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**A model of marketing strategies and pull motivations influencing young consumers to visit day spas**

The spa industry is growing rapidly in the United States. The rising demand for spa services has met with an increasing number of spa businesses, thus boosting the spa industry's overall revenue. Most spa research seems to be focused on hotel and resort spas even though three-fourths of all spas in the U.S. are day spas. The purpose of this study was to examine spa customers' attitudes and behaviors when they visited day spas in the U.S. A total of 615 participants completed questionnaires. A model was examined in this study, and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was selected as the statistic tool to analyze the model. The findings imply that past experience has a significant influence on spa-goers' consumption—additionally, spa consumers' perceptions of marketing mix impact how they perceived quality and satisfaction. The results also showed that satisfied customers were more likely to become loyal customers.

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Keywords: Marketing Strategy, Motivation, Day Spa, Consumer Behavior, Perceived Quality, Customer Satisfaction

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## Introduction

The spa industry is growing rapidly in the United States. The International Spa Association (ISPA) released data showing the number of spa locations rising quickly, almost five times from 1999 to 2009 (International Spa Association [ISPA], 2014). Tabacchi (2010) stated that the number of visitors visiting a spa increased from 136 million to 158 million between 2004 to 2008, causing the number of spa shops to rise substantially from 9,632 to 21,300. Globally, the number of spa locations showed a 47% increase between 2007 and 2013 (Florida Spa Association, 2015). Global Wellness Summit (2014) summarized the global spa's revenue from 2007 to 2013 (see Table 1).

Table 1 Global spa revenue from 2007 to 2013

<b>Regions</b>	<b>U . S . Dollar Revenue</b>	<b>Percentage Growth</b>
Europe	\$29 . 8 billion	(+62%)
Asia-Pacific	\$18 . 8 billion	(+65%)
North America	\$18 . 3 billion	(+35%)
Latin America/Caribbean	\$4 . 7 billion	(+86%)
Middle East/North Africa	\$1 . 7 billion	(+134%)
Sub-Saharan Africa	\$800 million	(+186%)

Table 1 shows Europe as generating the highest revenue from spa businesses, followed by Asia-Pacific. However, Sub Saharan Africa and Middle East-North Africa show the fastest-growing spa industry. This is due to the rapidly developing economies in some countries, including South Africa, Nigeria, United Arab Emirates, and Saudi Arabia (Florida Spa Association, 2015). Thus, the spa industry is a significant industry with the potential to enhance the global economy.

The U.S. spa revenue and employee hiring trends increased from 1999 to 2013 (ISPA, 2014). Revenue generated from spa services in the U.S. was fourth behind golf, cruises, and health clubs in 2001 (Langvinienė & Sekliuckienė, 2009; Koh, Yoo, & Boger, 2010). In 2005,

the spa industry was the fastest growing industry within the tourism industry (Revenue Management Applications in Untraditional Industries, 2013).

### **Problem statement**

Several researchers have realized that the spa industry plays an important role in the hospitality industry (Kim, Kim, Huh, & Knutson (Eds.), 2010; Lu & Shiu, 2009). They have done research on spas in the context of behavioral intentions (Kim et al., 2010; Lu & Shiu, 2009), customer satisfaction (Sekliuckiene & Langviniene, 2009), spa events and finance (Tabacchi, 2010), service quality (Alén, Fraiz, & Rufín, 2006; Hsieh, Lin, & Lin, 2008; Langviniene & Sekliuckiene, 2008), motivation (Mak, Wong, & Chang, 2009), and marketing (Hirankitti, Mechinda, & Manjing (Eds.), 2009; McNei & Ragins, 2005; Monteson & Singer, 2004).

Most spa research has focused on hotel and resort spas (Hsieh et al., 2008; Langviniene & Sekliuckiene, 2009; Lu & Shiu, 2009; Madanoglu & Brezina, 2008; Mandelbaum & Lerner, 2008; Monteson & Singer, 2004; Tsai, Suh, Fong, 2012). However, 72.4% of all spa types located in the U.S. are day spas, while hotel and resort spas account for only 13.5% (Eisner, 2013). Koh et al. (2010) also acknowledged that day spas are the most common type of spa in the U.S. Perhaps the wide gap in the day spa literature is due to researchers' tendency to focus on spas as a component of a destination within the context of tourism. This would result in the majority of studies concentrating on hotel/resort spas. Therefore, the average day spa down the street would not fall within the range of focus, as examined through the lens of tourism. Thus, it is useful for the spa industry, especially day spa operators, to understand their customers' motives and demographics and respond to their needs accordingly.

The results of this study would help day spa entrepreneurs to classify customers' demographics and their characteristics. This information can help day spa owners more effectively reach their target market by offering spa products, services, and facilities that match their preferences. As certain marketing tools are more effective for certain groups of customers depending on their interests, it is necessary to identify factors generating day spa customer satisfaction and loyalty. This may include studying motivations, marketing strategies, and perceived quality. This study assists day spa owners in understanding their target markets. With proper application, day spa owners can increase profitability and further enable their business's long-term success.

## **Literature review**

### **Spa services**

The spa is an area of hospitality services that is growing significantly on a global scale (Tabacchi, 2010). The increasing trend of wellness spas has come with people's rise in health awareness (Johanson, 2004). Spas were previously considered luxury facilities in resorts or hotels; however, spas are now more often considered for health, therapy, and wellness (Cohen & Bodeker, 2008). Langvinienė and Sekliuckienė (2009) suggested that wellness spas provide both physical and psychological improvement.

A great deal of research mentions that customers usually visit the following seven types of spas: day spa, health club, resort/hotel spa, medical spa, cruise spa, mineral spring spa, and destination spa (Boonyarit & Phetvaroon, 2011; Frost, 2004; Langvinienė & Sekliuckienė, 2009; Loureiro, Almeida, & Rita, 2013; Monteson & Singer, 2004). Definitions for these seven types of spas and services are provided in Table 2 (Healing Holidays, 2013; Joppe, 2010; Langvinienė & Sekliuckienė, 2009).

Table 2 Seven types of spas

Type	Location	Service Provided
Health club	Suburbs and vicinity	Offering a fitness center and one day service .
Cruise Spa	Cruise ships	Selection of spa services provided for customers on a cruise ship such as a fitness room and healthy food .
Day Spa	Suburbs and vicinity, and city center	Variety of spa services such as facial and massage; service offered on daily basis .
Mineral Spring Spa	Natural mineral springs	Offering natural mineral water on site for hydrotherapy treatments .
Resort/hotel spa	Vacation destinations	Offering facial and body treatments, massages/scrubs, fitness classes, recreational facilities, and spa cuisine menu choices .
Medical spa	Resort areas	Providing wellness care and spa service, especially cosmetic care such as microdermabrasion, chemical treatments, Botox injection, laser treatments, and nutritional counselling .
Destination spa	Mountain resorts and vacation cities	Allowing customers to improve healthy lifestyles by offering programs including fitness activities, health education, nutrition, and healing .

Each type of spa provides unique services and varying results for customers that choose a category of the spa to suit their purpose or needs. Hirankitti, Mechinda, and Manjing (2009) proposed the definition of a day spa as a place that is usually located in the downtown section of major cities offering spa treatments for consumers with a stressful routine, and a spa program which tends to last between 30 minutes and one hour per customer. Day spas provide similar products and services compared with hotel spas such as facial treatment, body massages/scrubs, and skincare (Langviniene & Sekliuckiene, 2009). A target market of day spas is the customers who do not have time to spend overnight to receive treatment (Frost, 2004; Healing Holidays, 2013; Joppe, 2010; Loureiro et al., 2013), and who have a limited budget to spend on a full-spa service (Healing Holidays, 2013). In contrast, Tsai et al. (2012) defined a hotel/resort spa as a spa located inside a hotel/resort, providing a variety of spa programs including health, wellness, and meal options. They added that "hotel spas can be further divided into two separate categories: urban hotel spa and resort spa. While urban hotel spas draw local residents who

patronize spa facilities without staying at hotels due to the hotels' locations being within metropolitan areas, resort spas attract leisure travelers who tend to spend more time at spa facilities and recreational activities" (p. 250). Furthermore, spa customers need to spend more time, at least 2-3 days, for resort/hotel spas and 7-14 for destination spas (Langvinienė & Sekliuckienė, 2009). Therefore, day spas match customers' needs who desire to relax but do not have much time.

There is a very limited amount of research examining day spas. Few researchers have mentioned the functions of day spas or compared them to other types of spas (Hirankitti et al., 2009; Joppe, 2010; Langvinienė & Sekliuckienė, 2009), yet few of the research studies are about marketing strategies and motivations to visit day spas. As day spas are the most common spa type in the U.S. (Koh et al., 2010), it is necessary to examine them more thoroughly.

### **Past experience and push and pull motivations**

Motivations are important factors influencing customers' intentions to revisit tourist destinations or repurchase products and services. According to Tiefenbacher, Day, and Walton (2000), tourists are more likely to return to a travel destination due to three personal motivations. First, people may not want to risk disappointing themselves when visiting new places as they are already familiar and satisfied with a particular destination. Second, they would like to expand their already positive experience of a destination by discovering more about it. The first two reasons are responses to internal motivations (push factors) of tourists' intentions motivating them to revisit the same destination. Third, tourists would like to return to the same travel destination because they like local people and desire to make new friends at the destination. This reason is a response to external motivations (pull factor) of tourists' intentions to revisit a destination. Gitelson and Crompton (1984) suggested that marketing strategies to promote

restaurants and hotels may help to encourage tourists to revisit a travel destination. The marketing mix is considered a pull factor to motivate travelers to visit a destination. Thus, past experience may create both push and pull factors influencing tourists' decisions.

Tiefenbacher et al. (2000) indicated that people who are familiar with an area and have positive perceptions of it are more likely to visit the area than are travelers who are merely aware of it. Moreover, Gitelson and Crompton (1984) suggested that marketing strategies promoting restaurants and hotels encourage tourists to revisit a travel destination. This functions as a pull factor motivating travelers to revisit a destination. As such, past experience may contain both push and pull factors influencing customer's revisit intentions. For example, tourists whose push motivations were to learn from an arboretum in Korea gained motivation to return based on the pull factors of convenience and comfort (Lim, Kim, & Lee, 2015).

One study examining customer behavior regarding spa visitation found that past experience is one factor encouraging customers to go to a spa. The researchers explained that people often return to spas if they have been to those spas before (Kim et al., 2010). As previously mentioned, tourists' past experience of visiting a destination may influence their push and pull motivations inspiring them to visit again. Therefore, this study examined how past experience affects tourists' push and pull motivations to revisit day spas. To test the influence of prior experience on customers' push and pull motivations to repurchase day spa products and services, the participants were asked to answer regarding past experience with a recently visited day spa. The following hypotheses were suggested:

*H<sub>1a</sub>: Past experience affects customers' personal push motivations to repurchase products and services from the same day spas.*



*H<sub>1b</sub>: Past experience affects customers' pull motivations encouraging them to repurchase products and services from the same day spas.*

### **Push motivations, perceived quality, and customer satisfaction**

Mak et al. (2009) mentioned that customers with different cultures might have different perceptions of the spa experience. They found that European customers viewed spa visitation as resolving health issues, while American consumers perceived going to spas as a reward for dealing with their working life. Tourists with different backgrounds or characteristics may also have different perceptions of the quality of products and services, leading them to have diverse consumer behaviors.

Additionally, push motivations play an important role in encouraging people to travel and affect their trip satisfaction. Damijanić and Šergo (2013) explored push motives which enhance tourists' satisfaction with their trip to a seaside resort in Istria County of Croatia. The researchers found that "tourists who find desire for relaxation and escape very important push motives are more likely to experience satisfaction with service quality, to recommend the visit to friends and family members, and to repeat their visit." (p.16).

Just as this theory works to explain motivations to visit travel destinations, it can be applied to the spa service as well. Sekliuckiene and Langviniene (2009) stated that attempting to forget the economic crises appearing in several countries causes people to be more concerned with their physical and mental rest. Thus, people's use of spa services to relieve stress, treat themselves better, solve physical problems, and to relax has become common in the U.S. (Monteson & Singer, 2004). Furthermore, Tsai et al. (2012) suggested that customers visit spas with several push factors. For instance, they desire to be healthy by controlling their weight, reducing pain and stress, trying anti-aging treatments, and using vitamins. Additionally,

customers' push motivations may affect their satisfaction and perception of the quality of products and services (Dodds & Monroe, 1985). Thus, the following hypotheses were proposed:

*H<sub>2a</sub>: Customers' personal push motivations affect customer satisfaction of day spa*

*H<sub>2b</sub>: Customers' personal push motivations influence customers' perceived quality of day spas.*

### **Marketing strategies and perceived quality**

For this study, marketing strategies are defined as pull factors attracting people to visit day spas in the U.S. Marketing strategies are used in retail stores to attract customers to buy products and services. For example, customers may have different motivations for purchasing products based on external attraction, such as slogans, branded names, affective media, store image, and price (Yoo, Donthu, & Lee, 2000). Marketing strategies are thus critical elements helping motivate consumers to make decisions to purchase products and services. Not only do marketing strategies encourage customers to make decisions to purchase products and services, but they also allow customers to have perceptions of the quality of products and services. According to Hirankitti et al. (2009) and Rafiq and Ahmed (1995), the physical evidence component of the marketing mix helps consumers interpret how they perceive the quality of products and services at stores. For example, if customers have positive perceptions of physical evidence, they tend to perceive the spa products and services as being of high quality. Physical evidence may include background music, atmosphere of the shop, staff performance, location, store layout, and facilities. Thus, this research focused on marketing strategies as pull factors and how they attract consumers to visit day spas and how they generate perceptions of quality of day spas.

To test perceptions of quality of products and services based on pull factors, the following hypothesis was suggested:

*H<sub>3a</sub>: Perceptions of marketing strategies influence the perceived quality of day spas.*

### **Marketing strategies and customer satisfaction**

The fundamentals of marketing theory aim to satisfy human needs (Moore & Pareek, 2010). Marketing is an expert tool creating the relationship between consumers and product or service providers (Christopher, Payne, & Ballantyne, 1991; Gronroos, 1990). Swanson and Horridge (2004) point out that the "twelve components that motivated consumers to patronize specific business were price, quality, assortment, fashion, sales personnel, location convenience, other convenience criteria, services, sales promotions, advertising, store atmosphere, and reputation on adjustments" (p. 373). McKaskill (2011) mentioned that marketing strategies could enhance customer satisfaction. He explained that marketing strategies help minimize the gap between customers' expectations and the perceptions of the actual goods and services. If the products and services meet expectations, customers are more likely to be satisfied. Additionally, marketing activities not only generate customer satisfaction, but they can also work to build customers' trust in a company (Lo, 2012).

Marketing strategies may also increase the level of customer satisfaction with day spas. This relationship was examined in this research. Therefore, the following hypothesis was proposed:

*H<sub>3b</sub>: Marketing strategies increase overall customer satisfaction towards day spas.*

### **Perceived quality and customer satisfaction**

Iglesias and Guillén (2004) explained the relationship between perceived quality and customer satisfaction. Consumers perceive the quality of products or services by considering

several factors, such as price, advertising, accessibility, and their experience with the actual products. When customers decide to buy products, they generally compare what they expected with what they received. This affects their degree of satisfaction or dissatisfaction as well as their intention of repurchasing products in the future.

Žabkar, Brenčič, and Dmitrović (2010) studied how quality perceptions of tourist destinations impact tourist satisfaction. They found a positive relationship between perceptions of the quality of a destination and tourist satisfaction. Higher customer satisfaction is the result of a higher quality of service (Boonyarit & Phetvaroon, 2011). Customers are an important source assessing the quality of service of a company (González & Brea, 2005; Naylor & Kleiser, 2002; Sekliuckiene & Langvinienė, 2009). Thus, this research explored if perceived quality influences customer satisfaction at day spas. Therefore, the following hypothesis was proposed:

*H<sub>4</sub>: Customers' perceived quality of day spas influences their satisfaction with products and services at day spas.*

### **Customer satisfaction and customer loyalty**

Customers' repurchase intentions are based on their evaluation of a company's service quality (González & Brea, 2005). Becoming a loyal customer is often the outcome of one's satisfaction with the quality of service (Bitner, 1990). Several researchers have found a positive relationship between customer satisfaction and customer loyalty (Dixon, Bridson, Evans, & Morrison, 2005; Homburg & Giering, 2001; Setiowati & Putri, 2012). Hallowell (1996) stated that a loyal customer is the result of one's belief in the high quality of products and services, leading to one's satisfaction with its performance.

Furthermore, Moslehpour, Huang, & Erdoğan (2012) pointed out several benefits of customer loyalty. For example, generating and maintain a high percentage of loyal customers

might help a company save on the cost of marketing to new customers due to the potential for an increase in customers from a referral. As loyal customers tend to continue repurchasing goods, they increase the revenue for the company. Thus, this study investigated whether customers who are satisfied with products and services at day spas are more likely to become loyal customers.

The following hypothesis was proposed:

*H<sub>5</sub>: Customers who are satisfied with products and services at day spas become loyal customers.*

The theories reviewed consisting of past experience, motivations (personal push motivations and perceptions of marketing strategies), customer satisfaction, perceived quality, and customer loyalty were used to develop the below model (Figure 1).



Figure 1 Conceptual framework

## Method

### Participants

A total of 615 participants who had visited day spas were selected in the U.S. The criteria for choosing participants included: (1) they must have visited a day spa in the U.S., (2) they must live in the U.S., and (3) they were at least 18 years old.

The reason for this criteria is to ensure the subject's eligibility as a day-spa visitor and also to identify the majority of a demographic group who visit day spas in the U.S.

## **Instruments**

This research was designed to use an online questionnaire to collect data from participants. The questionnaire helped participants to express their perceptions of spa services and their attitudes toward the marketing of spa shops in the U.S. The questionnaire consisted of seven sections including: (1) push motivations (Hung & Petrick, 2011; Lee, Lee, & Wicks, 2004), (2) past experience (Huang & Hsu, 2009), (3) perceptions of marketing strategies (Al-Dmour, Zu'bi, & Kakeesh, 2013; Akroush, & Al-Dmour, 2006; Yoo et al., 2000), (4) perceived quality (Wong Ooi Mei, Dean, & White, 1999; Mangold & Babakus, 1991), (5) satisfaction (Back & Parks, 2003; Keaveney & Parthasarathy, 2001), (6) customer loyalty (Beatty, Mayer, Coleman, Reynolds, & Lee, 1996; Reynolds & Beatty, 1999), and (7) participants' background information. For sections one to six, respondents were required to provide a rating on a scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree.

The survey was pilot tested by Qualtrics prior to its launch. A total of 30 completed surveys were collected. Analyses of the pilot data showed construct reliabilities. Therefore, the degree of the researchers' bias was reasonably controlled.

## **Data analysis**

The participants were conveniently selected in the U.S. by Qualtrics. The researcher set coding for the questions of the survey, and computed and analyzed the data by using the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). Nachtigall, Kroehne, Funke, and Steyer (2003) stated that "SEM allows for conducting and combining a wide variety of statistical procedures like multiple regression, factor analysis, (M)ANOVA and many others" (p. 2). This research aimed to examine

the combinations of variables from the conceptual framework to analyze the outcome. Therefore, SEM was used to test the model.

## Results

### Demographic information of the respondents

A total of 615 respondents who visited day spa shops in the U.S. was analyzed in this study. The demographic information of the respondents is summarized in Table 3. Most respondents were female (78.7%). In terms of age, the majority of respondents were between 25 and 34 (30.1%), followed by 18 to 24 (24.4%), and 35 to 44 (16.7%).

More spa-goers were married (49.4%) than single (40.2%). Regarding educational level, more than half of the respondents had earned undergraduate degrees (52.8%).

As for the respondents' annual household income (in US \$), the findings show that the largest group of respondents generated income under \$40,000 (24.6%), followed by respondents earning \$40,001 - \$60,000 (23.3%), and \$60,001 - \$80,000 (16.4%).

In terms of ethnicity, the dominant group was Caucasian (70.9%). With regard to the current region that respondents resided in, those residing in the Southeast were the most (22.9%), followed by Far West (21.9%), and Mideast (18.7%).

Table 3 Demographic Information of the Respondents

Customers' Demographics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	131	21.3
Female	484	78.7
<b>Age</b>		
18-24	150	24.4
25-34	185	30.1
35-44	103	16.7
45-54	78	12.7
55-64	66	10.7
65 and above	33	5.4
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Single	247	40.2

Married	304	49.4
Divorced	45	7.3
Widowed	12	2.0
Other	7	1.1
<b>Education Level</b>		
High school	127	20.7
Vocational college	54	8.7
Undergraduate degree	325	52.8
Master degree	97	15.8
Doctoral degree	12	2.0
<b>Household Income</b>		
Under \$40,000	151	24.6
\$40,001 - \$60,000	143	23.3
\$60,001 - \$80,000	101	16.4
\$80,001 - \$100,000	73	11.9
\$100,001 - \$120,000	59	9.6
\$120,001 - \$150,000	37	6.0
\$150,001 - \$180,000	15	2.4
\$180,001 - \$200,000	9	1.4
Over \$200,000	27	4.4
<b>Ethnicity</b>		
Caucasian	436	70.9
African American	55	9.0
Native American	5	0.8
Asian	46	7.5
Hispanic	63	10.2
Other	10	1.6
<b>Regions</b>		
New England	28	4.6
Mideast	115	18.7
Great Lakes	86	14.0
Plains	30	4.9
Southeast	141	22.9
Southwest	58	9.4
Rocky Mountain	22	3.6
Far West	135	21.9

## Statistical analysis

For this research, structural equation modeling (SEM) was used to investigate three concepts consisting of measurement construct, structural model, and hypotheses (Chang, Yurchisin, Hodges, Watchravesringkan, & Ackerman, 2013). An exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was used to assess the number of latent constructs for a set of indicators. A confirmatory



factor analysis (CFA) examined the measurement model before using SEM to test the goodness-of-fit of the conceptual framework, and if hypotheses were supported. Additionally, it is necessary to assess the comparative fit index (CFI), Tucker–Lewis index (TLI), root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), and chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) in order to test the measurement construct and structural model.

### **Exploratory factor analysis (EFA)**

The EFA suggested that personal push motivations should have three factors including: (1) social recognition, (2) relaxation, and (3) socialization. Perceptions of marketing strategies were recommended to be tested by two factors defined as follows: (1) service quality and atmosphere and (2) advertisement and location. Other constructs were suggested to have a one factor solution. The EFA of standardized parameter estimates showed that indicators providing factor loadings for the 44 variables ranged from 0.61 to 0.98.

The EFA results suggest three factors of the personal push factors construct explained about 80.66% of the total variance (see Table 4). The two factors of the perceptions of marketing strategies construct explained 67.46% of the total variance (see Table 5). Satisfactory levels of internal consistency corresponded to a strong Cronbach’s alpha. Cronbach’s alpha values at 0.70 and above are considered acceptable (Kim, Kim, Ruetzler, & Taylor, 2010). The results showed that all constructs have high internal consistency due to a range of reliability from 0.72 to 0.96.

Table 4 Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) results of personal push motivations

<b>Subscales</b>	<b>Factor Loading</b>	<b>Eigenvalue</b>	<b>Variance Explained</b>	<b>Reliability Coefficient</b>
<b>Social recognition</b>		3.28	32.76	0.93
Doing something to impress others	0.95			
Others’ thoughts of you	0.98			
Having a high status image	0.78			
<b>Relaxation</b>		3.73	37.30	0.90
Having fun	0.66			
Escaping from routine day	0.83			

Giving mind a rest	0.92			
Relieving daily stress	0.83			
Enjoying a peaceful environment	0.78			
<b>Socialization</b>		1.78	10.60	0.88
Friends/family's desire to visit the day spa	0.84			
Interacting with friends/family	0.92			
<b>Total</b>			80.66	0.80

Table 5 Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) results of perceptions of marketing strategies

Subscales	Factor Loading	Eigenvalue	Variance Explained	Reliability Coefficient
<b>Quality of Products and Services &amp; Atmosphere</b>		5.53	50.23	0.93
Well-trained staff	0.80			
Being treated a special customer	0.77			
Providing easy and quick procedures	0.76			
Delivering services as promised	0.84			
Honoring purchase policy	0.79			
Providing comfortable waiting space	0.73			
Feeling comfortable in the waiting area	0.80			
Having comfortable overall atmosphere	0.89			
<b>Advertisement &amp; Location</b>		1.90	17.23	0.72
Having many branches	0.61			
Seeing advertisements through media	0.81			
Credibility in the advertisements	0.62			
<b>Total</b>			67.46	0.84

## Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA)

Accordingly, EFA is typically used earlier in the process of scale development and construct validation, whereas CFA is used in later phases after the underlying structure has been established on prior empirical (EFA) and theoretical grounds (Brown, 2006).

## Reliability and correlation

The correlations, means, and standard deviations of nine constructs were checked. The constructs which were correlated were positive and ranged from 0.12 to 0.81 (see Table 6). According to Field, Miles, Field (2012), the correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) can be used to measure the effect size between the variables. The researchers mentioned that a small effect size is identified when the value of  $r$  is  $\pm 0.1$ . A medium effect size tends to be interpreted when  $r$  value is  $\pm 0.3$ .

Table 6 Correlations of the model's constructs

Constructs	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Personal Push Factors									
1. Social recognition	1.000								
2. Relaxation	0.075	1.000							
3. Socialization	0.482*	0.233*	1.000						
	*	*							
Perceptions of Marketing Strategies									
4. Service quality and atmosphere	0.107	0.356*	0.009	1.000					
		*							
5. Advertisement and location	0.361*	0.128*	0.292*	0.154*	1.000				
	*	*	*	*					
6. Past experience	0.121*	0.382*	0.009	0.704*	0.026	1.000			
	*	*		*					
7. Perceived quality	0.103	0.323*	0.046	0.812*	0.087	0.695*	1.000		
		*		*		*			
8. Customer satisfaction	0.125*	0.352*	0.001	0.764*	0.040	0.796*	0.800*	1.000	
	*	*		*		*	*		

9. Customer loyalty	0.312*	0.034	0.217*	0.106	0.273*	0.191*	0.145*	0.159**	1.00
Mean	2.359	5.642	3.352	5.845	3.880	6.102	5.951	6.094	4.27
Standard deviation	1.603	1.185	1.895	0.889	1.487	0.834	0.771	0.867	0.85

Note: \*\* $p < 0.01$ , \*  $p < 0.05$

Finally, a large effect size is determined if the  $r$  value is  $\pm 0.5$ . The results indicated that customers' perceptions of the constructs of both perceived quality and service quality and atmosphere had the highest correlation with  $r = 0.81$ ,  $p < 0.01$ , followed by the correlation between how customers perceived quality at day spas and customer satisfaction ( $r = 0.80$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Other correlations tended to represent a medium effect size.

### Measurement model analysis

The CFA model was examined and provided a good model fit ( $\chi^2/d.f. = 2.09$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ; CFI = 0.92; TLI = 0.91; RMSEA = 0.06). According to Chang et al. (2013), values of the CFI and TLI above 0.90 suggest that the overall fit of the measurement model is good. In addition, an RMSEA below 0.08 shows a good model fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999). All factor loadings in the CFA were significant and ranged from 0.47 to 0.98 (see Table 7). Cronbach's alpha showed that the measurement construct had good discriminant reliability, as all constructs provided values above 0.70 (Kim et al., 2010). Average Variance Extracted (AVE) helps identify the convergent validity for all constructs with a value of 0.50 and above (Yuan & Jang, 2007). The results showed that the AVE of all constructs was above 0.50; thus, convergent validity was assured.

Table 7 Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) Results for the Measurement Model

Item	Standardized Loading	Construct Reliability	Average Variance Extracted
<b>Personal Push factors</b>		0.82	
Social recognition		0.94	0.84
Doing something to impress others	0.91		
Others' thoughts of you	0.97		
Having a high status image	0.88		

Relaxation		0.86	0.61
Having fun	0.67		
Escaping from routine day	0.84		
Giving mind a rest	0.81		
Relieving daily stress	0.66		
Enjoying a peaceful environment	0.82		
Socialization		0.89	0.80
Friends/family's desire to visit the day spa	0.47		
Interacting with friends/family	0.47		
<b>Perceptions of Marketing Strategies</b>		0.84	
Service quality and atmosphere		0.93	0.62
Well-trained staff	0.86		
Being treated a special customer	0.76		
Providing easy and quick procedures	0.77		
Delivering services as promised	0.84		
Honoring purchase policy	0.78		
Providing comfortable waiting space	0.72		
Feeling comfortable in the waiting area	0.65		
Having comfortable overall atmosphere	0.79		
Advertisement & location		0.77	0.83
Having many branches	0.68		
Seeing advertisements through media	0.79		
Credibility in the advertisements	0.69		

### Structural equation modeling

Table 8 shows the results of the structural model. The proposed conceptual framework was a good model fit. It had a chi-square test statistic of 1874.55 ( $df = 685$ ). Plus, CFI and TLI were above 0.90, set as a cut-off point for this study (0.92 and 0.93, respectively). RMSEA provided a result of 0.07. The value of the RMSEA less than 0.05 may indicate a good fit. However, the threshold is a rule of thumb that may not generalize across all studies. Hu and Bentler (1999) and Chang et al. (2013) claim that an RMSEA around 0.80 is an acceptable model fit. With all these results, the model was indicated to be a good fit.

## **Hypothesis testing**

The SEM model and the relationship paths among constructs are shown in Figure 2.

There were eight hypotheses proposed to test the conceptual model, and four hypotheses were supported (see Table 8).

H1a was tested to observe whether customers' past experiences had an effect on their push motivations to visit day spas. The results showed that customers' past experience did not impact their push motivations to visit day spas. Therefore, H1a was rejected ( $\beta = 0.01, p = 0.74$ ). On the other hand, customers' past experiences had a significant and positive influence on how they perceived marketing strategies at day spas. Thus, H1b was supported ( $\beta = 0.86, p < 0.001$ ).

H2a was proposed to examine whether personal push motivations affected customers' overall satisfaction. The results showed that the effect of customers' push motivations on their overall satisfaction with day spas was not significant. Thus, H2a was rejected ( $\beta = 0.00, p = 0.95$ ). H2b was tested to examine whether customers' personal push motivations influenced how they perceived the quality of products and services at day spas. The findings indicated that customers' push motivations did not influence their perceived quality of products and services at day spas. Therefore, H2b was rejected ( $\beta = -0.04, p = 0.237$ ).

H3a was examined to observe whether customers' perceptions of marketing strategies influence how they perceived quality at day spas. Results indicated that customers' perceptions of marketing strategies had a strong effect on their perceived quality of products and services at day spas. Thus, H3a was supported ( $\beta = 0.92, p < 0.001$ ). H3b tested how customers' perceptions of marketing strategies impact their overall satisfaction at day spas. The results indicated that

customers' perceptions of marketing strategies had a highly positive effect on their overall satisfaction with products and services at day spas. H3b was thus supported ( $\beta = 0.99, p <$

Table 8 Hypothesis testing and goodness-of-fit measures for the structural model

Path			Standardize d Estimates	<i>p</i>	Hypothesis	Results
Past Experience	→	Personal Push Motivations	0.01	0.736	H1a	Rejected
Past Experience	→	Perceptions of Marketing Strategies	0.860	0.000	H1b	Supported
Personal Push Motivations	→	Customer Satisfaction	0.001	0.951	H2a	Rejected
Personal Push Motivations	→	Perceived Quality	-0.047	0.237	H2b	Rejected
Perceptions of Marketing Strategies	→	Perceived Quality	0.920	0.000	H3a	Supported
Perceptions of Marketing Strategies	→	Customer Satisfaction	0.990	0.000	H3b	Supported
Perceived Quality	→	Customer Satisfaction	-0.123	0.543	H4	Rejected
Customer Satisfaction	→	Customer Loyalty	0.580	0.000	H5	Supported
Model Fit Statistic						
$\chi^2$ :		1864.89				
$\chi^2$ /df:		2.14				
Comparative Fit Index (CFI):		0.92				
Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI):		0.91				
Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA):		0.07				

Model Fit Statistic

$\chi^2$ :	1864.89
$\chi^2/df$ :	2.14
Comparative Fit Index (CFI):	0.92
Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI):	0.91
Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA):	0.07

0.001).

H4 proposed that customers' perceived quality of day spas influenced their satisfaction with products and services of day spas, which was rejected ( $\beta = -0.12, p = 0.54$ ). The results showed that the effect of perceived quality on customer satisfaction was not significant. Finally, customers who were satisfied with products and services at day spas tended to be loyal. customers as proposed by H5. Results indicated that H5 was supported ( $\beta = 0.58, p < 0.001$ ).

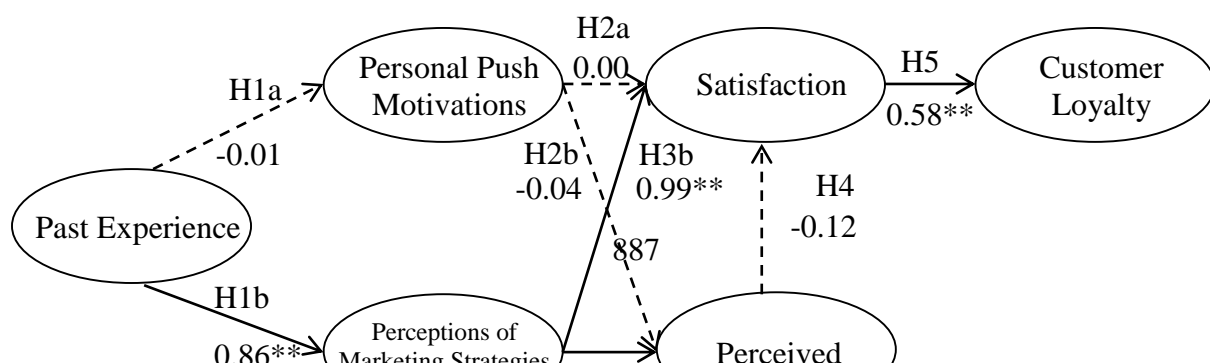


Figure 2 Structural model and hypotheses testing results (standardized parameter estimates)

Note:  $\chi^2/d.f. = 2.14$ ;  $**p < 0.001$ ; CFI = 0.92; TLI = 0.91; RMSEA = 0.07

_____	Hypothesis supported
-----	Hypothesis rejected.

## Conclusions

The result of this study shows that young adults are the majority age group who visit day spas, a finding consistent with previous discoveries. According to Eisner (2013), besides baby boomers who use day spas to keep their health and fitness, young adults in their late teens and early 20s with disposable income also go to spas seeking escape from work-related stress. Day spas have thus become the fastest-growing trend for the industry. McNei and Ragins (2005) offered a similar explanation of American spa-goer demographics. Many day spas focus on teens, and one of the benefits of targeting young adults is their tendency to repurchase spa services and to continue telling other people when they are satisfied with the services. McNei and Ragins (2005) continued to state that the majority of U.S. spa goes are women, while men tend to feel uncomfortable being touched by either male or female spa therapists. Elrod et al. (2015) identified the majority of spa customers who visited luxury spas in Hawaii to be the under 18-year-old group and the 18- to 27-year old group (almost 80%), and the majority of these being women (61%).



Though past experience seems to stimulate people's personal push motivations to revisit places in the previous studies (Mak et al., 2009; Ryu & Jung, 2006), the findings of this study showed that spa customers with past experience did not affect their personal motivations encouraging them repurchase products and services at day spas. On the other hand, past experience tended to influence how customers perceived marketing strategies affecting their decisions to revisit day spas. Perhaps people are more motivated by marketing mix than internal push factors in relation to quality and satisfaction. For example, if people see an ad for a spa that looks really nice, it forms a high expectation of quality, and then they get there and it is nothing like the image in their mind based on the ad. This will affect their perception of quality. However, their internal push factor of going to the spa to keep their friend company will not affect my perception of quality or their sense of satisfaction.

These results may have to do with the fact that more than half of all the respondents were under 35 years old. Young adults between 18 and 29 years old tend to use social media and the internet more compared to other age groups in the U.S. (Perrin & Duggan, 2015). As Hirankitti et al. (2009) stated, "no marketing program can succeed without an effective communication program" (p. 7). Thus, this group of people is perhaps more attracted to visit day spas due to receiving spa advertisements through social media and internet sources rather than from personal motivations. For example, young spa customers might be motivated to go to day spas through exposure to special promotions offered by day spas such as a discounted price or a free trial of products and services. These promotions are often delivered through email or as an advertisement on a website, thereby limiting their reception to those who participate more in online activity. Mak et al. (2009) also mentioned an increasing number of spa entrepreneurs

prefer to promote their business through websites, which results in the increasing number of spa consumers to purchase products and services online.

All of the above could be the reasons why young adults visited day spas more than other age groups in this study. Spa customers who have a positive overall past experience tend to have positive perceptions of marketing strategies that encourage them to revisit day spas. This study corroborates previous studies suggesting that marketing strategies are important factors convincing people to revisit restaurants, hotels, and tourist attractions (Gitelson & Crompton, 1984; Hede, 2005).

The research findings found that customers' perceptions of marketing strategies influenced how they perceived the quality of products and services at day spas. Yoo et al. (2000) mentioned that external attractions, including store image and social network, arouse people to buy goods. Hirankitti et al. (2009) also pointed out that creating a positive store image affects consumers' choice of which store to visit. The store image also helps customers create expectations of how they may perceive the quality of goods and services. By providing a welcoming atmosphere consisting of peaceful music, comfortable seats, professional employees, and an open and simple layout, a store can instill a positive image (Hirankitti et al., 2009). Rafiq and Ahmed (1995) stated that the tangible facilities of a store help customers measure service quality.

Not only is marketing a tool attracting people to visit a store (Swanson & Horridge, 2004), it also helps generate satisfaction in customers (Lo, 2012; McKaskill, 2011). This study found that customers place a high value on employee performance. Spa-goers are thus likely to be satisfied when the day spa staff provides high-quality professional service. This is similar to the findings of Hirankitti et al. (2009). They revealed that spa customers mainly assess the

quality of spa products and services based on service employees. Furthermore, Hirankitti et al. (2009) mentioned that the spa staff is considered the "fifth P" (people) of the marketing mix (p. 16), a significant element of the service business producing tangible and intangible products.

Even though a number of previous studies showed that one's perceptions of quality influence his/her the degree of satisfaction (González & Brea, 2005; González, Comesaña, & Brea, 2007; Iglesias & Guillén, 2004; Sekliuckiene & Langvinienė, 2009; Žabkar et al., 2010), this study showed that customers' perceived quality did not affect their satisfaction. This may perhaps be due to day spa products and services meeting the quality standard, though not meeting customers' expectations. The research results suggested that customers' perceived quality might not be the factor used to assess customer satisfaction.

Additionally, day spa customers who have high overall satisfaction are more likely to become loyal customers at day spas. Tsai et al. (2012) studied the relationship between customer satisfaction and customer loyalty among males at hotel spas in Hong Kong. However, they did not find a significant relationship between these two variables. On the other hand, the results of the current study supported Setiowati and Putri's (2012) research. They found that spa customers with high satisfaction seem to become loyal customers who would revisit and be willing to recommend the spa services to others. Therefore, a model of marketing strategies aimed at creating loyal customers at day spas was suggested by the current study.

## **Implications**

### **Research contributions**

The results from testing the model allow for an effective day spa model encompassing past experience, personal push motivations, perceptions of marketing strategies, perceived quality, satisfaction, and customer loyalty. The combination of these variables has not been attempted in a previous study in spa consumer research. This model can help identify that spa customers who have positive past experience will have positive perceptions of marketing strategies leading them to have perceptions of high quality and overall high satisfaction. Satisfied consumers are, in turn, more likely to become loyal customers at day spas in the future.

As more than half of all respondents were under thirty-five years old, these findings helped specify that social media and internet sources play a vital role in young consumers' decision-making process when they decide to visit places. These results benefit future spa research by opening up new questions and areas of study. Further hospitality research can use the model as a conceptual framework to investigate young adult consumers' attitudes and behavior and how past experience affects their perceptions of marketing strategies motivating them to visit a destination.

### **Management implications**

The study results showed that past experience plays a vital role in influencing day spa customers' satisfaction with services and their perceptions of marketing strategies. Therefore, day spas operators should pay close attention to creating effective and efficient marketing tools to attract spa customers to revisit. For example, day spa operators could offer benefits to return customers such as a package deal consisting of cheaper individual visits or a "buy three get one free" type of benefit. Operators can produce attractive marketing campaigns using media advertisements that generate perceptions of high-quality service and a comfortable atmosphere inside day spas.

Even though some spa operators prefer to communicate in person, increasing numbers of spa operators use websites for providing spa packages, and booking spa services (Mak et al., 2009). Lehto, O’Leary, and Morrison (2004) suggested that providing information about products helps prevent uncertainty in customers’ decision making processes. For example, customers may decide to book a spa service online if the website provides simple and clear information such as business hours, spa packages with prices, location, and pictures of spa facilities. The internet allows consumers access to information prior to their first time visiting a destination (Lehto et al., 2004). Therefore, well-executed and attractive marketing strategies are necessary for today's market.

Targeting the right market also can lead a spa business towards increased success. The finding of this study revealed that young adults are the predominant age group among day spa customers (under thirty-five years old). This supports the findings of Tsai et al. (2012), who found that Generation Y is a growing market among spa consumers. Therefore, offering the right spa packages to the young adult group would help increase revenue. To do this, the spa owners can check the records of the spa packages purchased by the young adult spa consumers. If facial treatment is popular among this target group, the spa marketers may create promotions to attract them by offering free facial treatment for new customers or discount the price of this spa package for the second visit. Once customers visit day spas offering services meeting their expectations, their degree of satisfaction may lead them to become loyal customers. Therefore, improving and maintaining day spa products and services help a day spa business gain revenue in the long run.

### **Limitations and future research**

The results of this study showed that over half of all respondents were young adult customers (aged 18-34 years old) visiting day spas in the U.S. This is likely due to the participants being recruited by Qualtrics, whose panel mostly consists of younger age groups. Also, older generations tend to have less exposure to internet technology and thus are less likely to answer questionnaires through online platforms like Qualtrics. Therefore, future research should collect more data from older customers who visit day spas in the U.S. This data could be used to compare the behaviors of younger and older day spa-goers regarding their preferences of day spa packages, marketing channels, and motivations.

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