. The second component is establishing a service strategy expressed in policies and procedures that reflects the organization’s unique service proposition (Kotler and Fox, 1995).

Having summarized all said above, customer satisfaction research is one of the fastest growing areas in market research today. Defined as a comparison of perceptions and predicted service expectations, customer satisfaction has been associated with such benefits as repeat sales, more frequent sales, increased sales per transaction, positive
word-of-mouth communications, insulations from price competition, and pleasant work environments for employees. Customer satisfaction questionnaires send the signal to consumers that the firm cares about its customers and wants their input. Data collected from questionnaires facilitates the development of employee training programs, identifies strengths and weaknesses in the firm's service delivery process, and provides information to be used in employee performance reviews and compensation decisions.

1.1.2 Overview of the Spa Industry

The increased pace of life and concurrent stresses experienced by vast numbers of people worldwide have generated both a need and a desire for effective relaxation to counter these daily pressures. With less time available for rest and regeneration, people are seeking places to revive themselves, to gain relief from overwork and stress. With the aim of most spas being treated mind, body and soul, individuals can find that they are able to experience a form of mental and spiritual harmony during their spa stay that they can take back with them into their daily lives.

The abbreviation SPA comes from Latin which means “Sanus Per Aqua” and is interpreted as “health through water”. Briefly speaking, a spa is a facility where one goes for a variety of treatments aimed to relax, rejuvenate, exercise or get pampered. A modern spa comprises the idea of 4 R's, which are Rest, Relaxation, Rejuvenation and Rejoicing life (J. Lee and C.Z. Lim, 2004, “Spa Style Asia”).

There are several types of spas: day spa, salon spa, destination spa, resort spa, hotel spa, club spa, medical spa. The short descriptions are given in the glossary part of the research.

The spa industry in Thailand is still young but growth is rapid (V. Phannachet, 2003, TSPA). A recent report published by Intelligent Spas (2003, Singapore) mentioned that the Thai spa industry achieved 64% growth for the period 2000-2002.

In 2002 – 2003, there were about 230 spa service outlets, earning about 3,655 million Baht in 2002, and 7,255 million Baht in 2003. The industry also yields benefits to other businesses, namely the One Tambon, One Product, (OTOP) Program, and herbal products.
Between June 2001- June 2002, some 230 Thai spa operators attracted 2.5 million international spa patrons and generated a total of US$85 million in revenue.

With the proliferation of spa operations found in a diverse range of places beyond hotels, resorts, destination and medical spas, recent attempts to classify spas according to the types of premises in which the services are found have proven to be impractical and confusing. In Thailand, the vast majority of existing spa facilities are Hotel/Resort Spas. Day spas largely cater to the domestic clientele.

The key ingredients for a successful spa are the quality and variety of the services and products being offered, the price range, the friendliness and competence of the staff, design, atmosphere and ambience, and cleanliness.

Thailand’s rich heritage that embodies a time-honored healing tradition based on herbal and holistic remedies, generations of folk wisdom, and centuries-old healing techniques, some of which reflect deep-rooted Buddhist influences, embellishes the Thai spa experience. The recent resurgence of "back to Nature" themes and consumer preference for natural health and beauty solutions have refocused attention on the healing power of indigenous herbs and plants - a key component in the ancient Thai tradition of natural healing.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Though spa industry in Thailand is relatively young, it has already shown the significant level of development. Spas contribute extensively into well-being of the tourism and hotel industry, adding profits, improving image and developing popularity to the hotels and resorts in Thailand. Hence, along with the expanding industry and increasing number of spa facilities grows the competition between them, it is of vital importance for spa organizations to consistently measure, monitor and improve service quality which appears one of the main predictors of customer satisfaction (V. Phannachet, TSPA, 2003).

The statement of the problem for this research is “What is the difference between customers’ expectations and customers’ perceptions of the service quality provided by the selected spas in Bangkok?”
Since the service quality can be measured on the basis of comparison of customers’ expectations and perceptions towards the services, the following set of research questions was constructed:

1. Is there any difference between customers’ expectations and customers’ perceptions of service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok?

2. Is there any difference between customers’ expectations and customers’ perceptions of service quality regarding tangibles in the selected spas in Bangkok?

3. Is there any difference between customers’ expectations and customers’ perceptions of service quality regarding reliability in the selected spas in Bangkok?

4. Is there any difference between customers’ expectations and customers’ perceptions of service quality regarding responsiveness in the selected spas in Bangkok?

5. Is there any difference between customers’ expectations and customers’ perceptions of service quality regarding assurance in the selected spas in Bangkok?

6. Is there any difference between customers’ expectations and customers’ perceptions of service quality regarding empathy in the selected spas in Bangkok?

7. Is there any difference in customers’ expectations of service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok when classified by demographic characteristics?

8. Is there any difference in customers’ perceptions of service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok when classified by demographic characteristics?

1.3 Research Objectives

The main objective of the research was to study customers’ expectations and customers’ perceptions of service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok. This main objective included several sub objectives to be achieved which were as follows:
1. To identify the difference between customers’ expectations and customers’ perceptions of service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok.

2. To identify customers’ expectations of service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok.

3. To identify customers’ perceptions of service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok.

The process of identifying expectations and perceptions of the spa users towards service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok will involve identifying the service quality dimensions for evaluating service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok, and identifying the demographic characteristics of the spa users.

1.4 Scope of the Research

The purpose of the study was to study the service quality dimensions in the selected spas in Bangkok which are tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy (application of SERVQUAL model, Parasuraman, Berry, Zeithaml, 1985, 1989). The study was based on evaluating expectations and perceptions of spa users towards the service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok and the difference between the two. The researcher has emphasized on the demographic characteristics of spa users and on how customers’ expectations and perceptions can vary depending on the selected demographic characteristics which are age, gender, monthly income, occupation and nationality. The theoretical framework was based on the SERVQUAL model of measuring service quality, developed by Parasuraman et. al., (1985, 1989). The survey method was chosen for the research in order to obtain the needed data for the analysis. The sample size for the research was 396 persons. The respondents were randomly selected in 33 spas in Bangkok. They were asked to fill in the questionnaires twice- the first set of questions regarding their expectations of spa services was given to them prior using spa services and the second set of questions regarding their post-service perceptions was given to them after using the spa services. The spas, mentioned in Table 1.2, were selected for the distribution of questionnaires because there are many hotels, business establishments and big department stores around the chosen areas and hence, a lot of
people who can be potential spa users (businessmen, tourists, visitors) can be spotted in those areas. Besides, the researcher chose the spas with minimum 20 persons in personnel. The 15 Hotel/Resort spas, the 15 Day spas were chosen in the equal proportion because there’s approximately the same number of spas of each type in Bangkok. The number of medical spas chosen was three because there are only three medical spas in Bangkok. Table 1.2 lists the spas selected for distributing the questionnaires.

**TABLE 1.2: THE SELECTED SPAS IN BANGKOK**

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<th>Day Spas</th>
<th>Medical Spas</th>
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<td>Amrita Spa and Fitness (Nai Lert Park Hotel, Wireless road)</td>
<td>Bua Spa (Sukhumvit)</td>
<td>Bavali Natural Health Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ambassador Hotel Spa (Ambassador hotel, Sukhumvit)</td>
<td>Celadon Homa Spa (Nanglichi)</td>
<td>Saint Carlos Medical Spa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anne Semonin Spa (Sofitel Silom Hotel, Silom)</td>
<td>Divana Massage and Spa (Sukhumvit)</td>
<td>Thai Medical Spa</td>
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<td>Club Erawan Fitness Spa (Hyatt Erawan, Rajdamri Road)</td>
<td>Le Fern Day Spa (Jatujak)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Como Shambhala (The Metropolitan Hotel, Sathorn)</td>
<td>Palm Herbal Retreat (Thonglor)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Banyan Tree Spa (Sathorn Road)</td>
<td>Palm Herbal Spa (Chinatown)</td>
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<td>Club Erawan Fitness Spa (Hyatt Erawan, Rajdamri Road)</td>
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<td>Dulaya Spa (The Davis Bangkok Hotel, Sukhumvit)</td>
<td>Palm Herbal Retreat (Thonglor)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grande Spa (Sheraton Grande, Sukhumvit)</td>
<td>Palm Herbal Retreat (Thonglor)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imperial Queen’s Park Spa (Imperial Queen’s Park Hotel, Sukhumvit)</td>
<td>Palm Herbal Retreat (Thonglor)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>JW Marriott Health Club and Spa</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mandarin Spa (Bangkok Marriott Resort and Spa)</td>
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<td>Tantara Health Spa (Pathumwan Princess Hotel)</td>
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<td>The Dust Spa/ Devarana Spa (Dusit Hotel, Rama 4)</td>
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<td>The Oriental Spa Thai Health and Beauty Center</td>
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1.5 Limitations of the Research

The research was limited in terms of the four dimensions. Those dimensions were: respondents, time frame, variables, and studying spas in general rather than in particular.
The research focused attention on investigating the expectations and the perceptions of customers residing in Bangkok and using spa services in the selected spas in Bangkok, therefore its findings may not be generalized for the customers not residing in Bangkok and not using spas services in the selected spas in Bangkok.

The research also focused attention on investigating the expectations and perceptions of spa users towards the selected spas in Bangkok by collecting data in a specific time frame. The survey was conducted during the moderate season in tourism industry, from February to March 2005, therefore its findings may not be generalized for all the seasons.

The research was aimed to investigate the expectations and the perceptions of the spas users towards the selected spas in Bangkok by selecting specific variables, therefore its findings may not be generalized for the variables not included in the framework of the research. Besides, the selected spas are of different types and standards, and they were investigated in general. There were no studies focused on a particular spa.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The study was developed to identify the service quality dimensions of spas in Bangkok. The study was aimed to investigate spa customers’ expectations of service quality prior spa experience and their perceptions of the service quality after their interaction with the spa providers. Then, having compared expectations and perceptions, Gap 5 was defined which can be defined as the difference between expectations and perceptions. Gap 5 shows whether there’s difference between the two aspects and therefore the outcome which can be satisfaction, mere satisfaction, or dissatisfaction with the service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok.

The results of the study provide information about factors contributing to service quality and hopefully provide insight into the means of meeting customers’ needs and for improving customers’ loyalty to spas. In the long run it is expected that the results of this study will serve as the foundation for improved service quality that will lead directly to
benefits for the spas to include a continuing relationship with their customers, and indirectly to keep and improve their reputation and stability over time.

The research is expected to help spa organizations to better understand wants, trends, attitudes of their customers and through that improve service quality and therefore create and increase satisfaction of their clients. It may also be useful in attempt to trace needed statistics about spa consumers and assist spas and other members of spa industry make informed business decisions. The research results may help to generate greater awareness of the spa industry to increase visitation to spas and promote overall industry growth.

1.7 Definitions of Terms

**Ambient conditions:** The distinctive atmosphere of the service setting that includes lighting, air quality, noise, music, and so on (Hoffman, Bateson, 1997).

**Assurance:** Knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to convey trust and confidence (Parasuraman, et al., 1990).

**Customer satisfaction:** How closely experience with products or services meets or exceeds customer’s expectation (Pride and Ferrell, 1997).

**Day spa:** A clean, safe and nurturing environment offering an array of spa treatments administered by highly trained and licensed technicians. It is usually a self-contained facility, but may also be combined with a salon. Clients usually use day spa for 2-3 hours and overnight accommodations are not provided (www.aboutspas.com).

**Demographic factors:** Consist of age, gender, marital status, education level, occupation, income. Demographic or personal characteristics are most often used as the basis for market segmentation, and also affect the extent to which a person uses products or services in a specific category (Pride and Ferrell, 1997).

**Destination spa:** A facility where all guests participate in a variety of exclusively structured programs, combining weight loss, nutrition, exercise, healing, meditation and pampering. Guests usually stay for a minimum of three to four days (www.aboutspas.com).
Empathy: Caring and individualized attention the firm provides its customers (Parasuraman, et al., 1990).

Expectations: A “baseline against which product or service performance is compared” (Nolan and Swan, 1985). In the context of customer dissatisfaction, expectations are generally said to be disconfirmed (Olshavsky and Miller, 1972).

Gap 5: Quality that a customer perceives in a service; a function of the magnitude and direction of the gap between expected service and perceived one (Payne, 1993).

Medical spa: Spa setting which combines various medically based therapeutic treatments that often blend Eastern and Western therapies (www.aboutspas.com).

Perceptions: Customers’ beliefs concerning the service received and experienced (Parasuraman, et al., 1985).

Reliability: Ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately (Parasuraman, et al., 1990).

Resort spa: A facility at a resort, where guests who enjoy the spa concept can also take advantage of traditional resort activities (www.aboutspas.com).

Responsiveness: Willingness to help customers and provide prompt service (Parasuraman, et al., 1990).

Satisfaction: A person’s feelings of pleasure or disappointment resulting from comparing products or services perceived performance in relation to his expectations (Kotler, 1997).

Service: Represents any activity, offered to a customer, that is simultaneously consumed as it is produced. Characterizing a service encounter is difficult due to its intangibility, given that the service encompasses process, delivery, and outcome (Kothari, 1988).


Spa: A facility where one goes for a variety of treatments aimed to relax, rejuvenate, exercise, improve health or get pampered (www.aboutspas.com).

Tangibles: The appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personnel, and communication materials (Parasuraman, et al., 1990).
The Selected Demographic Factors: The demographic factors that were selected to study demographic characteristics of spa users. The demographic factors were included in the research in order to find out whether they make difference in how the service quality in spas is expected to be and how it is perceived. They are age, gender, monthly income, occupation and nationality.

The selected Spas in Bangkok: The spas located in Bangkok that were selected to study service quality, expectations and perceptions of it from customers’ perspective.
Chapter 2
Review of Related Literature and Studies

This chapter discusses the literature directly or indirectly related to the research. The definitions and characteristic features of services, service quality, theories and models of service quality, customer expectations, customer perceptions, customer satisfaction, measuring service quality and depicting service quality dimensions are collected from the point of view of different authors and experts in the area of investigation.

2.1 Understanding Service Quality and Its Importance

It is logically assumed that service quality is directly linked to the success of a business. The rationale for this argument is that quality service will create loyal and returning customers. This, in turn, will lower marketing costs, because customers become familiar with an organization. They begin to trust it and the level of risk declines (Bateson, and Hoffman, 1999). Good quality will decrease costs and the need for advertising. It will also result in higher productivity, allowing the firm to charge a higher price, therefore make a higher profit. Poor quality can increase costs, cause a loss of sales and even become a threat to society.

Service quality has to be distinguished from customer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction can be described as a short-term, transaction specific measure, whereas service quality is a long-term overall evaluation of a performance (Bateson et al., 1999). Service quality, therefore, is an attitude. Oliver (1981), suggested that the two concepts are distinct constructs. But, they are related in the sense that satisfaction will influence the perceptions of service quality prior to the delivery of the service. This will lead to new perceptions to be formed after performance. Satisfaction thus rapidly becomes part of the revised perception of service quality (Cronin and Taylor, 1992).
2.1.1 Definition and Features of Service Quality

To define service quality, it is important to first, define what quality is, and what the main features of services are; then, it is necessary to define what quality is, and what the main features of quality are.

Definition and Features of Service

There are various definitions regarding service. According to Peters (1999), one frequently cited definition of service is the one suggested by Gronroos (1990), which stated that service is an activity or a set of activities of a more or less tangible nature that normally, but not necessarily, takes place in interaction between a consumer and service employees and/or physical resources or goods and/or systems of a service provider, which are provided as solutions to customer problems. Kotler (1991), defined service as any act or performance that one party can offer to another that is essentially intangible and does not result in the ownership of anything. Its production may or may not be tied to a physical product. Gummesson (1993), defined service as something that can be bought or sold, but which you cannot drop on your foot.

In theory, there are more definitions, but they amount to more or less the same thing. What all definitions have in common is that they contain items that can be directly related to the primary characteristics of the services: intangibility, inseparability, variability and perishability (Peters, 1999).

The reason that service quality is difficult to define, describe, and measure is because of the specific subjective nature of services (Brown, Gummesson, Edvardsson, and Gustavsson, 1991). These characteristics of service also make service unique and different from goods. They are described below (Ghobadian, Speller, and Jones, 1993; Groth, and Dye, 1999; Zeithaml et al., 1990):

1. Intangibility: Unlike manufactured goods that are tangible, a service is intangible. The products from service are purely a performance. The consumer cannot see, taste, smell, hear, feel or touch the product before it purchased (Ghobadian et al., 1993; Groth, and Dye, 1999; Zeithaml et al., 1990).

2. Heterogeneity: A service is difficult to produce consistently and exactly over time. Service performance varies from producer to producer, from customer to
customer, and from time to time. This characteristic of service makes it difficult to standardize the quality of the service in the same way done for manufactured goods (Ghobadian et al., 1993).

3. Inseparability: In service industries, the producer usually performs the service at the same time the consumption of the service takes place. Therefore, it is difficult for the producer to hide mistakes or quality shortfalls of the service. In comparison the goods producers, have a buffer between production and customers' consumption (Ghobadian et al., 1993).

4. Perishability: Unlike manufactured goods, services cannot be stored for later consumption. This makes it impossible to have a quality check before the producers send it to the customers. The service providers then only have one path, to provide service right the first time and every time (Ghobadian et al., 1993).

5. Non-returnability: A service is not returnable, unlike products. On the other hand, in many services, customers maybe fully refunded if the service is not satisfactory (Groth et. al., 1999).

6. Needs-match uncertainty: Service attributes are more uncertain than the product. This yield to higher variance of making a match between perceived needs and service is greater than perceived need and product match (Groth et. al., 1999).

7. Interpersonal: Service tends to be more interpersonal than products. For example, compare buying a vacuum cleaner to contracting for the cleaning of a carpet. While customers will judge the quality of the vacuum cleaner by how clean the carpet is, customers will tend to judge the quality of the carpet cleaning service on both the appearance of the carpet and the attitude of the technician (Groth et. al., 1999).

8. Personal: Customers often view services to be more personal than products. For example, a customer may perceive the service of her car (balancing the tires) as more personal than purchasing new tires. If the same customer has problems later with the tires, the defect in the tires would be less personal than if the tires were never balanced (Groth et. al., 1999).

9. Psychic: Even though the food at a restaurant might not be as delicious as other famous restaurants, the customers will recognize the restaurant and tend to be satisfied if the service of the restaurant is excellent. Another example is
when a flight is delayed, and people tend to be upset with this poor service. However, if the gate agent is very helpful and friendly, people tend to still be pleased with the service (Groth et. al., 1999).

Definition of Quality

On the issue of quality, Johnson and Chvala (1996), admitted that quality is one of those elusive concepts which is easy to visualize but difficult to define. Quality has many definitions, ranging from specific to general, and varies by functional area. Many executives say that they know quality when they see it. However, they all share the common assumption that quality is defined by the customer.

Deming, a leading quality guru, said that quality is continuous improvement. Juran’s philosophy of quality centers around three basic quality processes: quality planning, quality improvement, and quality control. Another quality authority, Crosby (1979), said that quality is conformance to requirements. He stated that quality is created by a system of prevention, not appraisal, where the performance standard is “zero defects”.

According to Johnson and Chvala (1996), what the quality is and how it is defined also changes over time. Quality is said to be a moving target. Cortada (1993), stated that in the process-related aspect, how the interaction between employees and customers takes place will define quality in the mind of customers. Thus, what is received is often the focus of quality, but so too is how a customer receives quality- a crucial distinction for service organizations.

A great deal of research reveals that service work involves performance more than just products and has a very large labor component. Since consumption of service occurs as it is performed (produced), consumption and production are inseparable and perishable. Customer-oriented definitions therefore call for focus on the reliability of service provided, willingness or responsiveness of avenger to service a customer quickly, ability of employees to offer trust and confidence, empathy, and good business environment.
2.2 Theories and Studies Related to Service Quality

Theories and studies related to service quality involve several variables which should be taken into consideration. The main variables to be considered are customers' expectations of service quality and customers' perceptions of service quality. The dimensions of service quality need to be identified for better assessment of service quality.

2.2.1 Customer Expectations of Service Quality

A single definition of expectations relating to service quality has not yet been finalized. There is, however, consensus that expectations are standards that result from a range of experiences compared and consequentially evaluates either satisfaction or quality. Several types or paradigms of expectations can be identified. The dominant paradigm views expectations as predictions about what is possibly going to take place during the transaction. Normative expectations are customer desires or wants. They consider whether or not the service satisfies the needs and wants of customers, rather than his/her expectations. Experience-based expectations encapsulate the ideal and realistic features of expectations. The ideal aspect involves standards to which the service should oblige. The realistic aspect entails expectations based on actual experiences with service providers. Minimum tolerable expectations are the bare minimum a customer will accept and tolerate. Deserved expectations are the consumer's subjective evaluation of their own product investment. Comparative expectations are conjured via comparisons made to other services providers in the same industry (Parasuraman et al., 1993).

Expectations can originate from a number of sources. One such a source could be comparing performance to a particular brand (Best-brand norm) and another could be the Product norm (an average performance believed of a group of similar brands). The product itself, the context and the individual characteristics could be a source, as well as the company's external communications (Parasuraman et al., 1993).

Parasuraman et al., (1993) developed a model that divides customer expectations into four categories:

1. The expected service component
2. Antecedents of desired service
3. Antecedents of adequate service

4. Antecedents of both predicted and desired service

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 2.1: ANTECEDENTS OF DESIRED AND ADEQUATE SERVICE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SERVICE</td>
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<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ANTECEDENTS OF DESIRED SERVICE</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enduring service intensifiers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ANTECEDENTS OF ADEQUATE SERVICE</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transitory service intensifiers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived service alternatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-perceived service role</td>
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<tr>
<td>Situational Factors</td>
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<tr>
<td>Predicted service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EXTERNAL FACTORS FOR DESIRED AND PREDICTED SERVICE</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explicit service promises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implicit service promises</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word-of-Mouth</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>INTERNAL FACTORS FOR DESIRED AND PREDICTED SERVICE</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Past experience</td>
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</tbody>
</table>


The four categories are also depicted in Figure 2.1. Expected service consists of Desired service, Adequate service, and a Zone of tolerance. Desired service is what the customer hopes for, it is a blend of what the customer believes ‘can be’ and ‘should be’. Adequate service is the minimum level of service the customer will accept. The difference between Desired and Adequate service is Zone of tolerance. This zone can vary over time, thereby expanding and/or contracting. The zone is unique to each individual and will consequently vary considerably. Individual tolerance is influenced by numerous factors, among which could be the price. The adequate service level is more likely to change, compared to the desired level. Various determinants influence the levels of Desired, Adequate and Predicted service.
These combined, will effectively be the expectations catered by the customer and will affect Gap 5 between expectations and Perceived service (Parasuraman et al., 1993).

![Diagram of Customer Expectations](image)

Customer expectation is an important element that might play a role in the next few decades. Many researchers who believe in disconfirmation paradigm are concerned about this area, since customers evaluate service quality by comparing their perception of the service with their expectation (Zeithaml et al. 1990; Robledo, 2001).

Clow, et. al., (1991), stated that consumer expectations are pre-trial beliefs consumer has about the performance of a service. These beliefs are then used as the standard or reference against which service performance is judged. Customer expectations represent five levels.

- Ideal service level: the “wished-for” level of service a customer would like to experience.
Desired service level: the level of performance a customer wants or hopes to receive from the service. The desired level of service is lower than the ideal level of service.

Adequate service level: the minimum level of service a customer will tolerate and accept without being dissatisfied. Between the adequate level of service and the desired level of service is an area called The Zone of Tolerance. Services performed in the zone of tolerance will be acceptable to the customer. Services performed below the adequate level of service and outside the zone will not be acceptable.

Predicted service level: the level of service a customer actually expects from the service firm. The predicted level of service can range from the ideal level of service to the adequate level of service. The predicted level of service would be closer to the desired and the ideal levels of service. The predicted level of service takes into consideration all the circumstances of the service and modifies the customer expectations accordingly.

Customers' expectations are also influenced by several factors (Zeithaml et al., 1990; Robledo, 2001).

Informal recommendations, i.e. word-of-mouth communications: Customers tend to have a higher expectation of a specific service that has been recommended to them by family or friends.

Formal recommendations: Such as recommendations of travel agents or quality assessments found in certain publications, such as consumer magazines.

Personal need: Each customer has different needs for each service. Therefore, this need also influences customers to judge the quality of the service, and whether or not it has satisfied their needs.

Past experience: Customers with different past experiences with that specific service type seem to have different expectations of the service. For example, the person who has experienced waiting in line at the bank in rush hour seems to know the situation and expect to wait in a long line. Although, that customer might have to wait the same amount of time as the inexperienced customer, the inexperienced customer will likely be more dissatisfied with the bank service than the customer that has experienced this before.

Price: The price to be paid for a service determines, in the customer's mind, the level of quality to be demanded.
All elements of promotional mix: These elements convey a message to the customer that has an influence on expectation.

Good corporate image: It is a very important asset because it positively shapes the expectations of the customers.

External communication: The influence of messages sent out by service providers plays an important role on customer expectations. Customers will expect the service to be in keeping with the messages.

Figure 2.2 shows the relationship between the five dimensions of service quality and the eight influence factors. The figure is adopted from Zeithaml et al. (1990). These factors play an important role in the customer assessment of the service quality.

As customers' expectation can be influenced, some tools that companies can use to influence customers are promotional campaigns with suitable positioning statements, mission statements, corporate communication campaigns, service guarantees, consumer education programs, pricing strategies and consistent, and excellent service delivery (Robledo, 1999).

Researchers should not overlook customer expectation and how it relates to customer satisfaction, because the developing management model to manage customer expectation might be one of the important models that will bring service toward service quality.

FIGURE 2.2: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE FIVE DIMENSIONS OF SERVICE QUALITY AND THE EIGHT INFLUENCE FACTORS


20
2.2.2 Perceived Service Quality

Perceived quality is frequently compared to overall attitude, and this construct is viewed as similar (Bitner, et al., 1990; Parasuraman, et al., 1988). The classic definition of attitude is that it is a learnt predisposition to respond to an object in a consistently favorable or unfavorable way. Perceived quality is a relatively global judgement, which relates to the superiority of the overall product (Holbrook and Corfman, 1985). As with satisfaction, it would appear that perceptions of quality of the interaction with the service provider and the quality of the core service, and the overall quality of the organization (Bitner, et al., 1990).

Gronroos (1983), was the first researcher to use the traditional consumer satisfaction/ dissatisfaction model to explain service quality satisfaction. Perceived service quality was defined as the outcome of an evaluation process where customers compare their expectations with the service perceived to have received. Gronroos (1983), modeled perceived service quality with two distinct dimensions:

1. Technical quality: related to the result of the service. This dimension is related to the question "What" has been provided.
2. Functional quality: related to the way the service has been delivered. This dimension is related to the question "How" the service has been provided.

FIGURE 2.3: GRONROOS'S PERCEIVED QUALITY MODEL

Grongroos (1988), identified six criteria of good perceived service quality.

Professionalism and skill: Customers see the service provider as knowledgeable and able to solve their problems in a professional way.

Attitudes and behavior: Customers perceive a genuine, friendly concern for them and their problems.

Access and flexibility: Customers feel that they have easy access and that the service provider is prepared to adjust to their needs.

Reliability and trustworthiness: Customers can trust the service provider to keep promises and act in their best interests.

Recovery: Customers know that immediate corrective action will be taken if anything goes wrong.

Reputation and Credibility: Customers believe that the brand image stands for good performance and accepted values.

2.2.3 Models of Service Quality

Besides SERVQUAL model which was previously discussed in the research, there are two important models, SERVPERF and Normed Quality, that have been further developed from assessment of SERVQUAL.

SERVPERF, developed by Cronin and Taylor in 1992, determines service quality by measuring only performance (instead of performance and expectation like SERVQUAL) which Cronin and Taylor claimed would best reflect customers' perceptions of service quality and that expectations are not part of the concept (Robinson, 1999; Franceschini, 1998, Lee et al., 2000). They studied four alternative service quality models to evaluate efficiency of SERVQUAL and SERVPERF. These models are (Robinson, 1999).

1. SERVQUAL: Service quality = performance-expectations
2. Weighted SERVQUAL: Service quality = importance x (performance-expectations)
3. SERVPERF: Service quality = performance
4. Weighted SERVPERF: Service quality = importance x performance

The conclusion from their study is that the unweighted SERVPERF measure performance better than any other measure of service quality.
Another important model is Normed Quality, proposed by Teas (1993). This model measures service quality by the gap between perceived performance and the ideal amount of a feature, rather than the customers’ expectations presented by SERVQUAL. Teas points out that expectation might be interpreted by customers in two different ways: an ideal level or a feasible level based on actual condition (Franceschini, 1998).

Besides these three service quality measurement models, SERVQUAL, SERVPERF, and Normed Quality, there are several models. Such models include the Two-Way (Schvaneveldt, Enkawa, and Miyakawa, 1991), and QUALITOMETRO (Franceschini et al., 1998).

The Two-Way model evaluated service quality from two perspectives. The first “objective” involved the presence or absence of a particular quality dimension, and the second “subjective,” involved the users’ resulting sense of satisfaction and dissatisfaction. This model uses questionnaires to ask customers to evaluate service quality (Franceschini et al., 1998).

The QUALITOMETRO method is based on service quality dimensions proposed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry. It was conceived for evaluation and “on-line” service control (Franceschini et al., 1998). It allows an online quality monitoring of the differential between expected and perceived quality.

A comparison of these methods is presented in Table 2.2.
TABLE 2.2: THE COMPARISON OF SOME METHODS FOR SERVICE QUALITY EVALUATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SERVQUAL</th>
<th>TWO-WAY</th>
<th>SERVPERF</th>
<th>NORMED</th>
<th>QUALITO-METRO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theoretical Back-ground</td>
<td>The determinants method of service quality and gap theory. Service quality is calculated as the difference between perceptions and expectations with importance weights given to each dimension.</td>
<td>Latent evaluation factors: service quality is evaluated by answers given by customers to questions about ‘objective’ (quality attributes) and ‘subjective’ (satisfaction levels)</td>
<td>Service quality is evaluated by perceptions only, without expectations and without importance weights.</td>
<td>The problem for expectations become a redefinition of this component and discrimination between ideal expectation/and feasible expectation.</td>
<td>The determinants of service quality. Customer expectations and perceptions are evaluated in two distinct moments. Quality evaluation is carried out by means of a comparison between quality expectations and perceptions profiles using MCDA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Items number</td>
<td>22+22</td>
<td>Not declared</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>10+10+10+10</td>
<td>8+8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample size</td>
<td>290 to 487 according to companies</td>
<td>330</td>
<td>660</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
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</table>


Although, there have been several methods developed to measure service quality in the past decade, researchers can not pin point which method is the best. Three main debates over how to measure service quality are: disconfirmation models vs. perception models, weighted vs. unweighted models, and dimensions of service quality (Robledo, 2001).
Disconfirmation models vs. perception models

The debate centered on this issue is whether customer expectations have to be taken into consideration when measuring service quality. The two different approaches were considered.

Disconfirmation models that are based on disconfirmation paradigm (Robledo, 2001). Disconfirmation stems from discrepancies between prior expectations and actual performance (Caruana et al., 1998). This approach asserts that quality can be defined as the gap between customer expectations and perceptions. Moreover, service only qualifies a "quality service" when the service providers meet or exceed customer expectations. SERVQUAL is one of the models that has been developed under this approach.

Perception models have been developed by examinations and assessment of SERVQUAL. This type of model represents the idea that perceptions of performance are the only thing to measure to define service quality. SERVPERF and Normed Quality model are well known to present this type of model.

There are many results from a study that supports both types of models. The studies that support disconfirmation models claim that these models that measure service quality considering expectation are superior to models that measure service quality of performance only (Bebko, 2000; Gilbert, 2000). Gilbert (2000), proposed that there is a gap between perceived performance and customer expectation. In measuring internal customer satisfaction, it was shown that customers rate service quality based upon their expectation and the performance they perceived. Moreover, several studies have supported this theory and some even developed SERVQUAL further to fit their service type. Bolton and Drew (1997) pointed out that performance is a key determinant of service quality, though disconfirmation has greater predicting power (Lee et al., 1999).

Weighted vs. unweighted models

Weighted models are basically evaluating service quality according to the importance customers assign to each of the dimensions. The researchers that weight the model claimed that importance of weighting reflects the relative importance of
various items and dimensions. Other researchers conclude in their studies that weighting does not add the predictive power of the tools.

### 2.3 Service Quality Dimensions

Many researchers and academics have deliberated the various dimensions that constitute service quality. Table 2.2 portrays a timeline since 1978, of the various dimensions.

#### TABLE 2.3: THE TIMELINE OF SERVICE QUALITY DIMENSIONS

<table>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Three dimensions of service performance</td>
<td>Technical and Functional Quality</td>
<td>Ten Dimensions of Service Quality</td>
<td>Five Dimensions of Service Quality</td>
<td>Refine SERVQUAL</td>
<td>Further refinements: New Expectations Model</td>
<td>Two Dimensions of SERVQUAL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>levels of material, facilities and personnel</td>
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</table>

Source: Adapted from Glynn and Barnes, 1995, pp.146-161; Mels, Boshoff and Nell, 1997, pp.183-184

Service performance was first believed to have three dimensions, namely levels of material, facilities and personnel. In 1982, two types of quality were proposed, to be exact, Technical quality (what the customer actually receives) and Functional quality (the manner in which customers receive service). In another study, it was anticipated that quality could be one of three kinds: Physical, Corporate (involving image or reputation) and Interactive quality (between personnel and customers) (Glynn et al., 1995).

Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1985), formulated that service quality comprises of ten dimensions. They are depicted in Figure 2.4.
The service quality was viewed as an attitude that results from a ‘global judgement’, after comparing expectations with perceptions. The ten dimensions were the result of a study that contained 97 items and included access, communication, competence, courtesy, credibility, reliability, responsiveness, security, tangibles and understanding or knowing the customer. Parasuraman, et al. (1988), reduced 97 items to a 34-item scale. The result concluded that service quality consists of five dimensions. (Parasuraman et al., 1988).

The study produced SERVQUAL, an instrument used to measure service quality in terms of tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy. These are defined in Table 2.4.
TABLE 2.4: THE FIVE DIMENSIONS OF SERVQUAL DEFINED

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tangibles</strong></td>
<td>&quot;Compares consumer expectations and firm’s performance regarding the firm’s ability to manage its tangibles. Tangibles include: carpeting, desks, lighting, wall colours, brochures, daily correspondence, and appearance of firm’s personnel. It has two dimensions – one focusing on equipment and facilities, another focusing on personnel and communications materials.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reliability</strong></td>
<td>&quot;Reflects the consistency and dependability of a firm’s performance....Consumers perceive this dimension to be the most important of the five. Consequently, failure to provide reliable service generally translates into an unsuccessful firm.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Responsiveness</strong></td>
<td>&quot;Reflects the firm’s commitment to provide its services in a timely manner, therefore concerned with the readiness and/or willingness of employees to produce a service. It also reflects the firm’s preparedness to provide the service.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assurance</strong></td>
<td>&quot;Addresses the competence of the firm (knowledge and skills pertaining to the service), the courtesy that it extends to its customers (employees interaction with customers), and the security of its operations (customer feels free from risk, danger and doubt).&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Empathy</strong></td>
<td>&quot;The ability to experience another’s feelings as one’s own. Understand customer needs and make services accessible to them.&quot;</td>
</tr>
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The three dimensions remained the same (Tangibles, Reliability and Responsiveness), and the other two (Assurance and Empathy) have combined several dimensions. The figure below shows how ten dimensions were redesigned into five.
2.4 Definitions of the Independent Variables

The set of independent variables was divided into two main groups: the first group embodied the set of the service quality dimensions and the second group embodied the selected demographic characteristics of spa customers.

2.4.1 Definition of Each Service Quality Dimension

Parasuraman et. al., (1985), define tangibles as the physical evidence of the service and state that the dimension includes physical facilities, appearance of personnel, tools or equipment used to provide the service, physical representations of the service. The dimension was redefined in the 1988 study as the physical facilities, equipment, and appearance of personnel. Since this study deals with spa quality evaluation, there was a need to include ambient conditions and choice of treatments as important aspects of tangibles. Previous studies' researchers included ambient
conditions and treatments range in the tangibles and these two aspects were included in the research too.

In this study the researcher considered tangibles in terms of:

1. Equipment in spas
2. Physical facilities in spas
3. Choice of spa treatments
4. Ambient conditions in spas
5. Appearance of spa personnel

Reliability

Reliability is defined as the consistency of performance and dependability (Parasuraman et al., 1985). The authors state that reliability involves accuracy in billing, keeping records correctly, and performing the service at the designated time. The dimension was redefined in the 1888 study as the ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately. These dimensions contain two concepts: accuracy and dependability. The root word “rely” is defined as to depend confidently, put trust in (Merriam, 2000). Accuracy is defined as the condition or quality of being accurate, precision or exactness, correctness (Merriam, 2000).

In this study the researcher considered reliability in terms of:

1. Dependability of spas
2. Interest in solving customers’ problems
3. Accuracy of keeping the records
4. Keeping to promises

Responsiveness

Parasuraman et al., (1985), stated that responsiveness is the willingness or readiness of employees to provide service. It involves timeliness of service. The dimension was redefined in the 1988 study as the willingness to help customers and provide prompt service. The revised definition contains two concepts: willingness and promptness. Willingness is defined as cheerfully consenting or readiness (Merriam, 2000). Prompt is defined as done, performed, delivered at once or without delay (Merriam, 2000).
In this study the researcher considered responsiveness in terms of:
1. Willingness to help customers
2. Readiness to respond to customers’ requests
3. Promptness of service
4. Informing customers exactly when service will be performed

Assurance

Parasuraman et al., (1988), found that seven of the original dimensions (communication, credibility, security, competence, courtesy, understanding/knowing customers, and access) were not distinct and should be combined into two new dimensions; assurance and empathy were created. Assurance is defined as the knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to inspire trust and confidence; the authors expand on this definition stating that the assurance dimension also includes the features of competence to perform the service, politeness and respect for the customer, effective communication with the customers.

In this study the researcher considered assurance in terms of:
1. Ability to instil confidence in customers
2. Customers’ safety
3. Service guarantees
4. Courtesy of personnel
5. Knowledge regarding spa services

Empathy

Parasuraman et al. (1988), defined empathy as caring, individualized attention the firm provides its customers. Empathy is defined as mental entering into the feeling or spirit of a person or thing; appreciative perception or understanding (Merriam, 2000). Shelton (2000), defines empathy as understanding the customer and making the effort to know customers and their needs.

In this study the researcher considered empathy in terms of:
1. Individualized attention to customers
2. Having customers’ best interests at heart
3. Understanding specific needs of customers

4. Operating hours convenience for customers

Mels, Boshoff, and Nel (1997), recommended that SERVQUAL should consist of two empirical factors (intrinsic and extrinsic quality) and the five factors as suggested. Intrinsic service quality can be considered as 'interaction quality', because it refers to the interaction that takes place between the employee and customer. This factor embraces responsiveness, assurance, empathy and reliability. Extrinsic service quality relates to the tangible aspect of quality. It correlates with two dimensions mentioned before, namely Technical quality and Physical quality (Mels, Boshoff, and Nel, 1997).

2.5 Measuring Service Quality

There have been several tools proposed by many authors to measure service quality. However, there have been hot issues and debates going on since SERVQUAL, the first and the most popular service quality measurement tool was proposed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry in 1988 (Franceschini, Cignetti, and Caldara, 1998; Robinson, 1999; Caruana, Money, and Berthon, 2000; Lee et al., 2000). SERVQUAL, based on the disconfirmation model, measures service quality by calculating the gap between what the customers expect and what they perceive. The tool was developed from four different service sectors: retail banking, credit cards, securities brokerage, and product repair and maintenance.

SERVQUAL consists of three sections. The first two sections consist of two sets of 22 statements: the first set aimed to determine customer’s expectation to service, and the second set determines the customer’s perception to the firm performance. The customer is asked to rate his/her expectations and perceptions of the company’s service performance on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Sometimes, a 5-point Likert scale is applicable. The gap between expectations and performance perceptions is measured by the difference between the two scores (performance minus expectations). Positive scores show that the performance is better than what the customer expects, while negative scores show that the services are of poor quality. The third section of SERVQUAL measures the level of importance of the five dimensions to the
customer. These scores are used to weight the perceived service quality to give more accuracy to the overall service quality score. The five dimensions that Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry presented for customers to evaluate a service are described below.

Tangibles: The appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personnel, and communication materials.

Reliability: The ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately.

Responsiveness: The willingness to help customers and provide prompt service.

Assurance: The knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to convey trust and confidence.

Empathy: The caring individualized attention the firm provides its customers (Bebko, 2000; Robledo, 2001).

Since SERVQUAL was presented in 1988, there have been many criticisms and questions about its concept, validity and accessibility.

2.6 Criticisms of SERVQUAL

Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry have faced many criticisms concerning the SERVQUAL model.

Carman (1990), suggested that the instrument only be used as a guide to research service quality in various industries. “Wording and subject of some individual items need to be customized to each service setting.” Carman also stated that a problem exists in Parasuraman’s treatment of expectations, where a respondent error could exist due to different interpretations of questions. Expectations could be rated according to their importance, as forecasts, ideal, deserved and/or as minimum tolerable. Parasuraman et al., have however, published an article defining and presenting a new model concerning this concern. It has also been suggested that respondents compare expectations to performance and give a single score. There will, however, be various response formats to overcome.

Another matter suggested that the model should not be limited to the five dimensions proposed by Parasuraman et al. Up to seven or eight dimensions have been identified by various researchers in a variety of studies (Carman, 1990). This is also a concern and continues to be debated, but the authors of the model state that the
model is generic (a skeleton) and dimensions will change from one industry to another. Those studies that could not replicate Parasuraman's results used other industries, other statistical analysis, changed the wording, added items and/or used other methodologies.

The Disconfirmation Paradigm of Service Quality stated that Customer Satisfaction is equal to Expectations less Perceptions, i.e. CS = E - P. The authors of the model stated that SQ = E - P, while also saying that CS is not the same as SQ. The authors replied that CS and SQ are the same, but CS is one encounter and SQ is multiple encounters. SQ therefore becomes a global satisfaction. Both use the same models, but different levels of measurement.

Reverse scoring of items exist, where respondents give the same score to both negatively and positively phrased questions stating/asking the same thing, e.g. Strongly agree with both statements. This can be resolved by not having negatively phrased questions.

The model makes use of two administrations in one sitting, i.e. Both expectations (before encounter) and perceptions (after encounter) are measured at the same time. The two could be measured at different times, or you could even use two different samples.

The actual scores of gaps do not identify the gap's importance relative to other dimensions, and therefore have limited value.

Should vs would for only expectations and not perceptions.

2.7 Relationship Between Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction

Although there seems to be a consensus in the literature that satisfaction and service quality are unique constructs, distinctions in their definitions have not always been made clear (Tomiuk 2000). An important source of confounding between these two constructs has been the use of the expectancy disconfirmation model in defining both concepts conceptually and operationally (Gronroos, 1982; Oliver, 1993, 1997; Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry, 1985, 1994; Rust and Oliver, 1994). In an attempt to provide clarity to the distinction between these two constructs, two different types of standards have been proposed—one reflecting a desired state and the other an ideal state (Oliver 1993). Boulding et al. (1993), proposed that the ideal expectation (or
"should") be used as the referent in the expectancy disconfirmation involving service quality and the desirable expectation (or "will") as a referent in the case of satisfaction.

Others proposed a distinction that involves a more fundamental clarification of the conceptual domains of these constructs. Oliver (1981), defined satisfaction as "the summary psychological state resulting when the emotion surrounding disconfirmed expectations is coupled with consumer's prior feelings about the consumption experience" (p. 27). This definition suggests that satisfaction is a consequence of, or a reaction to, expectancy disconfirmation and the resulting outcome is an affective one. There appears to be greater accord in the literature that service quality, on the other hand, is a cognitive construct (e.g., Oliver, 1997; Brady and Robertson, 2001). Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988), who developed the widely used SERVQUAL scale, defined it as a judgment or evaluation relating to the superiority of the service, assuming that consumers apply a mental calculus to reach an evaluation. According to Rust and Oliver (1994), the evaluation of service quality results from specific attributes or cues related to the service, while satisfaction involves a wider range of determinants, including quality judgments, needs, and perceptions of equity.

The lack of clarity in the definitions of service quality and satisfaction is further linked to the ongoing controversy surrounding the causal order of service quality and satisfaction (Bitner 1990; Bolton and Drew 1991). This debate over which comes first has many similarities to the cognition-emotion debate (Tomiuk 2000). Distinguishing between service quality as a cognitive construct and satisfaction as an affective construct suggests a causal order that positions service quality as an antecedent to satisfaction. This is consistent with the attitude theoretical framework proposed by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) and refined further by Bagozzi (1992). Although not absolute, much evidence has been documented for the service quality to satisfaction link in recent consumer satisfaction studies including those in the area of health care marketing (Brady and Robertson 2001; Gotlieb, Grewal, and Brown, 1994; Rust and Oliver, 1994; Andaleeb, 2001).

It has been understood that customer satisfaction and service quality are conceptually distinct from one and another, but closely related. Service quality is a cognitive, left-brained, evaluative, objective concept while satisfaction is a
combination of an affective, right-brained, feeling-based, and subjective component (Shemwell et al., 1998).

The relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction is still a mystery, whether the customer satisfaction is an antecedent of service quality or vice versa. Several researchers including Parasuraman, Zeithaml, Berry, Bitner, Bolton, and Drew support the idea that customer satisfaction leads to service quality (Lee et al., 2000). This group of researchers see service quality as a long-run overall evaluation while the customer satisfaction is a transaction-specific evaluation. Other researchers such as Cronin, Taylor, Spreng, Mackoy, and Oliver suggested that service quality is an antecedent of customer satisfaction (Lee et al., 2000). Customer satisfaction stems from the fact that service providers provide service that meets or exceeds customers' expectations.

2.8 Customer Satisfaction Importance

There is evidence of strategic links between the level of customer satisfaction and a firm's overall performance. Fournier and Mick (1997), declared that customer satisfaction is central to the marketing concept. Lovelock, Wirtz and Hean Tat Keh (2002), stated that customer satisfaction is the means to achieving a number of key business goals:

1. Satisfaction is inextricably linked to customer loyalty and relationship commitment.
2. Highly satisfied (delighted) customers spread positive word-of-mouth and in effect become walking-talking advertisement for an organization whose service has pleased them, thus lowering the cost of attracting new customers.
3. Highly satisfied customers may be more forgiving. Someone who has enjoyed good service many times in the past is more likely to believe that a service failure is a deviation from the norm.
4. Delighted customers are less susceptible to comparative offerings.
FIGURE 2.6: BENEFITS OF CUSTOMER SATISFACTION AND SERVICE QUALITY

- Insulates Customers from Competition
- Can Create Sustainable Advantage
- Reduces Failure Costs

Customer satisfaction (and service quality)

- Encourages Repeat Patronage and Loyalty
- Enhances/ Promotes Positive Word-of-Mouth
- Lowers Costs of Attracting New Customers

Source: Lovelock, Patterson, 1998, “Service Marketing”, p.448

2.9 Customer Satisfaction Models

The basic customer satisfaction model (Winner,2000), suggested that levels of customer satisfaction with a product or service are determined by how well the product performs relative to what the customer expected. In the central rectangle there’s perceived customer satisfaction. The circle on the right is experienced quality, or product or service actual performance. To the left, the customer is assumed to form an expectation or prediction about the product’s performance. This expectation is formed from a variety of sources of information with the product or service. If the product/service meets the expectations, the customer is satisfied to different degrees. If the product/service just meets the expectation, satisfaction is less than if the product/service goes beyond expectations. Any performance below expectations results in a dissatisfied customer.

FIGURE 2.7: CUSTOMER SATISFACTION MODEL

-Market communication
-Image
-Word-of-mouth
-Past experience
-Customer needs

Expected quality

Total perceived quality

 Experienced quality

Patterson (1995), investigated the dominant model in satisfaction research. It is disconfirmation of expectations. The model investigated by Patterson is related to the variation between a customer pre-purchase expectations and perception of service performance. The disconfirmation is the difference between the expectation and perceived performance. The theory of disconfirmation of expectation indicated that expectation is crucial as a comparison standard in the formation of satisfaction judgments. Expectation is shaped by previous service experiences, word-of-mouth, various forms of marketing communications. According to the study, service quality is defined as the comparison between customer expectation and perception of service. For each service attribute, customers are asked to rate a 5-point scale which consists of expectations and how they think the company performed. When the performance rating is lower than expectation, this indicates dissatisfaction, while the reverse indicates satisfaction. When Perceived Performance is less than Expectation, the results fall into dissatisfaction. When Perceived Performance is equal to Expectation, the result falls into mere Satisfaction. When Perceived Performance exceeds Expectation, the result falls into Delight.

![Figure 2.8: The Disconfirmation of Expectations Model](image-url)

The disconfirmation model is based on satisfaction determined primarily from the disconfirmation of prior expectations (Olson and Dover, 1967; Olshavsky and Miller, 1972; Oliver, 1980; Day, 1984). The underlying principal in the disconfirmation model is that if the performance of the service provider meets or exceeds expectations, then the customer is more likely to be satisfied. If the firm’s performance fails to meet expectations, then the customer is more likely to be dissatisfied (Oliver, 1980). Parasuraman, et al. (1985, 1988, and 1991), extended the model into the service quality literature and the authors operationalized the model with the development of SERVQUAL (1998).

2.10 Definition of the Selected Demographic Factors

Demographic factors consist of age, gender, marital status, education level, occupation and income variables. Demographic or personal characteristics are most often used as the basis for market segmentation, and also affect the extent to which a person uses products in a specific product category (Pride and Ferrell, 1997).

Demographic or personal characteristics are most often used as the basis for market segmentation. Berman and Evans (2001), mentioned that groups of consumers and individual consumers could be identified in terms of such demographic variables. The researcher selected age, gender, income level, occupation and nationality as the demographic factors when identifying the expectations and perceptions of spa users towards service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok.

Age

Age is defined as the period of time a person has lived. Age is one essential variable of demographic characteristics because it has an impact on behavior. The same age range may have similar consumption pattern. In turn, difference in age range has various consumption patterns. Kotler (2000), mentioned that consumers of different age groups obviously have very different needs and wants. They buy different goods and services during the lifetime. Roger and Paul (2000), stated that it is clear that consumers’ requirements change with age. Hoyer and Maclinnis (1997), determined that there are four main age groups: teens, generation X- 20-35 years old, baby boomers- 36-50 years old and those who are older than 50 years.
In the previous studies of spas and spa users, it was discovered that baby boomers represent the most active group regarding using spa services. They search for any methods to maintain their healthy and young look and they turn to spa services in order to find the solution in their battle with the physical age (M. Brighton, 2003). The previous researches of spas and spa users have shown that over 60% of spa visitors were between 30-49 years old.

Gender

Gender is defined as sex identification of a person. Gender has always been a distinguishing variable for segmentation. Gender influences consumer's thinking, values, attitudes, behavior, wants and purchase decision (Kotler, 1997).

When considering the gender of spa users, the difference in consumption behavior is evident. According to the previous researches of the previous years, around 75-80% of spa visitors were females. Nowadays, the number of men considering a spa as a place for women customers is reducing. More and more men, especially those who have concurrent stress at work, are seeking the ways for relaxation and healing the emotional tenure.

Income

Income can be defined as the financial gain (earned or unearned) accruing over a given period of time. Income can determine consumer needs, thinking and behavior. Income is the factor that marketers consider when planning product advertising as well as determining price strategy. Income has been an important variable for market segmentation (Schiffman and Kanuk, 1994).

For many people going to spas is perceived as luxury. Some people cannot afford visiting spas because they consider spa services costly. In the research on spa consumers in Asia (Intelligent Spas, 2003), 25% of respondents mentioned that they never visited a spa because spas are costly. In the research on spa industry of Thailand it was mentioned that average income of the spa visitors was 25,000 Baht and more.
Occupation

Occupation can be defined as the principal activity in one's life that one does to earn money. Occupation influences consumption pattern (Kotler, 1997). Occupation reflects values, attitudes, tastes, lifestyle. Schiffman and Kanuk (1994) stated that occupation, income and education have close correlation.

The research on spa consumers in Asia (Intelligent Spas, 2003), showed that 28% of spa visitors were executive and supervisors, 26% were managers or department heads, 18% were professionals.

Nationality

Nationality can be defined as the status of belonging to a particular nation by birth or naturalization. Nationality influences consumption behavior. Nationality can determine values, wants, needs, lifestyle, and characteristics of consumers.

Thailand attracts huge number of tourists all year round. This fact influences the consumption pattern of spa users. The previous researches have shown that about 80% of spa visitors were foreigners.

2.11 Previous Researches


The Spa Industry Survey Program (Thailand, 2002)

One of the previous researches on spas, spa operators, spa consumers was done by Intelligent Spas Pte Ltd (Singapore, 2002). This Spa Industry Survey Program was a comprehensive survey program that provided extensive data on a variety of topics that
influence the business of spas and spa related organizations and the behavior of spa users in Thailand.

The Objectives of the research were:

1. To establish industry averages for key management, operations and performance indicators.
2. To allow spas to benchmark their own performance against industry averages.
3. To enable organizations to better service and support the industry
4. To generate greater awareness of the spa industry to promote growth.

Industry Size

It is estimated there were 230 spa facilities in Thailand, employing over 4,000 people. Approximately 3.3 million people visited Thai spas during 2001/2002, 80% of which were international tourists. Spa facilities generated approximately 85 million dollars in revenue during the 2001/2002 financial year.

Spa Facility Profiles

The majority of spas in Thailand were located within a hotel or resort. Day spas and clubs made up a small percentage of the market. All spas offered private treatment rooms, having eight rooms on average. 83% of spas had couple rooms. 33% had a plunge pool, the majority being gender-shared. 50% of spas had a relaxation room. 100% of spas had a waiting area. 88% of spas had retail area.

Therapies and treatments practiced

The therapies practiced most often in spas were aromatherapy and reflexology. Approximately two thirds of spas offered mud therapy. All spas (100%) offered Thai massage. The majority of spas introduced a variety of new treatments in 2001 and planned to introduce more treatments in 2002 and 2003. Common new treatments included stone therapy and Ayurvedic head massage. Other common massages offered in spas were aromatherapy, Swedish and sports massages. Exfoliation and
body wraps were the most common body treatments offered. The majority of spas offered traditional beauty services including facials, manicures, pedicures and waxing.

**Qualifications, Training and Education of Employees**

The majority of spa employees were trained on the job. A greater proportion of resort spa employees were professionally qualified, compared to hotel spa employees. 30% of beauty therapists were professionally qualified. 71% of spas conducted or arranged a variety of training courses. 88% of those stated their employees’ training related to products or new techniques. Certifications were undertaken in 12% of spas.

**Spa visits**

Spa visits had increased by 64% over 2000-2002. The most common purpose of visit to a spa was for massage, followed by body treatments. 13% of visits were primarily to purchase retail products. The average repeat visitation rate was 24% The average occupancy rate was 50%.

**Client Demographics**

59% of spa visitors were females, 41% males. Over 60% of spa visitors were aged between 30 and 49 years of age. 5% of spa visitors were 60 years old. International tourists provided 79% of all spa visits.

Service Quality

To assess service quality in the spas of Thailand SERVQUAL model was applied. The traditional five dimensions were considered to be the variables upon which expectations and perceptions of spa visitors were measured. The Gap 5 has appeared to exist. The customers’ expectations slightly exceeded the perceptions of actual service performance. The slight difference between expectations and perceptions was traced when assessing service quality in terms of responsiveness and empathy. The bigger difference between expectations and perceptions was noticed when assessing the service quality in terms of tangibles, reliability and assurance.


The data analysis and preparation of the Spa Consumer Survey Asia (2003), was conducted by Intelligent Spas Pte Ltd. The responses were collected via three online surveys, designed and implemented by Spa Asia Media Pte Ltd.

Frequency of Spa Visitation

30% of respondents stated they visited spas once a month. 29% only visited spas when they traveled. 94% liked to try new spas, compared to 6% who preferred their favorite spas.

Reasons why Never Visited a Day Spa

5% respondents that stated they had never been to a spa before, majority said it was because they didn’t have enough knowledge about treatments. 25% stated spas were too costly.

FIGURE 2.11: REASONS FOR NOT GOING TO SPAS

![Figure 2.11: Reasons for Not Going to Spas](image)

The factors that make spa experience favorable

Professional and experienced therapists were mentioned by 57% of the respondents when asked what made a good spa experience. 55% of respondents considered ambience within a spa very important in assessing spa performance. Cleanliness was mentioned by 16% of respondents as an important factor.

The factors that make spa experience unfavorable

Unskilled therapists were mentioned as contributing to bad spa experience by 51% of respondents. 40% stated inadequate facilities negatively impacted spa experience. 10% believed therapists talking during treatments did not allow them to relax. 34% defined poor service as one of the negative factors in spa experience 8% stated that the selling and promotion was too aggressive.

Service Quality Evaluation in the Slovenian Spas

Damijan Mumel and Boris Snoj (1999), in their study of service quality dimensions in the Slovenian spas applied the SERVQUAL model to achieve the objectives of their research which were as follows:

1. the identification of profile of importance of general health spa service quality components
2. the identification of groups of guests (segments) according to the degree of their demand in the research in 1991 compared with 1999.

The empirical study of the importance of service quality dimensions from the generally accepted service quality model, proposed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1985), in the health spa industry in Slovenia was undertaken.

In the assessment of the importance of health spas service quality components the questionnaire from Snoj’s 1991 study was used. It was developed on the basis of a list of service quality attributes derived from SERVQUAL (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, Berry, 1986, 1988), which was slightly corrected by using the most commonly used components of service quality in service marketing literature (Snoj, 1995).

The questionnaire measured the importance of 23 components of health spas service quality classified in generally used SERVQUAL five dimensions:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Services quality dimensions</th>
<th>Services quality components</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Tangibles</strong></td>
<td>1. The condition of facilities, equipment and surroundings,</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2. The adjustment of facilities, equipment and surroundings with the type of services provided,</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>3. The heterogeneity of facilities, equipment and surroundings according to the type of services provided,</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4. The location of the health spa,</td>
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<td>5. Sleeping,</td>
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<td></td>
<td>6. Food and beverages,</td>
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<td></td>
<td>7. Medical and other professional programs,</td>
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<td>8. Entertainment,</td>
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<td>9. Recreation,</td>
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<td>10. Price ranges and terms of payment,</td>
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<td>11. Other guests,</td>
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<td></td>
<td>12. Employees' appearance,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Reliability</strong></td>
<td>13. Employees' professionalism,</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14. Reliability of services,</td>
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<td></td>
<td>15. The employees' knowledge of the assortment of health spa services,</td>
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<td></td>
<td>16. Availability, clearness and fairness of information,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3. Responsiveness</strong></td>
<td>17. Employees' overload,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18. Promptness of service implementation</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>4. Assurance</strong></td>
<td>19. Health spa image,</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20. Physical safety of guests and security of their valuables,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21. Management support in solving problems,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5. Empathy</strong></td>
<td>22. Employees' capacity to recognize the needs of their guests,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>23. Employees' commitment to the comfort of their guests.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Damijan Mumel and Boris Snoj, 1999, "Cluster Analysis as a Tool of Guests Segmentation by the Degree of Their Demand", p. 22

The Role of Service Quality and Satisfaction in Customer Loyalty

Duangrat Tiensuwan (2001), in her study “The Role of Service Quality and Satisfaction in Customer Loyalty in Private and Public Hospitals in Bangkok” emphasized the importance of service quality in health services and its significant influence on the customer satisfaction.

The population of the study consisted of out-door patients of public and private hospitals in the Bangkok Metropolis. The sample was collected from 5 public and 5 private hospitals in the Bangkok Metropolitan area. The sample of the survey was 500 out-door patients, 50 patients from each hospital. The respondents rated the service provided by the hospital based on their expectations.
According to findings there were more female out-door patients (65% on average of the two hospitals) than the male out-door-patients (35% on average). It could be concluded that out-door patients of both public and private hospitals are dominated by female patients. For the age group of 36 to 45 years has maximum frequencies in both private (31.2%) and public hospitals (38.3%). Half of the respondents, 48% in public hospitals and 53.5% in private hospitals, were single.

It is evident that out-door patients of the private hospitals attained higher educational qualifications than the patients in the public hospitals. In terms of income, 50% of out patients of public hospitals earned less than 10,000 Baht per month compared to 32.4% of out-door patients of the private hospitals. In general, more than 50% of out-door patients repeated visits to public hospitals while 46% of the out-door patients repeated visits to private hospitals. The appearance of the hospital employees was the most expected service for the respondents in the private hospitals. It was followed by modern looking equipment, and visual appearance of the hospitals. For the public hospitals, the most attractive services expected by the respondents were responsiveness, given prompt services by the staff, assurance, knowledge of the staff in replying to questions, and reliability.

**A Study of Service Quality in Clark Hatch Fitness Center**

The objective of the research was to study the service quality of The Clark Hatch Fitness Center at Silom Road branch by applying the SERVQUAL instrument to measure Gap 5 between customers’ expectations and perceptions of service quality. The study found a significant difference in terms of five SERVQUAL dimensions between customers’ expectations and their perceptions of service quality. Moreover, the results showed no difference in expectations of service quality when classified by age, gender, occupation, education level, and nationality. There was a significant difference in expectations of service quality when classified by income level. In perceptions respect, there was no difference in perceptions when classified by age, gender, income, education, and nationality. There was difference in perceptions when segmented by occupation. The researcher concluded that the customers of The Clark Hatch Fitness Center were dissatisfied with the service quality in it.
Chapter 3
The Research Framework

This chapter embodies a discussion of the research frameworks. It consists of the theoretical framework that the researcher used as the basis for developing the conceptual framework. The research hypotheses are described; operationalization of the selected variables is summarized in tables. A brief review of relevant literature used to develop the conceptual framework of the research is included.

3.1 Theoretical Framework

The customers form series of expectations about what they would like to receive and how they expect to be treated. The performance of the service provider is then measured against these expectations. If the service provider fails to meet their expectations, there is a gap. In this case dissatisfaction occurs and the service is judged to be of poor quality. On the other hand, if the service exceeds their expectations, the customers are delighted and the service is said to be of high quality. If the perceived performance of service stands on the same level as the customers' expectations, it results into mere satisfaction.

As a theoretical basis for the research, one of the most common used models of measuring service quality was chosen. Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1985, 1988), developed a measuring instrument, called SERVQUAL, to measure customer perceptions of service quality. The SERVQUAL model assumes developing the questionnaire which elicits two parallel sets of data. Scores are obtained for customers' expectations (E) and for customers' perceptions of the actual performance of the service (P). Quality of experience is then determined as the perceived difference between actual performance and that originally expected (John, Tyas, 1996). This concept is also known as disconfirmation paradigm (Parasuraman, et al., 1985). The smaller the discrepancy (difference), the more neutral the satisfaction response. The larger positive discrepancy (performance significantly exceeds expectations) the greater the degree of satisfaction.
The larger negative discrepancy (expectations significantly exceed performance) the greater the degree of dissatisfaction.

The foundation of the Model is a set of four gaps which are the major contributors to the service quality gap which customers may perceive:

Gap 1 is the difference between the customer's expectations and management perceptions of customer expectations. Management does not understand how the service should be designed and what support or secondary services the customer requires, i.e. what the right quality for the customer is.

Gap 2 is the difference between the company's quality specifications and management perceptions of customer expectations of the service and its quality. Often in an attempt to reduce costs, management places internal restrictions on how a service is to be performed, restrictions which deprive the staff of the opportunity to meet the customer's expectations.

Gap 3 is the difference between the quality of the service delivery and quality specifications. Even if the quality of the service is carefully specified in a company, the result in practice may be different from what was intended. Service quality is difficult to standardize since it is often dependent on personal contact between the customer and company staff.

Gap 4 is the difference between the quality of the service delivery and the quality promised in communicating the product/service. It is important not to promise the customer more than the company can deliver. At the same time, it is important for the company to inform customers about the efforts being made to elevate the quality, which would otherwise not be visible to the customer.

These four gaps emerge from an executive perspective on a service organization's design, marketing and delivery of services. They, in turn, contribute to another gap, mentioned earlier, Gap 5, which is the discrepancy between customers' expected services and the perceived service actually delivered.

This gap is a function of the other four gaps: i.e. Gap 5 = f (gaps 1, 2, 3, 4) It is this gap that Parasuraman et al. (1985) seek to measure using the SERVQUAL instrument.

The Gap Model which has served as the theoretical model for the research is shown in Figure 3.1.
3.2 Conceptual Framework

The researcher has designed the conceptual framework for studying the expectations, perceptions of spa users, the difference between expectations and perception and influence of demographic characteristics of spa users on their expectations and perceptions. The conceptual framework was developed on the basis of SERVQUAL model and its five dimensions. The five dimensions of service quality chosen for measuring expectations and perceptions of spa users in the selected spas are tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy.
FIGURE 3.2: THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

SELECTED DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Age
Gender
Income
Occupation
Nationality

EXPECTATIONS
Tangibles
Reliability
Responsiveness
Assurance
Empathy

PERCEPTIONS
Tangibles
Reliability
Responsiveness
Assurance
Empathy

GAP 5
Expectations - Perceptions
3.3 Research Hypotheses

A hypothesis is an unproved proposition to explain a certain fact or observation. A working hypothesis is a scientist's best estimation, based on scientific knowledge and assumptions, of the results of an experiment. One reason that hypotheses are so important is that in order to evaluate the significance of research data, scientists need something to compare it to. A hypothesis typically provides the key point of comparison for experimental data. The point of an experiment is to test the hypothesis. The null hypothesis for any experiment is that the results were due to random chance alone. Statistical tests cannot evaluate working hypotheses directly; they can only provide the basis for accepting or rejecting the corresponding null hypothesis.

The researcher has set the hypotheses in order to study the difference between customer expectations and perceived performance toward spas in Bangkok. Customer’s expectations and perceptions were assessed considering the demographic characteristics as well as considering the five dimensions of service quality.

The Hypothesis statements

Ho1: There is no difference between customers’ expectations and perceptions of service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok.

Ha1: There is difference between customers’ expectations and perceptions of service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok.

Ho2: There is no difference between customers’ expectations and perceptions of service quality regarding tangibles in the selected spas in Bangkok.

Ha2: There is difference between customers’ expectations and perceptions of service quality regarding tangibles in the selected spas in Bangkok.
Ho3: There is no difference between customers’ expectations and perceptions of service quality regarding reliability in the selected spas in Bangkok.

Ha3: There is difference between customers’ expectations and perceptions of service quality regarding reliability in the selected spas in Bangkok.

Ho4: There is no difference between customers’ expectations and perceptions of service quality regarding responsiveness in the selected spas in Bangkok.

Ha4: There is difference between customers’ expectations and perceptions of service quality regarding responsiveness in the selected spas in Bangkok.

Ho5: There is no difference between customers’ expectations and perceptions of service quality regarding assurance in the selected spas in Bangkok.

Ha5: There is difference between customers’ expectations and perceptions of service quality regarding assurance in the selected spas in Bangkok.

Ho6: There is no difference between customers’ expectations and perceptions of service quality regarding empathy in the selected spas in Bangkok.

Ha6: There is difference between customers’ expectations and perceptions of service quality regarding empathy in the selected spas in Bangkok.

Ho7: There is no difference in customers’ expectations of service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok when classified by customers’ age.

Ha7: There is difference in customers’ expectations of service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok when classified by customers’ age.
Ho8: There is no difference in customers’ expectations of service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok when classified by customers’ gender.

Ha8: There is difference in customers’ expectations of service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok when classified by customers’ gender.

Ho9: There is no difference in customers’ expectations of service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok when classified by customers’ income level.

Ha9: There is difference in customers’ expectations of service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok when classified by customers’ income level.

Ho10: There is no difference in customers’ expectations of service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok when classified by customers’ occupation.

Ha10: There is difference in customers’ expectations of service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok when classified by customers’ occupation.

Ho11: There is no difference in customers’ expectations of service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok when classified by customers’ nationality.

Ha11: There is difference in customers’ expectations of service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok when classified by customers’ nationality.

Ho12: There is no difference in customers’ perceptions of service in the selected spas in Bangkok when classified by customers’ age.

Ha12: There is difference in customers’ perceptions of service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok when classified by customers’ age.
There is no difference in customers’ perceptions of service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok when classified by customers’ gender.

There is difference in customers’ perceptions of service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok when classified by customers’ gender.

There is no difference in customers’ perceptions of service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok when classified by customers’ income level.

There is difference in customers’ perceptions of service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok when classified by customers’ income level.

There is no difference in customers’ perceptions of service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok when classified by customers’ occupation.

There is difference in customers’ perceptions of service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok when classified by customers’ occupation.

There is no difference in customers’ perceptions of service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok when classified by customers’ nationality.

There is difference in customers’ perceptions of service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok when classified by customers’ nationality.

3.4 Operationalization of the Variables

The variables for identifying customers’ expectations and customers’ perceptions of service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok were summarized in the operational tables 3.1, 3.2, and 3.3. The tables consist of the conceptual definitions, operational components, and the specified measurement scales that are appropriate for them.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONCEPT</th>
<th>CONCEPTUAL DEFINITION</th>
<th>OPERATIONAL COMPONENT</th>
<th>TYPE OF MEASUREMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AGE</td>
<td>Age of the respondents The period of time a person has lived</td>
<td>-younger than 20 y.o.</td>
<td>Ordinal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-21-30 y.o.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-31-40 y.o.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-41-50 y.o.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-51 and older</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GENDER</td>
<td>Gender of the respondents Sex identification of a person</td>
<td>-Male</td>
<td>Nominal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-Female</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INCOME</td>
<td>Monthly income of the respondents The financial gain (earned or unearned) accruing over a given period of time</td>
<td>-Below 10,000 Baht</td>
<td>Ordinal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-10,001-20,000 Baht</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-20,001-30,000 Baht</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-30,001 Baht and above</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OCCUPATION</td>
<td>Occupation of the respondents The principal activity in a one's life that one does to earn money</td>
<td>-Firm employee</td>
<td>Nominal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-Self-employed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-Unemployed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-Student</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-Other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NATIONALITY</td>
<td>Nationality of the respondents The status of belonging to a particular nation by birth or naturalization</td>
<td>-Thai</td>
<td>Nominal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-American</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-European</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-Other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

 TABLE 3.1: THE OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS OF DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONCEPT</th>
<th>CONCEPTUAL DEFINITION</th>
<th>OPERATIONAL COMPONENT</th>
<th>TYPE OF MEASUREMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| EXPECTATIONS OF TANGIBLES    | The customers’ expectations towards appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personnel, and communication materials in service firms | - Equipment  
- Appeal of facilities  
- Choice of treatments  
- Ambient conditions  
- Personnel appearance | Interval            |
| EXPECTATIONS OF RELIABILITY  | The customers’ expectations towards service providers’ ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately | - Interest in solving problems  
- Dependability  
- Records’ accuracy  
- Keeping promises | Interval            |
| EXPECTATIONS OF RESPONSIVENESS | The customers’ expectations towards service providers’ willingness to help customers and provide prompt service | - Willingness to help customers  
- Responsiveness to customers’ requests  
- Prompt service  
- Exact information on services performance | Interval            |
| EXPECTATIONS OF ASSURANCE    | The customers’ expectations towards knowledge and courtesy of service providers and their ability to convey trust and confidence | - Ability to instill confidence  
- Ability to provide safety  
- Service guarantee  
- Personnel’s courtesy  
- Personnel’s knowledge | Interval            |
| EXPECTATIONS OF EMPATHY      | The customers’ expectations towards provision of caring individualized attention to customers by service providers | - Individual attention to customers  
- Keeping customers’ best interests at heart  
- Understanding specific customer needs  
- Making operating hours convenient for customers | Interval            |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONCEPT</th>
<th>CONCEPTUAL DEFINITION</th>
<th>OPERATIONAL COMPONENT</th>
<th>TYPE OF MEASUREMENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| PERCEPTIONS OF TANGIBLES| The customers' perceptions towards appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personnel, and communication materials in service firms | - Equipment  
- Appeal of facilities  
- Choice of treatments  
- Ambient conditions  
- Personnel appearance | Interval |
| PERCEPTIONS OF RELIABILITY | The customers' perceptions towards service providers' ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately | - Interest in solving problems  
- Dependability  
- Records' accuracy  
- Keeping promises | Interval |
| PERCEPTIONS OF RESPONSIVENESS | The customers' perceptions towards service providers' willingness to help customers and provide prompt service | - Willingness to help customers  
- Responsiveness to customers' requests  
- Prompt service  
- Exact information on services performance | Interval |
| PERCEPTIONS OF ASSURANCE | The customers' perceptions towards knowledge and courtesy of service providers and their ability to convey trust and confidence | - Ability to instill confidence  
- Ability to provide safety  
- Service guarantee  
- Personnel's courtesy  
- Personnel's knowledge | Interval |
| PERCEPTIONS OF EMPATHY | The customers' perceptions towards provision of caring individualized attention to customers by service providers | - Individual attention to customers  
- Keeping customers' best interests at heart  
- Understanding specific customer needs  
- Making operating hours convenient for customers | Interval |
Chapter 4  
Research Methodology

The objective of the research was to study and compare customers’ expectations and customers’ perceptions of service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok, using a modified version of SERVQUAL developed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry in 1985 and 1988. Consideration was given to the relation of demographic characteristics to customers’ expectations and their perceptions of service quality. The chapter outlines the research design, hypotheses, sampling method, instrumentation, and data analysis methods utilized in the research.

4.1 Research Methods Used

The research methods chosen for the analysis of the obtained data can be clustered into three types, which are: Descriptive analysis, Inferential analysis, and Questionnaire.

Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive analysis refers to the transformation of raw data into a form that makes them easy to understand and interpret. Describing responses or observations is typically the first form of the analysis. Calculating averages, frequency distributions, and percentage distributions are the most common ways of summarizing data.

As the analysis progresses beyond the descriptive stage, researchers generally apply the tools of inferential statistics (Zikmund, 2000).

The researcher used descriptive method to explain the characteristics of the situation. It was applied to describe the demographic characteristics of the respondents.
**Inferential Analysis**

Inferential analysis refers to making inferences or judgments about a population on a basis of sample. (Zikmund, 2000). The researcher used the inferential statistics in order to test the research hypotheses.

1. The Paired Sample T-Test was applied to identify whether there is difference between customers’ expectations and perceptions of service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok.

2. The Analysis of Variance ANOVA (One-Way ANOVA) was applied to identify whether there is difference in customers’ expectations of service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok when classified by demographic characteristics (age, monthly income, occupation, and nationality), and whether there is difference in customers’ perceptions of service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok when classified by demographic characteristics (age, monthly income, occupation, and nationality).

3. Independent Samples T-Test was applied to identify The Analysis of Variance ANOVA (One-Way ANOVA) was applied to identify whether there is difference in customers’ expectations of service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok when classified by demographic characteristics (gender), and whether there is difference in customers’ perceptions of service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok when classified by demographic characteristics (gender).

**4.2 Respondents and Sampling Procedure**

**4.2.1 Target population**

Target population is the complete group of specific population elements relevant to the research project. (Zikmund, 2000). This research aimed to study the expectations and perceptions of spa users towards service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok. Hence, the target population were the spa users who visited the selected spas in Bangkok in the second part of February and the first part of March.
4.2.2 Sampling Procedure

In non-probability sampling, the probability of any particular member of the population being chosen is unknown. The selection of sampling units in non-probability sampling is quite arbitrary, as researchers rely heavily on personal judgment. (Zikmund, 2000). Since the researcher needed to distribute a large number of questionnaires, the convenience sampling was considered as the non-probability sampling method. Convenience sampling is a sampling procedure used to obtain those units or people most conveniently available. (Zikmund, 2000).

TABLE 4.1: DISTRIBUTION OF QUESTIONNAIRES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOTAL NUMBER OF SELECTED SPAS</th>
<th>33</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS</td>
<td>396</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NUMBER OF QUESTIONNAIRES PER SPA</td>
<td>12 (396/33)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2.3 Sample size

To define the sample size in this research, the researcher considered the summary table of the service quality models offered by Franceschini, F., Cignetti, M., and Caldara, M. (1998) “Comparing tools for service quality evaluation”, Chapter 2, p.13. According to this summary table, the sample size for distributing questionnaires based on SERVQUAL model is from 290 to 487 depending on the company type and size. The researcher chose the middle point in this range which appeared to be 388. The researcher increased the number from 388 to 396 in order to be able to distribute equal number of questionnaires in each of 33 selected spas in Bangkok. Table 4.1 represents the proportion in distributing the questionnaires to the sample of respondents.
4.3 Research Instrument / Questionnaire

The researcher chose the survey method, a questionnaire in particular, in order to obtain data needed for the analysis customers’ expectations and perceptions of service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok. The construct of questions is adopted and adapted from the SERVQUAL model of measuring service quality developed by Parasuraman et al., 1985, 1989). The adaptation was based on the study of spa consumers in Thailand and Asia by Intelligent Spas Pte LTD (2002, 2003), Singapore. In particular, the questionnaire items were adapted based on the items mentioned in the survey done by Intelligent Spas Pte LTD.

The SERVQUAL instrument was developed in 1988 by Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry, and subsequently refined by the authors in 1991 as a general methodology for measuring service quality. A set of questions representing five dimensions of service quality was created. The instrument has been used in research in a wide range of service industries, such as insurance, hospitality, education, health care, banking, as well as other service industries (Parasuraman et al., 1991).

The SERVQUAL model identifies specific criteria by which customers evaluate service quality. These criteria are categorized in five major dimensions. A survey instrument was developed to measure the gap between customers’ expectations for excellence and their perceptions of actual service delivered.

The SERVQUAL instrument was chosen for this research for several reasons. First, it is well documented in numerous studies and its strengths and weaknesses have been documented. SERVQUAL follows a scientific approach in its measurement scale development, Service Quality=Perceptions-Expectations (P-E). Furthermore, SERVQUAL is widely used by researchers around the world in various service industries and is more firmly based on research (Quester and Romanjuk, 1997).
Questionnaire

The questionnaire embodied the three parts:

1. Part 1: The customers’ expectations: 22 questions regarding the customers’ expectations of the five service quality dimensions prior using the spa services.

2. Part 2: The customers’ perceptions: 22 questions regarding the customers’ perceptions of the five service quality dimensions after using the spa services.

   The 5-point Likert scale was used for identifying the customers’ opinion towards different aspects of service quality:
   - 5- Strongly Agree
   - 4- Agree
   - 3- Neutral
   - 2- Disagree
   - Strongly Disagree

   It was applied for both expectations and perceptions sections.

3. Part 3: Demographic characteristics of respondents: This part of the questionnaire was designed to obtain the needed information about the demographic profiles of the respondents. It will include the questions about age, gender, income, occupation and nationality designed in the form of the multiple choice.

4.4 Collection of Data / Gathering Procedures

   Decisions have to be made about what kind of information is needed to enlighten the problem, and how to get the information and data. There are two types of data.

   Primary data is data gathered and assembled specifically for the research project at hand. (Zikmund, 2000). Primary data was gathered by the researcher herself, while secondary data has already existed. It is common to start by studying data that already exists, such as literature studies. Data collecting for this research was performed by distribution of 396 copies of the questionnaires in the selected 33 spas in Bangkok. The spas for distribution the questionnaires are defined in Chapter 1. The convenience sampling was used to collect the data. The researcher revised the 396 questionnaires and
identified that 6 questionnaires were not appropriately filled in. Hence, the total number of questionnaires for the analysis reduced from 396 to 390.

Secondary data is the data that have been previously collected for some project other than the one at hand. (Zikmund, 2000). Secondary data was collected from various sources, such as books, magazines, articles, textbooks on marketing and research methodology.

4.4.1 Instrument Reliability

Reliability can be thought of as consistency in measurement. Asubonteng, Mc Cleary, and Swan (1996) summarized Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients for the SERVQUAL dimensions across several studies. The researchers found relatively similar reliability which supported the internal reliability or cohesiveness of the scale items. Examples of these studies include Cronin and Taylor (1992), McA lexander, Kaldenburg, and Koenig (1994), Carman (1990). The lowest reliability reported in these studies related to SERVQUAL method was 0.59 and the highest was 0.97.

In this research, the 30 questionnaires were pre-tested by the respondents in order to obtain the data for calculating Cronbach Coefficient Alpha and to check whether the questionnaire can be accepted as reliable. The summary table of the output is presented in Table 4.2. The reliability analysis procedure with help of SPSS is attached in Appendix B

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Quality Dimensions</th>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Customers' Expectations</th>
<th>Customers' Perceptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TANGIBLES</td>
<td>1-5</td>
<td>0.8021</td>
<td>0.7955</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RELIABILITY</td>
<td>6-9</td>
<td>0.7529</td>
<td>0.7696</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RESPONSIVENESS</td>
<td>10-13</td>
<td>0.7500</td>
<td>0.7367</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASSURANCE</td>
<td>14-18</td>
<td>0.6268</td>
<td>0.7821</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMPATHY</td>
<td>19-22</td>
<td>0.7329</td>
<td>0.7956</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>0.7278</td>
<td>0.7171</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.5 Statistical Treatment of Data

The collected data were sorted and coded into the symbolic form that was applied in Statistical Package for Social Science program (SPSS). The program was utilized and then the results were used to summarize and interpret data. All the obtained tables and data presentations from SPSS procedures are supported with the descriptive analysis.

4.5.1 Descriptive Statistics

The researcher used Descriptive statistics of Frequency Distribution such as means, standard deviation, percentage to describe the demographic characteristics of the respondents which are age, gender, income, occupation and nationality.

4.5.2 Inferential Statistics

The researcher used Inferential statistics to do hypothesis testing. The following methods and tests were applied:

Paired Sample T-Test was used to test hypotheses H1, H2, H3, H4, H5, H6, which are related to studying the difference between customers' expectations and their perceptions of service quality dimensions in the selected spas in Bangkok.

One-Way Analysis of Variance ANOVA was used to test hypotheses H7, H9, H10, H11, H12, H14, H15, H16, which are related to studying expectations and perceptions of spa users towards the service quality dimensions of the selected spas in Bangkok when classified by age, income, occupation and nationality.

Independent T-Test was used to test hypotheses H8, and H13, which are related to studying expectations and perceptions of spa users towards the service quality dimensions of the selected spas in Bangkok when classified by gender.
4.5.3 Summary of the Hypotheses.

**TABLE 4.3: SUMMARY OF THE HYPOTHESES AND STATISTICAL ANALYSIS METHODS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HYPOTHESIS</th>
<th>STATISTICAL ANALYSIS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ho1: There is no difference between customers’ expectations and perceptions of service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok.</td>
<td>Paired Sample T-Test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ha1: There is difference between customers’ expectations and perceptions of service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ho2: There is no difference between customers’ expectations and perceptions of service quality in terms of tangibles in the selected spas in Bangkok.</td>
<td>Paired Sample T-Test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ha2: There is difference between customers’ expectations and perceptions of service quality in terms of tangibles in the selected spas in Bangkok.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ho3: There is no difference between customers’ expectations and perceptions of service quality in terms of reliability in the selected spas in Bangkok.</td>
<td>Paired Sample T-Test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ha3: There is difference between customers’ expectations and perceptions of service quality in terms of reliability in the selected spas in Bangkok.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ho4: There is no difference between customers’ expectations and perceptions of service quality in terms of responsiveness in the selected spas in Bangkok.</td>
<td>Paired Sample T-Test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ha4: There is difference between customers’ expectations and perceptions of service quality in terms of responsiveness in the selected spas in Bangkok.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HYPOTHESIS</td>
<td>STATISTICAL ANALYSIS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ho5: There is no difference between customers’ expectations and perceptions of service quality in terms of assurance in the selected spas in Bangkok. Ha5: There is difference between customers’ expectations and perceptions of service quality in terms of assurance in the selected spas in Bangkok.</td>
<td>Paired Sample T-Test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ho6: There is no difference between customers’ expectations and perceptions of service quality in terms of empathy in the selected spas in Bangkok. Ha6: There is difference between customers’ expectations and perceptions of service quality in terms of empathy in the selected spas in Bangkok.</td>
<td>Paired Sample T-Test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ho7: There is no difference in customers’ expectations of service quality of the selected spas in Bangkok when classified by customers’ age. Ha7: There is difference in customers’ expectations of service quality of the selected spas in Bangkok when classified by customers’ age.</td>
<td>One-Way ANOVA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ho8: There is no difference in customers’ expectations of service quality of the selected spas in Bangkok when classified by customers’ gender. Ha8: There is difference in customers’ expectations of service quality of the selected spas in Bangkok when classified by customers’ gender.</td>
<td>Independent T-Test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ho9: There is no difference in customers’ expectations of service quality of the selected spas in Bangkok when classified by customers’ income level. Ha9: There is difference in customers’ expectations of service quality of the selected spas in Bangkok when classified by customers’ income level.</td>
<td>One-Way ANOVA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HYPOTHESIS</td>
<td>STATISTICAL ANALYSIS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ho10: There is no difference in customers’ expectations of service quality of the selected spas in Bangkok when classified by customers’ occupation.</td>
<td>One-Way ANOVA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ha10: There is difference in customers’ expectations of service quality of the selected spas in Bangkok when classified by customers’ occupation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ho11: There is no difference in customers’ expectations of service quality of the selected spas in Bangkok when classified by customers’ nationality.</td>
<td>One-Way ANOVA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ha11: There is difference in customers’ expectations of service quality of the selected spas in Bangkok when classified by customers’ nationality.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ho12: There is no difference in customers’ perceptions of service quality of the selected spas in Bangkok when classified by customers’ age.</td>
<td>One-Way ANOVA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ha12: There is difference in customers’ perceptions of service quality of the selected spas in Bangkok when classified by customers’ age.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ho13: There is no difference in customers’ perceptions of service quality of the selected spas in Bangkok when classified by customers’ gender.</td>
<td>Independent T-Test</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ha13: There is difference in customers’ perceptions of service quality of the selected spas in Bangkok when classified by customers’ gender.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HYPOTHESIS</td>
<td>STATISTICAL ANALYSIS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ho14: There is no difference in customers’ perceptions of service quality of the selected spas in Bangkok when classified by customers’ income level.</td>
<td>One-Way ANOVA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ha14: There is difference in customers’ perceptions of service quality of the selected spas in Bangkok when classified by customers’ income level.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ho15: There is no difference in customers’ perceptions of service quality of the selected spas in Bangkok when classified by customers’ occupation.</td>
<td>One-Way ANOVA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ha15: There is difference in customers’ perceptions of service quality of the selected spas in Bangkok when classified by customers’ occupation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ho16: There is no difference in customers’ perceptions of service quality of the selected spas in Bangkok when classified by customers’ nationality.</td>
<td>One-Way ANOVA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ha16: There is difference in customers’ perceptions of service quality of the selected spas in Bangkok when classified by customers’ nationality.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 5
Presentation of Data and Critical Discussion of Results

This chapter embodies the research findings and the analyses of the study. This chapter is divided into two parts: the descriptive statistics of the respondents’ demographic characteristics and the inferential statistics outputs regarding testing the hypotheses followed by brief explanations.

5.1 Descriptive Analysis of the Respondents’ Demographic Characteristics

Total number of respondents for the research was 396 persons. The respondents were offered to fill in the questionnaires in the selected spas in Bangkok. After the filled in questionnaires were revised by the researcher, 6 defective questionnaires were excluded. Hence, the number of questionnaires available for the analysis reduced to 390.

The majority of the spa visitors (about 260 respondents out of 390) were baby boomers (35-50 years old). The 253 respondents were women. The majority of the spa visitors (about 330 respondents) had income more than 20,000 Baht. Approximately 300 respondents were firm employees and self-employed. The majority of respondents were foreigners. The detailed descriptive analysis is represented below with the help of summary tables and pie-charts. The summary tables contain the frequency and percentage of each demographic characteristic of the respondents.
Table 5.1 and Figure 5.1 illustrate frequency and percentage of the respondents classified by age. The age is grouped into age ranges. 67% of the respondents fall into the age range of 31-50 years old, so called baby boomers. Percentage of 21.5% represents the respondents who fall into the age range of 21-30. Only 7.7% of the respondents represent those who are 51 years old and older. The smallest percentage (3.1%) are young people of 20 years old and younger.
Table 5.2 and Figure 5.2 illustrate frequency and percentage of the respondents classified by gender. The 253 respondents out of 390 spa users were women. The other 137 respondents were men.
Table 5.3 and Figure 5.3 illustrate frequency and percentage of the respondents classified by monthly income. The monthly income is grouped into ranges. 54.9% of the respondents fall into the income range of 30,001 Baht per month and more. The second largest percentage (28.7%) are the respondents whose income is 21,000-30,000 Baht per month. 10.5% of the respondents earn 10,001-20,000 Baht per month. The smallest percentage (5.9%) are those whose income is 10,000 and less.
Occupation

**TABLE 5.4: SUMMARY OF RESPONDENTS CLASSIFIED BY OCCUPATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OCCUPATION OF RESPONDENTS</th>
<th>FREQUENCY</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Firm employee</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-employed</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other occupation</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>390</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FIGURE 5.4: PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS CLASSIFIED BY OCCUPATION**

Table 5.4 and Figure 5.4 illustrate frequency and percentage of the respondents classified by occupation. The biggest percentage (52%) are self-employed respondents. 24% of the spa users were firm employees. 11% of the spa users were students, most of which were ladies. 12% of the respondents had other occupations such as government school teachers, government employees, models and housewives.
Nationality

Table 5.5 and Figure 5.5 illustrate frequency and percentage of the respondents classified by nationality. 30% of the respondents were Thai. The 21.3% were Americans (North and South Americans were included here). The 27.4% of the respondents were European (mostly German, French, Spanish, Italian, Swedish and Eastern European). 22.1% of the respondents were from other countries (Middle Easterners, African, Asian from neighbor countries).
5.2 Comparing Raw Scores of Expectations and Perceptions of Service Quality Dimensions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Quality Dimensions</th>
<th>Raw Score of Expectations</th>
<th>Raw Score of Perception</th>
<th>Raw Score Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TANGIBLES</td>
<td>21.7128</td>
<td>20.3462</td>
<td>1.3667</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RELIABILITY</td>
<td>17.1564</td>
<td>14.7410</td>
<td>2.4154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RESPONSIVENESS</td>
<td>17.4128</td>
<td>16.5538</td>
<td>0.8590</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASSURANCE</td>
<td>22.1513</td>
<td>19.5282</td>
<td>2.6231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMPATHY</td>
<td>17.8846</td>
<td>15.0077</td>
<td>2.8769</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>96.3179</td>
<td>86.1769</td>
<td>10.1410</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.6 shows that there's difference between the raw scores of customers' expectations and customers' perceptions of service quality dimensions in the selected spas in Bangkok. The raw scores of expectations appear to be higher than those of perceptions. It means that customers' expectations of service quality were higher than their perceptions of the actual service quality. Hence, the customers were dissatisfied with the service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok. The biggest discrepancy occurred in assessing Empathy. The second biggest gap existed in assessing assurance of the spa providers. The smallest gap was traced in spa providers' responsiveness.
Hypothesis 1

Ho1: There is no difference between customers’ expectations and perceptions of service quality provided by the selected spas in Bangkok.

Ha1: There is difference between customers’ expectations and perceptions of service quality provided by the selected spas in Bangkok.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paired Samples Test</th>
<th>Paired Differences</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Lower</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pair 1 COMEXP - COMPER</td>
<td>10.1410</td>
<td>6.8230</td>
<td>.3455</td>
<td>9.4618</td>
<td>10.8203</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This Paired Samples T-Test for Hypothesis 1 indicates that there is a statistically significant difference between customers’ expectations and perceptions of service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok, with the two-tailed significance of .000, which is less than .05. It means that Ho1 is rejected at the .05 significance level, and Ha is accepted at the .05 significance level. The interpretation of the findings is: Customers’ expectations of service quality dimensions in the selected spas in Bangkok were higher than their perceptions. Hence, they were not satisfied with the service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok.
Hypothesis 2

Ho2: There is no difference between customers’ expectations and perceptions of service quality regarding tangibles in the selected spas in Bangkok.
Ha2: There is difference between customers’ expectations and perceptions of service quality regarding tangibles in the selected spas in Bangkok.

**TABLE 5.8: PAIRED SAMPLE T-TEST: DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CUSTOMERS' EXPECTATIONS AND PERCEPTIONS OF SERVICE QUALITY REGARDING TANGIBLES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paired Samples Test</th>
<th>Paired Differences</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Std. Deviation</td>
<td>Std. Error Mean</td>
<td>Lower</td>
<td>Upper</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>df</td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pair 1 COMEXTAN - COMPETA</td>
<td>1.3667</td>
<td>2.5906</td>
<td>.1312</td>
<td>1.1088</td>
<td>1.6246</td>
<td>10.418</td>
<td>389</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This Paired Samples T-Test for Hypothesis 2 indicates that there is a statistically significant difference between customers’ expectations and perceptions of service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok regarding tangibles, with the two-tailed significance of .000, which is less than .05. It means that Ho2 is rejected at the .05 significance level, and Ha is accepted at the .05 significance level. The interpretation of the findings is: Customers’ expectations of service quality dimensions in the selected spas in Bangkok regarding tangibles were higher than their perceptions. Hence, they were not satisfied with the service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok in terms of tangibles.
Hypothesis 3

Ho3: There is no difference between customers' expectations and perceptions of service quality regarding reliability in the selected spas in Bangkok.

Ha3: There is difference between customers' expectations and perceptions of service quality regarding reliability in the selected spas in Bangkok.

### TABLE 5.9: PAIRED SAMPLE T-TEST: DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CUSTOMERS' EXPECTATIONS AND PERCEPTIONS OF SERVICE QUALITY REGARDING RELIABILITY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paired Differences</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COMEXREL - COMPER</td>
<td>2.4154</td>
<td>2.1081</td>
<td>.1067</td>
<td>2.2055</td>
<td>2.6253</td>
<td>22.627</td>
<td>389</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This Paired Samples T-Test for Hypothesis 3 indicates that there is a statistically significant difference between customers’ expectations and perceptions of service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok regarding reliability, with the two-tailed significance of .000, which is less than .05. It means that Ho3 is rejected at the .05 significance level, and Ha is accepted at the .05 significance level. The interpretation of the findings is: Customers’ expectations of service quality dimensions in the selected spas in Bangkok regarding reliability were higher that their perceptions. Hence, they were not satisfied with the service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok in terms of reliability.
Hypothesis 4

Ho4: There is no difference between customers’ expectations and perceptions of service quality regarding responsiveness in the selected spas in Bangkok.

Ha4: There is difference between customers’ expectations and perceptions of service quality regarding responsiveness in the selected spas in Bangkok.

| Paired Samples Test |
|---------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Paired Differences  | Mean            | Std. Deviation  | Std. Error Mean | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference |
| Mean                | .8590           | 1.9328          | 1.7875-02       | .6665           | 1.0514          |
| Std. Error Mean     | .787E-02        | .6665           | 1.0514          | 8.776           | 389             |
| 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | .787E-02 | .6665 | 1.0514 | 8.776 | 389 |
| t                   | 8.776           | 389             | .000            |
| df                  | 389             | .000            |

This Paired Samples T-Test for Hypothesis 4 indicates that there is a statistically significant difference between customers’ expectations and perceptions of service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok regarding responsiveness, with the two-tailed significance of .000, which is less than .05. It means that Ho4 is rejected at the .05 significance level, and Ha4 is accepted at the .05 significance level. The interpretation of the findings is: Customers’ expectations of service quality dimensions in the selected spas in Bangkok regarding responsiveness were higher than their perceptions. Hence, they were not satisfied with the service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok in terms of responsiveness.
Hypothesis 5

Ho5: There is no difference between customers’ expectations and perceptions of service quality regarding assurance in the selected spas in Bangkok.
Ha5: There is difference between customers’ expectations and perceptions of service quality regarding assurance in the selected spas in Bangkok.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paired Differences</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pair 1 COMEXASS - COMPRE</td>
<td>2.6231</td>
<td>2.5450</td>
<td>.1289</td>
<td>2.3697 - 2.8764</td>
<td>20.354</td>
<td>389</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This Paired Samples T-Test for Hypothesis 5 indicates that there is a statistically significant difference between customers’ expectations and perceptions of service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok regarding assurance, with the two-tailed significance of .000, which is less than .05. It means that Ho5 is rejected at the .05 significance level, and Ha5 is accepted at the .05 significance level. The interpretation of the findings is: Customers’ expectations of service quality dimensions in the selected spas in Bangkok regarding assurance were higher than their perceptions. Hence, they were not satisfied with the service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok in terms of assurance.
Hypothesis 6

Ho6: There is no difference between customers' expectations and perceptions of service quality regarding empathy in the selected spas in Bangkok.
Ha6: There is difference between customers' expectations and perceptions of service quality regarding empathy in the selected spas in Bangkok.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 5.12: PAIRED SAMPLE T-TEST: DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CUSTOMERS’ EXPECTATIONS AND PERCEPTIONS OF SERVICE QUALITY REGARDING EMPATHY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Paired Samples Test</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paired Differences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COMEXEMP - COMPE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This Paired Samples T-Test for Hypothesis 6 indicates that there is a statistically significant difference between customers’ expectations and perceptions of service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok regarding empathy, with the two-tailed significance of .000, which is less than .05. It means that Ho6 is rejected at the .05 significance level, and Ha6 is accepted at the .05 significance level. The interpretation of the findings is: Customers’ expectations of service quality dimensions in the selected spas in Bangkok regarding empathy were higher than their perceptions. Hence, they were not satisfied with the service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok in terms of empathy.
Hypothesis 7

Ho7: There is no difference in customers’ expectations of service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok when classified by customers’ age.

Ha7: There is difference in customers’ expectations of service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok when classified by customers’ age.

TABLE 5.13: ONE-WAY ANOVA TEST: DIFFERENCE IN CUSTOMERS’ EXPECTATIONS OF SERVICE QUALITY WHEN CLASSIFIED BY AGE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANOVA</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>200.588</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>50.147</td>
<td>2.180</td>
<td>.071</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>8855.986</td>
<td>385</td>
<td>23.003</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>9056.574</td>
<td>389</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This One-Way ANOVA Test for Hypothesis 7 indicates that there is no statistically significant difference in customers’ expectations of service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok when classified by age, with the two-tailed significance of .071, which is more than .05. It means that Ho7 is failed to reject at the .05 significance level, and Ha7 is rejected at the .05 significance level. The interpretation of the findings is: Customers’ expectations of service quality dimensions in the selected spas in Bangkok were not different when classified by age.
**Hypothesis 8**

Ho8: There is no difference in customers’ expectations of service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok when classified by customers’ gender.

Ha8: There is difference in customers’ expectations of service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok when classified by customers’ gender.

This Independent T-Test for Hypothesis 8 indicates that there is no statistically significant difference in customers’ expectations of service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok when classified by age, with the two-tailed significance of .223, which is more than .05. It means that Ho8 is failed to reject at the .05 significance level, and Ha8 is rejected at the .05 significance level. The interpretation of the findings is: Customers’ expectations of service quality dimensions in the selected spas in Bangkok were not different when classified by gender.

**Hypothesis 9**

Ho9: There is no difference in customers’ expectations of service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok when classified by customers’ income.

Ha9: There is difference in customers’ expectations of service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok when classified by customers’ income.

**TABLE 5.14: ONE-WAY ANOVA TEST: DIFFERENCE IN CUSTOMERS’ EXPECTATIONS OF SERVICE QUALITY WHEN CLASSIFIED BY MONTHLY INCOME**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>94,455</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>31.485</td>
<td>1.356</td>
<td>.256</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>8962.119</td>
<td>386</td>
<td>23.218</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>9056.574</td>
<td>389</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This One-Way ANOVA Test for Hypothesis 9 indicates that there is no statistically significant difference in customers’ expectations of service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok when classified by monthly income, with the two-tailed significance of .256, which is more than .05. It means that Ho9 is failed to reject at the .05 significance level, and Ha9 is rejected at the .05 significance level. The interpretation of the findings is: Customers’ expectations of service quality dimensions in the selected spas in Bangkok were not different when classified by monthly income.

**Hypothesis 10**

Ho10: There is no difference in customers’ expectations of service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok when classified by customers’ occupation.

Ha10: There is difference in customers’ expectations of service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok when classified by customers’ occupation.

**TABLE 5.15: ONE-WAY ANOVA TEST: DIFFERENCE IN CUSTOMERS' EXPECTATIONS OF SERVICE QUALITY WHEN CLASSIFIED BY OCCUPATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMEXP</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>584.740</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>146.185</td>
<td>6.643</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>8471.834</td>
<td>385</td>
<td>22.005</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>9056.574</td>
<td>389</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This One-Way ANOVA Test for Hypothesis 10 indicates that there is statistically significant difference in customers’ expectations of service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok when classified by occupation, with the two-tailed significance of .000, which is less than .05. It means that Ho10 is rejected at the .05 significance level, and Ha10 is accepted at the .05 significance level. The interpretation of the findings is: Customers’ expectations of service quality dimensions in the selected spas in Bangkok were different when classified by occupation.
Hypothesis 11

Ho11: There is no difference in customers’ expectations of service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok when classified by customers’ nationality.
Ha11: There is difference in customers’ expectations of service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok when classified by customers’ nationality.

Table 5.16: One-Way ANOVA Test: Difference in Customers' Expectations of Service Quality When Classified By Nationality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>83.466</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>27.822</td>
<td>1.197</td>
<td>.311</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>8973.109</td>
<td>386</td>
<td>23.246</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>9056.574</td>
<td>389</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This One-Way ANOVA Test for Hypothesis 11 indicates that there is no statistically significant difference in customers’ expectations of service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok when classified by nationality, with the two-tailed significance of .311, which is more than .05. It means that Ho11 is failed to reject at the .05 significance level, and Ha11 is rejected at the .05 significance level. The interpretation of the findings is: Customers’ expectations of service quality dimensions in the selected spas in Bangkok were not different when classified by nationality.
Perceptions

Hypothesis 12

Ho12: There is no difference in customers' perceptions of service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok when classified by customers' age.
Ha12: There is difference in customers' perceptions of service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok when classified by customers' age.

TABLE 5.17: ONE-WAY ANOVA TEST: DIFFERENCE IN CUSTOMERS' EXPECTATIONS OF SERVICE QUALITY WHEN CLASSIFIED BY AGE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMPER</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sjq.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>115.976</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>28.994</td>
<td>1.659</td>
<td>.159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>6726.816</td>
<td>385</td>
<td>17.472</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>6842.792</td>
<td>389</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This One-Way ANOVA Test for Hypothesis 12 indicates that there is no statistically significant difference in customers' perceptions of service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok when classified by age, with the two-tailed significance of .159, which is more than .05. It means that Ho12 is failed to reject at the .05 significance level, and Ha12 is rejected at the .05 significance level. The interpretation of the findings is: Customers' perceptions of service quality dimensions in the selected spas in Bangkok were not different when classified by age.

Hypothesis 13

Ho13: There is no difference in customers' perceptions of service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok when classified by customers' gender.
Ha13: There is difference in customers' perceptions of service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok when classified by customers' gender.
This Independent T-Test for Hypothesis 13 indicates that there is no statistically significant difference in customers' perceptions of service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok when classified by gender, with the two-tailed significance of .663, which is more than .05. It means that Ho13 is failed to reject at the .05 significance level, and Ha13 is rejected at the .05 significance level. The interpretation of the findings is: Customers' perceptions of service quality dimensions in the selected spas in Bangkok were not different when classified by gender.

Hypothesis 14

Ho14: There is no difference in customers' perceptions of service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok when classified by customers' income.

Ha14: There is difference in customers' perceptions of service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok when classified by customers' income.

<p>| TABLE 5.18: ONE-WAY ANOVA TEST: DIFFERENCE IN CUSTOMERS' EXPECTATIONS OF SERVICE QUALITY WHEN CLASSIFIED BY INCOME |
| ANOVA |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUM OF SQUARES</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>MEAN SQUARE</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>SIG.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>112,925</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>37,642</td>
<td>2.159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>6729.867</td>
<td>386</td>
<td>17,435</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>6842.792</td>
<td>389</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This One-Way ANOVA Test for Hypothesis 14 indicates that there is no statistically significant difference in customers' perceptions of service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok when classified by monthly income, with the two-tailed significance of .092, which is more than .05. It means that Ho14 is failed to reject at the .05 significance level, and Ha14 is rejected at the .05 significance level. The interpretation of the findings is: Customers’ perceptions of service quality dimensions in the selected spas in Bangkok were not different when classified by monthly income.
Hypothesis 15

Ho15: There is no difference in customers’ perceptions of service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok when classified by customers’ occupation.
Ha15: There is difference in customers’ perceptions of service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok when classified by customers’ occupation.

**TABLE 5.19: ONE-WAY ANOVA TEST: DIFFERENCE IN CUSTOMERS’ EXPECTATIONS OF SERVICE QUALITY WHEN CLASSIFIED BY OCCUPATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>46.867</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11.717</td>
<td>.664</td>
<td>.617</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>6795.925</td>
<td>385</td>
<td>17.652</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>6842.792</td>
<td>389</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This One-Way ANOVA Test for Hypothesis 15 indicates that there is no statistically significant difference in customers’ perceptions of service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok when classified by occupation, with the two-tailed significance of .617, which is more than .05. It means that Ho15 is failed to reject at the .05 significance level, and Ha15 is rejected at the .05 significance level. The interpretation of the findings is: Customers’ perceptions of service quality dimensions in the selected spas in Bangkok were not different when classified by occupation.
Hypothesis 16

Ho16: There is no difference in customers' perceptions of service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok when classified by customers' nationality.

Ha16: There is difference in customers' perceptions of service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok when classified by customers' nationality.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 5.20: ONE-WAY ANOVA TEST: DIFFERENCE IN CUSTOMERS' EXPECTATIONS OF SERVICE QUALITY WHEN CLASSIFIED BY NATIONALITY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ANOVA</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This One-Way ANOVA Test for Hypothesis 16 indicates that there is no statistically significant difference in customers' perceptions of service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok when classified by nationality, with the two-tailed significance of .083, which is more than .05. It means that Ho16 is failed to reject at the .05 significance level, and Ha16 is rejected at the .05 significance level. The interpretation of the findings is: Customers' perceptions of service quality dimensions in the selected spas in Bangkok were not different when classified by nationality.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NULL HYPOTHESIS</th>
<th>LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE</th>
<th>RESULTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ho1:</strong> There is no difference between customers’ expectations and perceptions of service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok.</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>Rejected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ho2:</strong> There is no difference between customers’ expectations and perceptions of service quality regarding tangibles in the selected spas in Bangkok.</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>Rejected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ho3:</strong> There is no difference between customers’ expectations and perceptions of service quality regarding reliability in the selected spas in Bangkok.</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>Rejected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ho4:</strong> There is no difference between customers’ expectations and perceptions of service quality regarding responsiveness in the selected spas in Bangkok.</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>Rejected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ho5:</strong> There is no difference between customers’ expectations and perceptions of service quality regarding assurance in the selected spas in Bangkok.</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>Rejected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ho6:</strong> There is no difference between customers’ expectations and perceptions of service quality regarding empathy in the selected spas in Bangkok.</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>Rejected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ho7:</strong> There is no difference in customers’ expectations of service quality of the selected spas in Bangkok when classified by customers’ age.</td>
<td>.071</td>
<td>Failed to reject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ho8:</strong> There is no difference in customers’ expectations of service quality of the selected spas in Bangkok when classified by customers’ gender.</td>
<td>.223</td>
<td>Failed to reject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NULL HYPOTHESIS</td>
<td>LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE</td>
<td>RESULTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ho9: There is no difference in customers’ expectations of service quality of the selected spas in Bangkok when classified by customers’ income level.</td>
<td>.256</td>
<td>Failed to reject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ho10: There is no difference in customers’ expectations of service quality of the selected spas in Bangkok when classified by customers’ occupation.</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>Rejected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ho11: There is no difference in customers’ expectations of service quality of the selected spas in Bangkok when classified by customers’ nationality.</td>
<td>.311</td>
<td>Failed to reject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ho12: There is no difference in customers’ perceptions of service quality of the selected spas in Bangkok when classified by customers’ age.</td>
<td>.159</td>
<td>Failed to reject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ho13: There is no difference in customers’ perceptions of service quality of the selected spas in Bangkok when classified by customers’ gender.</td>
<td>.663</td>
<td>Failed to reject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ho14: There is no difference in customers’ perceptions of service quality of the selected spas in Bangkok when classified by customers’ income level.</td>
<td>.092</td>
<td>Failed to reject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ho15: There is no difference in customers’ perceptions of service quality of the selected spas in Bangkok when classified by customers’ occupation.</td>
<td>.617</td>
<td>Failed to reject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ho16: There is no difference in customers’ perceptions of service quality of the selected spas in Bangkok when classified by customers’ nationality.</td>
<td>.083</td>
<td>Failed to reject</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 6
Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

This chapter embodies the summary of the findings that is an overview of the hypotheses results. The conclusion gives the answers to problems that were raised in Chapter 1. The detailed recommendations and suggestions are given by the researcher in the last part of this chapter. A few of recommendations were adopted and adapted from the spa experts' articles and other relevant literature.

6.1 Summary of Findings

The primary aim of this research was to study customers’ expectations and customers’ perceptions of the service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok, and Gap 5 which is the difference between expectations and perceptions. The selected spas in Bangkok were: 15 day spas, 15 hotel/resort spas, and 3 medical spas.

Another aim of the research was to identify the demographic characteristics of the spa users and to find out whether there is difference in expectations and perceptions of the customers when classified by age, gender, income, occupation and nationality.

The researcher developed 16 hypotheses based on the objectives of the research. They were tested with the help of SPSS, the Statistical Package for Social Science.

The first group of hypotheses (Hypotheses 1-6) was tested by the Paired Samples T-Test. Those hypotheses were aimed to identify whether there is difference between customers’ expectations and customers’ perceptions of service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok. The service quality was considered in terms of the five dimensions of SERVQUAL: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy (Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry, 1985, 1988). The results of the tests of hypotheses 1-6 showed that there is difference between customers’ expectations and perceptions of service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok. And this difference can be called negative disconfirmation of expectations, because the expectations exceeded the perceptions of service quality (E>P).

The second group of hypotheses (Hypotheses 7,9,10,11) was tested by the One-Way ANOVA Test. Those hypotheses were aimed to identify whether there is
difference in customers' expectations of service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok when classified by demographic characteristics. The demographic characteristics involved in the research were age, monthly income, occupation, and nationality. The results of hypotheses 7, 9, and 11 showed that there is no difference in customers' expectations of service quality when classified by age, monthly income, and nationality. The result of Hypothesis 10 showed that there is difference in customers' expectations of service quality when classified by occupation.

The third group of hypotheses (Hypotheses 12, 14, 15, 16) was also tested by the One-Way ANOVA Test. Those hypotheses were aimed to identify whether there is difference in customers' perceptions of service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok when classified by demographic characteristics. The demographic characteristics involved in the research were age, monthly income, occupation, and nationality. The results of hypotheses 12, 14, 15, 16 showed that there is no difference in customers' perceptions of service quality when classified by age, income, occupation and nationality.

The fourth group of hypotheses (Hypotheses 8, 13) was tested by Independent T-Test. Those hypotheses were aimed to identify whether there is difference in customers' perceptions of service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok when classified by gender. The results of hypotheses 8, and 13 showed that there is no difference in customers' perceptions of service quality when classified by gender.

6.2 Conclusions

The results of the findings clearly showed that Gap 5 was identified as existent in assessing the quality of services in the selected spas in Bangkok. Moreover, it was identified that Gap 5 showed the negative disconfirmation of expectations. It means that expectations were higher than perceived performance. Hence, the spa users were dissatisfied with the service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok, taking into consideration that the service quality was assessed in terms of tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy.
The conclusion of the research is presented in Table 6.1.

**TABLE 6.1: CONCLUSION OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Questions</th>
<th>Answers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Is there any difference between customers’ expectations and customers’ perceptions of service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Is there any difference between customers’ expectations and customers’ perceptions of service quality regarding tangibles in the selected spas in Bangkok?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Is there any difference between customers’ expectations and customers’ perceptions of service quality regarding reliability in the selected spas in Bangkok?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Is there any difference between customers’ expectations and customers’ perceptions of service quality regarding responsiveness in the selected spas in Bangkok?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Is there any difference between customers’ expectations and customers’ perceptions of service quality regarding assurance in the selected spas in Bangkok?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Is there any difference between customers’ expectations and customers’ perceptions of service quality regarding empathy in the selected spas in Bangkok?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Is there any difference in customers’ expectations of service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok when classified by demographic characteristics?</td>
<td>For Age, Gender, Income, Nationality- No, For Occupation- Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8. Is there any difference in customers’ perceptions of service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok when classified by demographic characteristics?

No

### Research Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Questions</th>
<th>Answers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| What is the difference between customers’ expectations and customers’ perceptions of the service quality provided by the selected spas in Bangkok? | Expectations > Perceptions  
96.3179 > 86.1769  
Result: Dissatisfaction |

### 6.3 Recommendations

The researcher has revised the questionnaires answers and the SPSS outputs in order to give some recommendations to the spa directors, managers, personnel for improving service quality in the spas.

#### 6.3.1 Suggestions for Hotel/Resort and Day Spas

Spas and fitness facilities were once an afterthought for hotels and resorts. A few exercise bicycles, a couple of treadmills and a massage room or two were enough to satisfy the needs of most travelers. In the last decade, more business travelers and leisure guests have begun to choose hotels based in part on a complete, balanced fitness and spa facility. The following opportunities should be considered by the hotel/resort spas in order to meet their customers’ growing demands and expectations:

- Expanding fitness facilities by building larger exercise rooms and furnishing them with the latest exercise machines.
- Expanding spa facilities by building rooms for yoga, tai chi and meditation. Another important trend in spas’ renovation addressed is the mind/body connection. Fitness machines are no longer sufficient; today; rooms for tai chi, yoga, meditation are in demand.
- Expanding spa facilities by building more treatment rooms for couples. Packages for couples are increasingly common and are helping feed the increase in
spa usage by men. Couples traveling together see spa treatments as an option for
quality time together (www.aboutspas.com)

Expanding spa facilities by building more treatment rooms for group customers.
Groups now represent a very profitable target market of the hotel/resort spas,
particularly conference or incentive groups. While incentive trips once were fun-
based, now they function more as enrichment programs to refresh and recharge the
individual’s creativity and focus, hence, they look for spas which can provide their
services to group customers. Most incentive groups give their participants several
hours off, all at the same time. The spas offering services to such groups, should keep
in mind whether they can manage the number of rooms needed and the number of
personnel to perform the treatments.

Expand spa facilities by building various wet areas. Once the spas get the client
into warm therapy pool, sauna or steam room, they have won half the battle; the
client’s mind and body relax and any other treatment that follows will be more
effective (ISPA, 2003)

Expanding a spa menu of treatments and therapies. Most customers are looking
for a broad selection. Spas should offer a creative selection of services and products to
attract all types of clients. Offering several skincare lines and a variety of facials and
body treatments is exciting and fun for the clients. Even on a budget, spas still can
creatively develop different treatments for different skin types and needs. However, a
fancy 50-page spa menu will offer nothing to the clients if they cannot give the result
as they committed on the menu or as promised by the spa/health consultant.

Monitoring the personnel regarding their appearance. Since in the spa services it
is considered that personnel (those who perform treatments and therapies:
beauticians, massage therapists and others) are in a close contact with the client, a
healthy and well-maintained appearance-good grooming is expected from the
personnel of the spas.

Hiring both female and male therapists. Providing as much comfort as possible
for the clients is crucial. Nowadays, more and more spa clients expect to choose
between a male or a female therapist.
6.3.2 Suggestions for Medical Spas

As defined by the International Spa Association, a medical spa is an institution whose primary purpose is to provide comprehensive medical and wellness care in an environment, which integrates spa services as well as conventional and complimentary therapies and treatments.

The medical spas' owners, directors and managers should not forget that a medical spa is not a hospital and they should understand the importance of a relaxing atmosphere. Attention to details is essential - from the color of the walls to the fabric of the robes. A soothing, comforting ambiance helps to put the client at ease for even the most uncomfortable medical procedures. However, a medical spa differs from a day spa in the following two regards. As a medical spa keeps both medical and esthetic personnel under one roof, both medical and cosmetic treatments are offered within the center. Depending on the doctor's presence, these services may range anywhere from Botox injections to liposuction. Therefore, one role of a medical spa is a comprehensive approach to caring for the client before, during and after these procedures take place. The second distinction is, again with the presence of Western medicine, a medical spa is able to use a higher-grade product and, therefore, spa services show greater results. A medical spa should be the perfect balance between clinical and luxury.

The staffing of the Medical Spa is an essential element of a successful operation. The licensed therapists or 'Para-Medical Estheticians' require a working knowledge of all medical procedures performed by doctors. Estheticians should be encouraged to spend some time each month with a doctor on staff to gain understanding of the procedures that the doctor performs. Under the doctor's guidance and supervision, the esthetic staff should be thoroughly trained in patient preparation and contraindications for pre and post surgical treatments. When hiring staff, it is advantageous to employ Estheticians with varied medical backgrounds. Estheticians that have worked as a dermatologists assistant, registered nurses and estheticians with 'Para-Medical' continued education courses are definite assets. Experience in a medical setting
combined with a healing touch is of great value to an operation. Many esthetic schools are adding both continuing education classes and courses with a medical influence to their aesthetics program.

Dermatology, the original and currently most popular medical practice that integrated Spa services has recognized that cosmetic procedures tie in smoothly with anti-aging spa treatments. Clients are more aware of cosmetic dermatological procedures such as Collagen, Botox and Laser resurfacing. These cosmetic procedures need before and after care as well as a maintenance program that can be performed by an esthetician.

With a plastic surgeon on board, the medical spa should provide for the client before, during and after surgery. Prior to surgery, patients would benefit from the addition of yoga stress control and self-image counseling. During surgery, energy work with a Reiki master may be incorporated, or an experienced Acupuncturist might even take the place of an anesthesiologist. Post treatment may include long-term weight management programs with nutritionists and sessions with personal trainers. Estheticians and massage therapists can perform spa treatments that will accelerate healing such as Lymphatic drainage and Scar management. Another way to integrate the spa and the clinical is to design packages that include both spa and medical services.

Clients' increased acceptance of Eastern medicine opens many new doors and allows to combine ancient Oriental and Indian medicine with spa services.

A Medical spa with an oncologist on board can be extremely rewarding. Chemotherapy patients are often in need of skincare that is all natural and non-toxic. Detoxifying treatments, spiritual healing, energy work, scar management are just a few ways in which cancer patients can benefit from a medical spa.

The medical spas should help the patients take the necessary time to heal and recuperate, they should make the patients feel beautiful in times of illness and they should acknowledge alternative practices of medicine whether East, West, Complementary or Esthetic. (Adapted from Medical Spas Future, Spa Sensation E-Magazine, 2004)
6.3.3 Qualification Standards For Managers

Spa industry employers looking for staff are now experiencing the problems associated with inconsistent (or, rather, barely existent) standards of spa education, and a subsequent shrinking gap of knowledge between the average spa consumer and the average spa manager or therapist. Spa leaders who are competent in business and retail, well-versed in spa philosophy and expected treatment outcomes, and who have an understanding of all the spa components or departments they are managing or working integrally with, particularly as the spa consumer becomes more and more educated, are very rare. Although spa managers are not performing the actual hands-on treatments or leading our meditation workshops, they are responsible for creating an image for their guests and the general public." Informed decisions such as menu design and implementation, which trainers to bring in and why, which product to bring in and why, and which therapists to hire and why are all part of an industry-wide moral and ethical management responsibility code that has remained unwritten. Advanced or post-graduate spa therapy education, where therapists are required by the spa industry or any regulatory agency to have a strong theoretical and manual background so that they are thoroughly familiar with the indications, contra-indications, applications and effects of spa services, other than basic massage, are still non-existent.

It is evident that at the onset of a modern spa concept where "to spa" is a verb, and a component of the increasingly popular wellness lifestyle, that a change in spa education systems is absolutely necessary. New vocations such as "spa director" and potentially "spa therapist" or "specialist" are on a continually evolving path as spa industry moves towards the peak of spa professionalism and consumer satisfaction. As for the spa owners, managers and employees, it is apparent that they have a new responsibility to their clients and to their industry to move forward with integrity and to fundamentally provide what they promote. (Adapted from Spa Sensation E-Magazine 2004).
6.3.4 Training Spa Personnel

Training spa personnel may be a novel idea in many spa settings, but the need for such training is becoming very apparent in the spa industry. With the severe shortage of qualified and experienced therapists, spa managers are forced to recruit a significant percentage of personnel with basic qualifications. These recruits need guidance and education in order to succeed (A. Lomas, 2000). Spa top management who realize the importance of personnel continuous training in order to maintain and improve service quality in their spas should take into consideration the following useful insights:

Making training one of spa’s business priorities: Include training in spa’s yearly budget both for internal and external training.

Avoiding having the spa manager take on the role of a trainer: He/she has too many things to take care of in regards to marketing, day-to-day operations and new treatment development. Instead, employ a group trainer or have the assistant manager assume the role of the trainer. Ensure that the new trainer has the relevant past experience of at least two years in training.

Putting all new recruits into an induction program: New recruits should meet each section head in order to understand the roles and responsibilities of each member. This will help the personnel know who to go to for what and also serves as a terrific grounding for the new personnel member. At the same time, new recruits can be introduced to all the services offered at the spa.

Having regular, ongoing training programs for the personnel to constantly update their skills: The training should be carefully planned to ensure sessions are interesting, fun and educational. They might include activities such as role playing or games. Sessions can focus on items as simple as greeting a client or they can stem from the more serious issues like client complaints. You may start with basic anatomy: the list of topics is endless and continual training keeps your staff on their toes.
Constantly upgrading and training spa receptionists: They are the forefront of the business and it is very important that they know all about the treatments and services available in the spa. They are the first people the client sees and speaks to.

Cross-training all staff in all areas: The therapist must be taken through the gym workout programs to know what other services are offered. The gym personnel must try the treatments. This also helps each area to cross-sell so that the gym person has actually felt the benefit of the treatments and understands how these programs fit into their schedules.

Monitoring each personnel member's training and skills: Conduct yearly evaluations to assess improvement. Ensure that the personnel contracts include a commitment clause to avoid having your staff leave as soon as a year of valuable training has been invested in them.

When launching a new product, having the training done in advance: Avoid having the stock languish in the retail section because no one knows how to effectively use the new product.

Investing time in creating reference material: Treatment rooms should have outlines for each treatment and reference cards so the therapists can refer to them. Training manuals also serve as valuable reference tools. Manuals should include handouts on treatment procedures as well as standard operating procedures (handouts should be carefully designed for each training session and should be presented to the staff prior to insertion into the manual). When the procedures are updated, it is important to remember to update all the training manuals.

### 6.3.5 Education, Experience, Expertise and Relationship Skills of Personnel

A spa director (or the person who does the interview and hiring) has to be very careful when recruiting new personnel. When revising resume and having the interview with a new applicant for a position of a therapist, a lot of attention is often paid to experience, education and letters of recommendations from the previous employers rather than to applicant’s flexibility to handle challenges and their relationship skills. Client services do not end up with a great massage or facial. A
therapist can have superior technical qualities and still not be considered a success for the spa when she/he is not able to return guests or get referrals from them, plus show poor products and additional services sales. Techniques can be learnt, but it's not often true that one can be taught how to be a quality person. Perhaps, it depends on which of three groups of people the personnel member falls into:

- **Overachievers**: those who excel.
- **Non-achievers**: those who consistently fail.
- **Underachievers**: those who try hard but still can’t reach the level of their potential.

Spa managers don’t have to worry about Overachievers; they are valuable team players who are always willing to help others. Non-achievers usually don’t last more than a month and then they are on to the next facility, only to leave the next one when the pressure gets too high. Underachievers try hard but somehow can’t seem to reach the level of their potential. Their technical talent is good; it is their lack of self-motivation, their apathy about getting referrals, their inconsistent sales and disinterest in being a team member that make managers think about letting them go.

Spa managers and supervisors should focus on ongoing attention and ongoing education for the first and the third group of personnel. Overachievers have tendency to burnout from their constant diligence focus on perfection. Underachievers have low self-esteem. Spa personnel is an investment in quality service, harmonious team spirit and continuous profitability. To guarantee that spa managers meet these goals, their primary task is to provide an ongoing flow of education that fits the needs of these employees.

### 6.3.6 Handling Customers’ Complaints

There is almost unanimous agreement that each complaint should be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. A set policy isn’t possible because this is a service-oriented industry; each guest’s complaint merits individualized investigation (L.B. Baldwin, 2000). Several ways to cope with customers’ complaints should be considered by spa managers and personnel when dealing with dissatisfied customers:

- **Offering complementary treatment (error solved)**: It is the most common method for dealing with customer complaints. Most customers feel that at least
some consideration has been afforded their complaint when a free treatment is offered. By immediate re-scheduling the treatment again (for free), spa providers would demonstrate to their clients commitment to working out the problem so that clients finally are satisfied.

- **Offering a small conciliatory gift:** An aromatherapy candle, a fragrance stick, a packet of herb infusion or other inexpensive gift can be offered as an apology for a slight error in service delivery along with the words of apology and promise to consider the complaint for immediate correction and further improvement.

**Preventative Strategies**

While seeking solutions to complaints is a noble pursuit, spas should work on preventative strategies before customers complain. One of the preventative strategies is having let front desk personnel to personally experience all of the spa treatments so that they might provide valuable insight to clients at the time of booking an appointment. It can be considered as responsibility of the front desk personnel to ascertain that client’s expectations about a particular treatment or package matches reality. If there is any disparity, then the personnel should either educate the clients about the experience, or help them select something that better suits their desires and preferences.

Besides, Spa personnel should be sensitive to clients’ emotional states, as well as their physical ones. If a therapist senses that a client is in a bad mood or having a rough day, the therapist can rely on his/her discretion in adjusting services to meet the client’s needs.

Another important strategy is earning clients’ trust. Earning the trust of spa clients is essential in the reduction of complaints. Spa personnel should never make promises that they cannot keep. This standard should be applied across the board, from maintaining accuracy in scheduling appointments to promoting the genuine benefits associated with specific spa treatments.

The concept of mystery shoppers can be applied in order to evaluate any potentially problematic issues or employees. Trained mystery shoppers- usually provided by outside shopper services- look for specific behaviors or processes and report their results back to management and the personnel who served them. Mystery
shopping is best when it is systematically done and the results are used to reinforce positive personnel behaviors rather than to catch them doing things wrong (P.R. Timm, 1998).

If the client has a long-term history of complaints with the spa services, the personnel should seriously consider suggesting nicely that the client might want to try another service provider, and then recommend one.

Table 6.2 represents the set of questions that can be considered by spa directors, managers, personnel in order to remind them about essential tips for maintaining service quality in their spas. Similar questions can be asked to mystery shoppers whose work is to observe everything, from spa operations, processes to spa personnel.

### TABLE 6.2: SAMPLE OF QUESTIONS TO ASK ABOUT SPA SERVICES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Dimension</th>
<th>Samples of questions to ask</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tangibles:</strong></td>
<td>• Are facilities attractive?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appearance of</td>
<td>• Are personnel dressed appropriately?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>physical facilities,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>equipment,</td>
<td>• Do personnel take care of themselves physically?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>personnel,</td>
<td>• Are written materials easy to understand?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>printed and visual materials</td>
<td>• Does technology look modern?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• When they are waiting for the treatment, do you have brochures and magazines that meet the needs of your client?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Do you have books or toys for women who bring children?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Is there ease of entrance for a disabled client?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reliability:</strong></td>
<td>• If a response is promised in a certain time, does it happen?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to perform promised service dependably and accurately</td>
<td>• Are exact specifications of client followed?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Are statements or reports free of error?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Is service performed right the first time?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Is level of service same at all times of day and for all members of personnel?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Are personnel punctual for appointments?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• How do you accommodate for running late?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Responsiveness:</strong></td>
<td>• When there is a problem, do personnel respond to it quickly?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willingness to help customers to provide prompt service</td>
<td>• Are personnel willing to answer client questions?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Are specific times for service accomplishments given to client?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• Are public situations treated with care and seriousness?
• Can personnel provide service without fumbling around?
• Are materials provided appropriate and up to date?
• Can personnel use the technology quickly and skillfully?
• Do personnel appear to know what they are doing?

Competence:
Possession of required skill and knowledge to perform service

• Do personnel have a pleasant demeanor?
• Do personnel refrain from acting busy or being rude when clients ask questions?
• Are those who answer the telephone considerate and polite?
• Do personnel observe consideration of the property and values of clients?

Courtesy:
Politeness, respect, consideration and friendliness of contact personnel

• Does the spa have a good reputation?
• Do personnel refrain from pressuring the client?
• Are responses given accurate and consistent with other reliable sources?
• Does the spa guarantee its services?

Credibility:
Trustworthiness, believability, honesty of the service provider

• Is it safe to enter the premises and to use the equipment?
• Are documents and other information provided for the client held securely?
• Are use records of clients safe from unauthorized use?
• Can client be confident that service provided was done correctly?

Security:
Freedom from danger, risk, or doubt

• How easy is it to talk to knowledgeable personnel member when client has a problem?
• Is it easy to reach the appropriate personnel person
  o in person?
  o by telephone?
  o by email?
• Are service access points conveniently located?
• Can clients easily find the parking spot?
• Is the spa clearly identifiable?

Access:
Approachability and ease of contact.

• When client contacts service point, will personnel person listen to their problem and demonstrate understanding and concern?
• Can personnel explain clearly the various options available to a particular query?
• Do personnel avoid using technical jargon when speaking with clients?

Communication:
Listening to customers and acknowledging their comments; Keeping customers informed in a
language they can understand.

- Do personnel member call if a scheduled appointment is missed?
- Are personnel emotionally stable?

Understanding the Customer:
Making the effort to know customers and their needs.

- Do personnel recognize each regular client and address them by name?
- Do personnel try to determine what client’s specific objectives are?
- Is level of service and cost of service consistent with what client requires and can afford?
- Are service providers flexible enough to accommodate to client's schedule?

Source: Adopted and expanded from “Delivering Quality Service; Balancing Customer Perceptions and Expectations”, Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry, 1990
Bibliography


www.aboutspas.com

www.intelligentspas.com


QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire was designed as a tool for collecting data about the respondents' expectations and their perceptions of service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok. The survey is conducted for the purpose of the preparation of a Thesis for the completion of Master Degree in Business Administration (MBA) at Assumption University of Thailand. Confidentiality is guaranteed.

Please, kindly fill in the questionnaire by circling the number which reflects the level of your expectations/perceptions of service quality in the selected spas in Bangkok.

Interpretation of Numbers:

1 = Strongly Disagree
2 = Disagree
3 = Neutral
4 = Agree
5 = Strongly Agree
Please think about the kind of a spa that would deliver excellent quality of service. Think about the kind of a spa which you would like to visit. Please show the extent to which you think a spa should possess the feature described by each statement. If you strongly agree that spas should possess a feature mentioned, circle number 5. If you strongly disagree that spas should possess a feature mentioned, circle number 1. If your feelings are less strong, circle one of the numbers in the middle. There’s no right or wrong answer—all we are interested in is the number that truly reflects your expectations regarding spas and the services provided by them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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<th>Strongly Agree</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Spas should have up-to-date equipment</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Physical facilities in spas should be visually appealing</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Spas should offer a big choice of treatments and therapies</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Ambient conditions in spas should be appropriate for relaxation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Personnel in spas should be neat in appearance</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>When a customer has a problem, spas should show sincere interest in resolving it</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Spas should be dependable</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Spas should keep their records accurately</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>3</td>
</tr>
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<td>9.</td>
<td>Spas should provide their services at the time they promise to do so</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Personnel in spas should always be willing to help customers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Personnel in spas should never be too busy to respond to customers’ requests</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Spas should provide prompt services to customers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Personnel in spas should tell customers exactly when services will be performed</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Behavior of personnel in spas should instill confidence in customers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Customers should feel safe in their transactions with spa service providers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Spas should guarantee their services</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Personnel in spas should be consistently courteous with customers</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>18.</td>
<td>Personnel in spas should have the knowledge about spa treatments, therapies and the ways to perform them</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>Spas should give customers individual attention</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>Spas should have customers’ best interests at heart</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>Personnel in spas should understand specific needs of their customers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>Spas should have operating hours convenient to all their customers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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</table>
The following statements are related to your perceptions of the spa you have visited. Please show the extent to which you believe the spa has the feature described by each statement. If you strongly agree that the spa you visited possesses a feature mentioned, circle number 5. If you strongly disagree that the spa you visited possesses a feature mentioned, circle number 1. If your feelings are less strong, circle one of the numbers in the middle. There's no right or wrong answer—all we are interested in is the number that truly reflects your perceptions regarding spas and the services provided by them.

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<td>3</td>
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<td>9</td>
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<td>11</td>
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<td>22</td>
<td>Spas have operating hours convenient to all their customers.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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</table>
Quality of Service (SERVQUAL)
Part 3: Demographic profile of the respondents

Please kindly answer the following questions concerning your demographic characteristics. Tick the box with the appropriate answer and write a word where there is need to specify the answer.

1. Age:
   - [ ] Younger than 20 years old
   - [ ] 21-30 years old
   - [ ] 31-40 years old
   - [ ] 41-50 years old
   - [ ] 51 years old and older

1. Gender:
   - [ ] Male
   - [x] Female

3. Monthly Income:
   - [ ] Less than 10,000 Baht / month
   - [ ] 10,001 – 20,000 Baht / month
   - [ ] 20,001 – 30,000 Baht / month
   - [ ] 30,001 Baht / month and more

4. Occupation:
   - [ ] Firm employee
   - [ ] Self-employed
   - [ ] Unemployed
   - [ ] Student
   - [ ] Other (please, specify)

5. Nationality:
   - [ ] Thai
   - [ ] American
   - [ ] European
   - [ ] Other (please, specify)
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<tr>
<td>22.</td>
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</tbody>
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คุณภาพด้านการบริหาร หน่วยที่ 1 ความคาดหวัง
คุณภาพด้านการบริหาร
ส่วนที่ 2 ความคิดเห็น

ข้อความมีลักษณะของข้อความดังที่กล่าวมาแล้ว ถูกต้องตามความในแต่ละข้อที่คุณคิดว่าเป็นลักษณะของสภาพความเห็นของผู้ชม

ถ้าคุณเห็นว่าเป็นอย่างยิ่งว่า สาปที่คุณเคยใช้บันทึกมีลักษณะต่างกัน ให้ 5 คะแนน แต่ถ้าคุณเห็นว่า ไม่มีลักษณะต่างกัน ให้ 1 คะแนน

ถ้าคุณรู้สึกตัดสินใจไม่ได้เห็นด้วยอย่างยิ่งหรือไม่ได้เห็นด้วยไปยังแนวหน้า ให้กรอกหมายเลขที่อยู่ระหว่างกลาง

ไม่มีคำตอบใดๆของการตัดสินใจ ทางเราต้องการทราบข้อความที่ตรงกับความคิดเห็นของคุณเกี่ยวกับ สาป และ การบริหารของสภานั้น

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</thead>
<tbody>
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คุณภาพด้านการบริการ
ส่วนที่ 3 ประวัติของผู้ตอบแบบสอบถาม

กรุณาเลือกคำตอบที่เหมาะสมหรือ กรอกรายละเอียดเพื่อดำาเนินค่าถามเกี่ยวกับข้อมูลต่อไปนี้

1. อายุ
   ...... น้อยกว่า 20 ปี
   ...... 21-30 ปี
   ...... 31-40 ปี
   ...... 41-50 ปี
   ...... 51 ปีขึ้นไป

2. เพศ
   ...... ชาย
   ...... หญิง

3. รายได้ต่อเดือน ...... น้อยกว่า 10000 บาทต่อเดือน
   ...... 10001 – 20000 บาทต่อเดือน
   ...... 20001 – 30000 บาทต่อเดือน
   ...... 30001 บาทขึ้นไป ต่อเดือน

4. อาชีพ
   ...... พนักงานบริษัท
   ...... ธุรกิจส่วนตัว
   ...... รัฐบาล
   ...... นักเรียน นักศึกษา
อื่นๆ โปรดระบุ

5. เลือกชาติ
   ...... ไทย
   ...... อเมริกัน
   ...... ญี่ปุ่น
อื่นๆ โปรดระบุ

.........................................................
RELIABILITY ANALYSIS - SCALE (ALPHA)

Correlation Matrix

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>PTAN1</th>
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<th>PTAN3</th>
<th>PTAN4</th>
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**Warning** **Determinant of matrix is zero**

Statistics based on inverse matrix for scale ALPHA are meaningless and printed as:

N of Cases = 30.0

N of Statistics for Mean Variance Std Dev Variables
Scale 21.1000 4.7138 2.1711 5

Item-total Statistics

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Reliability Coefficients 5 items

Alpha = .7955 Standardized item alpha = .8030

Correlation Matrix

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<tr>
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<th>PREL3</th>
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N of Cases = 30.0

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<th>Std Dev</th>
<th>Variables</th>
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Reliability Coefficients 4 items

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N of Cases = 30.0

N of Statistics for Mean Variance Std Dev Variables Scale 20.633 5.1368 2.2664 5

Item-total Statistics

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|------------|----------------|------------------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| PASS1      | 16.3000        | 3.8724                 | .5482         | .4337            | .7504             |
| PASS2      | 16.7667        | 3.5644                 | .5775         | .4631            | .7361             |
| PASS3      | 16.3667        | 4.1713                 | .4154         | .3656            | .7833             |
| PASS4      | 16.6667        | 3.4023                 | .5219         | .3773            | .7550             |
| PASS5      | 16.4333        | 2.3230                 | .8121         | .6681            | .6413             |

Reliability Coefficients 5 items

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Statistics for Mean Variance Std Dev Variables
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Reliability Coefficients 4 items

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RELIABILITY ANALYSIS - SCALE (ALPHA)

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** ** Warning ** ** Determinant of matrix is zero

Statistics based on inverse matrix for scale ALPHA are meaningless and printed as .

N of Cases = 30.0

N of Statistics for Mean Variance Std Dev Variables
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Item-total Statistics

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Recomputed reliability coefficients using inter-item correlations across the 22-item scale (ALPHA).

**Reliability Coefficients**

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Determinant of matrix is zero

Statistics based on inverse matrix for scale ALPHA are meaningless and printed as .

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Reliability Coefficients 44 items

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APPENDIX D
## T-Test

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## T-Test

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<th>COMEXRES &amp; COMPERES</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Correlation</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>390</td>
<td>-.074</td>
<td>.144</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Paired Samples Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pair</th>
<th>COMEXRES - COMPERES</th>
<th>Mean Difference</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.8590</td>
<td>1.9328</td>
<td>.787E-02</td>
<td>.6665</td>
<td>1.0514</td>
<td>8.776</td>
<td>389</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### T-Test

#### Paired Samples Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pair</th>
<th>COMEXASS</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>COMEXASS</td>
<td>390</td>
<td>1.8183</td>
<td>22.1513</td>
<td>9.207E-02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>COMPEASS</td>
<td>390</td>
<td>1.6916</td>
<td>19.5282</td>
<td>8.566E-02</td>
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</table>

#### Paired Samples Correlations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pair</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Correlation</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COMEXASS &amp; COMPEASS</td>
<td>390</td>
<td>-.050</td>
<td>.322</td>
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#### Paired Samples Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pair</th>
<th>Paired Differences</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>COMEXASS - COMPEASS</td>
<td>Mean: 2.6231, Std. Deviation: 2.5450, Std. Error Mean: 1.1289</td>
<td>2.3697 - 2.8764</td>
<td>20.354</td>
<td>389</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### T-Test

#### Paired Samples Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pair</th>
<th>COMEXEMP</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Error Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>COMEXEMP</td>
<td>390</td>
<td>1.5243</td>
<td>17.8846</td>
<td>7.718E-02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>COMPEEMP</td>
<td>390</td>
<td>1.4860</td>
<td>15.0077</td>
<td>7.525E-02</td>
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#### Paired Samples Correlations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pair</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Correlation</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COMEXEMP &amp; COMPEEMP</td>
<td>390</td>
<td>.067</td>
<td>.184</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Paired Samples Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pair</th>
<th>Paired Differences</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>COMEXEMP - COMPEEMP</td>
<td>Mean: 2.8769, Std. Deviation: 2.0558, Std. Error Mean: .1041</td>
<td>2.6723 - 3.0816</td>
<td>27.636</td>
<td>389</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Oneway ANOVA

## COMEXP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>200.588</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>50.147</td>
<td>2.180</td>
<td>.071</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>8855.986</td>
<td>385</td>
<td>23.003</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>9056.574</td>
<td>389</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Analysis of Variance in table 3 indicated that there was a statistically significant difference in expectation of service quality when segmented by occupation with the two-tailed .617 which was more than .05 (.617 > .05). It means that the null hypothesis was accepted. Accordingly, there is no difference in expectation of service quality provided by selected spas in Bangkok when segmented by occupations.