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THE GAME ON 2022:

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THE FUTURE IS BRIGHT**

**FACUTLY OF HOSPIATLITY, TOURISM AND WELLNESS,
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA KELANTAN**

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Service Quality That Affects Customers Satisfaction at Spas in Kota Bharu, Kelantan

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ABSTRACT

This study is aims to examine the service quality that affects customers satisfaction in Spas at Kota Bharu. A facility sampling approach was used, and 384 respondents were evaluated. The collected data is analysed using Statistical Packages for Social Science Version 26 (SPSS Version 26) software based on frequency analysis, descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, and correlation analysis. As a result, all independent variables (the relationship of tangible dimension in service quality, relationship between responsiveness dimension in service quality and relationship between empathy dimension in service quality) have a significant relationship to dependent variables (customers satisfaction) among customers who have experienced with service at Spas at Kota Bharu.

Keywords: *Service quality, tangible, responsiveness, empathy, customers satisfaction.*

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is one of the world's important and fastest-growing sectors and multi-sectorial activity that necessitates economic, social, cultural, and environmental inputs and produces employment both directly and indirectly through the expansion of linked industries. Wellness tourism is rapidly displacing all other types of tourism around the world and attracts high-end travellers from established and developing countries, boosting the economies of both developed and developing countries, as well as small or underdeveloped communities that are otherwise rich in traditional health and wellness approaches. The wellness concept is revolutionizing nearly every element of travel, and wellness tourism will only develop faster in the coming years, since it sits at the crossroads of two large, booming industries: the 2.6 trillion tourism sector and the 4.2 trillion wellness market (Global Web Index, 2018).

According to UNWTO (2013), international visitor arrivals surpassed one billion for the first time in history in 2012, with a 4% increase, or 39 million more tourists (Mosbah, 2014). In addition, people nowadays are looking for a place to relax and recharge themselves, owing to the hectic and nerve-racking nature of their working lives. Spas, according to the International Spas Association (2013), seek to be places of refuge, providing relaxation, treatments, pampering, and other services. It also acts as the one of the rapid industries in the world that has driven to massive challenges which need to be addressed. The reasons of emerging of wellness and spas industry are related to several factors. Right now, there are many countries accompanying heavily ageing population. In 2050 East and Southeast Asia countries will be an ageing of population and those in that countries will become more health aware and searching for a defensible lifestyle (East-West Center, 2011).

Spas and wellness services are growing and expanding remarkably in this region, including Malaysia. Consumer participation behaviour has become an essential part of these service-related business organizations, demanded by both locals and foreign consumers. Thus, understanding consumer participation behavior and customer value are essential. Although several studies have proposed the importance of consumer participation behavior, however,

understanding of how consumer participation behavior impacts attitudinal loyalty is still minimal. This study aims to analyze the critical dimensions of consumer participation behavior and its consequences. (Abdullah & Aziz, 2019).

Kelantan is a tourist attraction. Kelantan is the Since April 1, 1994, the Kelantan Tourist Information Centre, TIC has been given the responsible for transforming Kelantan into a famous tourist destination in the country (Suliadi, Zuhaimy and Marinah, 2013). Kota Bharu is the capital city of Kelantan, with a population of 2.001 million in 2018 (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2020). Apart from being the administration centre for the state, Kota Bharu is also one of the top tourist cities in Malaysia. Kelantan was forecasted to receive 5.5 million tourists in 2020 (Kelantan Tourism Information Centre, 2020) before the pandemic hit. (Ramely et al., 2021).

The aim of the study is to analyses service quality that effects customers satisfaction in Spas at Kota Bharu, Kelantan. There are three objectives of this research:

1. To identify the relationship of tangible dimension in service quality with customers satisfaction at spas in Kota Bahru.
2. To determine the relationship between the responsiveness dimension in service quality with customers satisfaction at spas in Kota Bahru.
3. To examine the relationship between empathy dimension in service quality with customers satisfaction at spas in Kota Bahru.

Significance of Study

Researchers

This study helps researchers explore how the service quality dimensions can affect customer satisfaction among residents in Kota Bharu. In addition, this research will allow researchers to discover improvement measures to produce the best service to customers. It can also provide an opportunity for customers to voice their opinions on the services provided by the spas.

Customers

Future customers may benefit from the research topic as this research guides customers to know the benefit of going to the spa. In addition, they also know the reasons why they should choose the spas if they want to get the best service.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Tangible Dimension in Service Quality with Customers Satisfaction

There is already virtually little research into client experiences and emotions during consumption. Tangible facts that tangible can be understood from a cognitive and emotional standpoint are the key assumption in this research. A cognitive process can be triggered by an emotional response, and emotional and affective reactions can be triggered by thinking. Service interactions can elicit cognitive and emotional responses, establishing the foundation for service quality perceptions (Edvardsson, Bo, 2005). Furthermore, guests have a role as co-producers, carrying out activities and deeds and being part of interactions such as, front-line personnel, other customers, and technology that will impact or decide both process and outcome quality.

Responsiveness Dimension in Service Quality with Customers Satisfaction

Responsiveness is quality of the spas is closely related to the guests satisfaction to positively impact the clients' satisfaction and acquire the emotions of the spas experience it deserves. The long-term impact of emotions on customer satisfaction, service quality, and positive word-of-

mouth intention formation. A confirmatory factor analysis was used in the study to support a three-dimensional model of emotions, which then served as predictors in a series of multiple regressions. The findings show that, two emotion dimensions had a consistent direct impact on all dependent variables in both time period. In the other hand, the interaction effect between time periods and emotions, revealed that different emotion dimensions influence satisfaction and word-of-mouth intentions at various stages of the service encounter. The findings' theoretical and managerial implications are thoroughly discussed. Responsiveness well-being is an integral part of holistic wellness, as it can impact your outlook on life, your relationships, and how someone look at you (Lois Melkonias, 2021). This responsiveness plays its role and it is very important for a spas to be responsiveness so that customers can feel satisfaction with spas service, as this will encourage customers to find the same positive experience in the future.

Empathy Dimension in Service Quality with Customers Satisfaction

Empathy in a spas depends on one's sense of one's surroundings. If he feels sad the environment will also change his condition as a feeling will affect the surroundings. With empathy the ability to show this is recognized as very important as every customer who comes to the spas wants to improve the heart and clear the mind of existing problems (Ariana Odell, 2016). To deal with guests, one must understand empathy to make things easier. A study (Umasuthan Hamsanandini, 2016) stated that emotional empathy measures under empathy anxiety and emotional transmission. The results indicate that the empathy dimension strongly influences the hotel guest service experience. While the emotional service experience of business guests is almost entirely determined by cognitive empathy. According to previous literature and empirical findings in hospitality and tourism, empathy can be seen as a subscale in the SERVQUAL instrument. This paper focuses on the observation of the empathy dimension, and has revealed that the interaction of both the cognitive and emotional dimensions of empathy determines the overall emotional service experience and intentions of hotel guests.

Customers Satisfaction on Service Quality

The concept of customer satisfaction can be defined as a consumer fulfilment response where consumers experience contentment with the product or service they have purchased (Oliver, 2010). Furthermore, some researchers choose to focus on the complete consumer experience as the basis of customer satisfaction instead of only the fulfilment response after the purchase (Gerpott, Rams & Schindler, 2001; Hill, Roche & Allen, 2007). More specifically, the complete consumer experience includes factors such as quality, price, functions of the product, and personal benefits gained from the product (Gerpott et al., 2001). This is further supported by Harris and Goode (2004) as well as Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1994) who all argue that a consumer experience is a comprehensive satisfaction, that is more permanent, rather than only transactional based satisfaction. Where a transactional-based satisfaction can be explained as the satisfaction achieved from simply the transaction between the consumer and the company, and comprehensive satisfaction as the satisfaction achieved when all aspects of a consumer to business relationship are considered. This is because if the eight entire experience is positive, the consumers are more likely to repeat the process with that company over and over again (Hill et al., 2007).

Research Hypothesis

The hypotheses in the study are to find out whether there are any correlations or relations between dependent variables and independent variables:

- H1 There is a significant relationship between spas tangible service quality toward customer satisfaction

- H2 There is a significant relationship between responsiveness on service quality that can affect customer emotion.
- H3 There is a significant relationship between the empathy that can be produced to enhance good emotions to the guest.

Research Framework

Figure 1 below shows the research framework for this study.

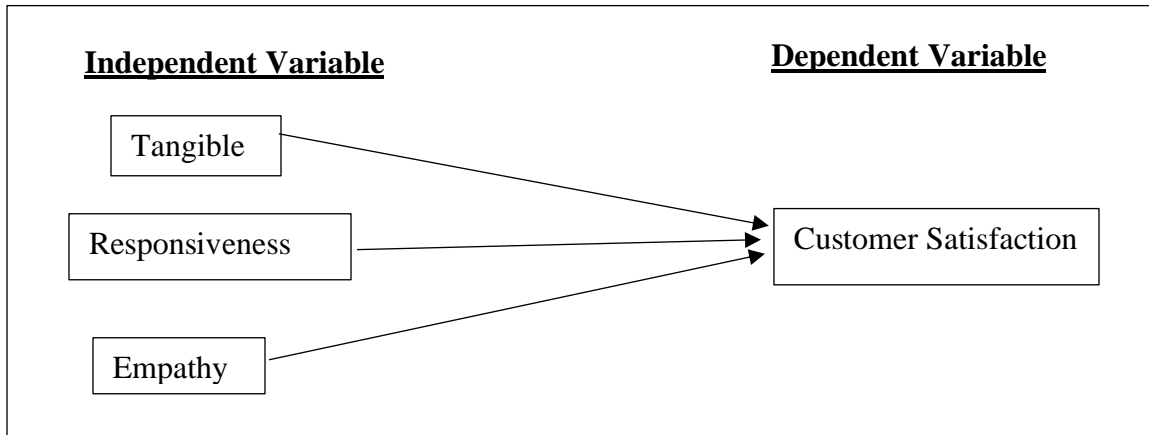


Figure 1: Research Framework

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

In the research design, there are two methods to ensure that the information collected allow researchers to focus effectively on research question which are quantitative and qualitative. According to Raimo (2021), quantitative research is concerned with numbers and figures, whereas qualitative research is concerned with words and their interpretations. Both are necessary for acquiring various types of information.

The differences between quantitative and qualitative in collecting and analysing data are that quantitative research is focus on testing theories and hypotheses while qualitative research is focuses on exploring ideas and formulating a theory or hypothesis. Next, quantitative more about numbers while qualitative is to words. For an example quantitative research are analysed through math and statistical analysis, mainly expressed in numbers, graphs and tables. While analysed by summarising, categorising and interpreting and mainly expressed in words are more to qualitative research. When it involves numbering, the question will be a closed questions which is multiple choice and it will requires many respondents because the key terms for quantitative research are testing, measurement, objectivity and reliability. Using open-ended questions and requires few respondents are for the qualitative research. The key term for qualitative are understanding, context, complexity and subjectivity.

This research uses a quantitative approach. Quantitative methods emphasize object measurements and the statistical, mathematical or numerical analysis of data collected through 18 polls, questionnaires and surveys or by manipulating pre-existing statistical data using computational techniques (Babbie, 2010). According to Bhandari (2021), quantitative research is the process of collecting and analysing numerical data. In this study, a survey was conducted through a questionnaire as the research instrument. The questionnaire was designed to collect all the information relevant to the objectives of this study.

Data Collection

There are several methods of data collection in the research study. This research was conducted using primary data. Primary data can be collected in many ways. The tool used in this research is a questionnaire through the Google form. A questionnaire is applied to collect the information regarding the relationship of tangible, responsiveness and empathy dimension in service quality with customer's satisfaction. The questionnaire was distributed online and data collected from the customer who received services at spas. This survey was conducted online because of the current pandemic in Malaysia, causing us to abide by the set rules. As a result, we know their answer.

Sampling

The sampling method is an introduction to the principles of sampling and considers, samples and populations, representativeness and random sampling sample. It concludes with a note on sampling for quantitative research. Sampling has implications for the way data are collected, analysed and interpreted. Quantitative methods allow you to test a hypothesis by systematically collecting and analysing data. Quantitative information is often called data, but can also be things other than numbers. Subjects in the population are sampled through a random process by using either a random number table or a random number generator therefore each person remaining in the population has the same probability of being selected for the sample.

There are two types of sampling method which are probability and non-probability. Probability sampling involves random selection and allows the researchers to make strong statistical inferences about the whole group. While non-probability sampling involves non-random selection based on convenience or other criteria. It may allow researchers to easily collect data (Shona, 2019). In this study, non-probability sampling will be used because it is mainly used in quantitative research. There are five main types of non-probability samples, but in this study, we used simple convenience sample.

A convenience sample is simply one where the units are selected for inclusion in the sample are the easiest to access (Laerd, 2012). The questionnaire form will be distributed to the respondents in Kota Bharu. Before letting the respondents answer the questionnaire, the researcher will ask whether the respondent have been to the spas in Kota Bharu or not. This will determine if they have experienced the service at spas in Kota Bharu.

Data Analysis

All the data collected will be checked in Statistical Packages for Social Science (SPSS). SPSS is a software for evaluating, modifying and generating characteristic pattern between different data variables. In addition, the output is obtained through graphical representation. So that, the user can understand the result easily (Jason, 2018). In this study, SPSS software was used to generate results from data collection through questionnaires distributed to respondents. Also, the data analysis is using the latest version of the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS).

The results will show that each data collected is reliable through the correlation between the independent and the dependent variables. If the result shown from SPSS is accurate, that is the correlation between the independent and the dependent variable, then the collected data is reliable and can be analysed.

FINDINGS

Result of Frequency Analysis

Table 4.2 below shows the frequency analysis of this research.

Table 29: Frequency Analysis

Characteristic	Population	Percentage
Gender		
Male	67	17.4
Female	317	82.6
Age		
18 – 20 Years	41	10.7
21 – 23 Years	150	39.1
24 – 26 Years	145	37.8
27 Years and above	48	12.5
Marital Status		
Single	210	54.7
Married	173	45.1
Other	1	0.3
Race		
Malay	321	83.6
Chinese	44	11.5
Indian	19	4.9
Monthly Income		
Less than RM1000	56	14.6
RM1001 – RM2000	117	30.5
RM2001 – RM3000	148	38.5
RM3001 – RM4000	59	15.4
RM4000 and above	4	1.0
How Often go to Spa		
Once a week	20	5.2
Once a month	28	7.3
Once every two months	198	51.6
Once every three months	138	35.9

The gender distribution of a total of 384 respondents. Table 1, shows that male respondents were 17.4 percent (n=67) less than female respondents' which is 82.6 percent (n=317). The reason is female respondents are more than male respondents is because female prefer to go to spas to relax than males.

Among these four age groups, the highest number of respondents were from 21 to 23 years, with 39.1 percent (n = 150). The second highest respondent age was from 24 to 26 years, 37.8 percent (n = 145) and followed by 12.5 percent (n = 48) respondents from the age 27 and above. While the lowest number of respondents were from 18 to 20 years old with 10.7 percent (n = 41). The reason the age of respondents from 21 to 23 years has the highest number is that they want to restores energy and calms the mind. Meanwhile, Respondent 18 to 20 have the lowest number of respondents because they are still in school and need to get permission from their parents.

The marital status distribution of a total of 384 respondents. It clearly shows that Single respondents were 54.7 percent (n=210) more than Married respondent 45.1percent (n=173). While other status is 0.3 percent (n=1). The reason Single respondents were more than Married respondents is because had more time to go to spa but married respondent did not have time

because they had to do housework. The Other status is less than both of status because they not interested to doing go to spas.

The race shows that, Malay respondents were 83.6 percent (n=321) more than Chinese respondents at 11.5 percent (n=44). For Indian respondents, it is 4.9 percentage (n=19). Malay respondents were more than Chinese and Indian respondents because Malays are more interested in going to the spas.

The Monthly Income distribution of a total of 384 respondents. It shows that RM2001 – RM3000 respondents were 38.5 percent (n=148) more than RM1001 – RM2000 and RM3001 – RM4000 which is 30.5 percent (n=117) and 15.4 percent (n=59). Monthly Income for Less than RM1000 is 14.6 percent (n=56) while RM4000 and above 1.0 (n=4). The reason RM2001 – RM3000 respondents were more than other Monthly Income that they have more time to go to spas and are not busy.

The Often go to a spa’s distribution of a total of 384 respondents. It shows that respondents often go to the spa Once every two months were 51.6 percent (n=198) more than respondent go to the spa Once every three months were 35.9 (n=138) , while respondent go to the spa Once a month and Once a week were 7.3 percent (n=28) and 5.2 percent (n=20). Respondents often go to the spa once every two months because they have more time to relax they mind from work or study.

Result of Descriptive Analysis

Table XX below shows the descriptive analysis of this research

Table 30 Descriptive Analysis

Variable	Item	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
Tangible	Are you satisfied with the services provided by the spa?	4.89	0.381
	Is the shape of the spa building interesting to you?	4.87	0.408
	Does the cleanliness at the spa satisfy you?	4.86	0.407
	Does the spa provide up to date facilities?	4.84	0.425
	Does the spa have competent staff to ensure your satisfaction is guaranteed?	4.84	0.439
	Do the spa staff have high communication skills when serving you?	4.82	0.449
	Does the spa staff look is attractive to you?	4.82	0.445
	Do the facilities at the spa work well?	4.84	0.406
Responsiveness	Is staff responsiveness to customers satisfactory?	4.82	0.4473
	Are the spa staff caring and responsive to the client’s needs?	4.82	0.4607
	Is staff responsiveness to customers satisfactory?	4.78	0.5453
	Are the spa staff caring and responsive to the client’s needs?	4.80	0.4602
	Is the determinant of customer satisfaction determined by the responsive attitude of the spa staff?	4.79	0.4851

	As a spa client, do you think responsiveness is more important than knowledge and courtesy?	4.80	0.5138
	Responsive attitude reflects the willingness of spa staff to help clients?	4.78	0.4967
	Does a responsive attitude need to be inculcated in the staff of employees to gain customer satisfaction?	4.79	0.4781
Empathy	Does the Spa always keep you informed of new and attractive packages?	4.83	0.464
	Does the Spa always advise you to take the right product for your facial treatment?	4.83	0.439
	While getting services at the Spa, did you get personal attention?	4.82	0.468
	Is the service received from the Spa staff satisfactory?	4.80	0.471
	Are employees trained to understand customer feelings?	4.80	0.496
	The spa operate at convenient hours?	4.80	0.484
	The spa maintains strong customer relationships?	4.79	0.488
	Do you like all the employee behaviour?	4.80	0.516
Customers satisfaction	Are you satisfied with the service given to you by the spa staff?	4.85	0.399
	Are you satisfied with the cleanliness and environment of the spa?	4.84	0.421
	Are you satisfied with the facilities provided by the spa?	4.84	0.414
	Are you satisfied with the treatment given by the spa staff?	4.84	0.435
	Overall, have u satisfied with all service in that spa?	4.84	0.419

The frequency, mean and standard deviation for the items used to Measure Tangible in Service Quality. The higher questions measured for T1 (Are you satisfied with the services provided by the spa?) Mean is 4.89. There were two lower questions, which were T6 and T7 (Do the spa staff have high communication skills when serving you? and Does the spa staff look is attractive to you?) The mean is 4.82. The mean values T2, T3 T4, T5 and T8 are 4.87, 4.86 and 4.84.

The frequency, mean and standard deviation for the items used to measure the stage Responsiveness in Service Quality towards SD. There were eight questions measured with two questions having the highest mean R1 and R2 (Is staff responsiveness to customers satisfactory? And Are the spa staff caring and responsive to the client's needs?) 4.82 mean for the lower mean is R3 and R7 (Is staff responsiveness to customers satisfactory? And Responsive attitude reflects the willingness of spa staff to help clients?) With a 4.78 mean, continue with R4, R5, R6 and R8 with 4.80 and 4.79 mean.

The frequency, mean and standard deviation for the items used to Measure Empathy in Service Quality towards SD. There were one questions measured with the lowers means of 4.79 for question E7 (The spa maintains strong customer relationships?). The higher measure is question

E1 and E2 (Does the Spa always keep you informed of new and attractive packages? And Does the Spa always advise you to take the right product for your facial treatment?) With 4.83 mean. Questions E3, E4, E5, E6, and E7 with 4.82 and 4.80 mean.

The frequency, mean and standard deviation for the items used to measure the Customer Satisfaction in Service Quality. There were five questions measured with the highest mean of 4.85 which is C1 (Are you satisfied with the service given to you by the spa staff?). Meanwhile, the same means 4.84 for questions C2, C3, C4 and C5

Result of Reliability Analysis

Table 3 below shows the results of the reliability analysis

Variable	Number of items	Cronbach Alpha
Tangible	8	0.933
Responsiveness	8	0.929
Empathy	8	0.934
Customer Satisfaction	5	0.905

Table 3 presents the Cronbach's Alpha values of the questionnaire in between the range of very good level 0.934 to excellent level 0.905. A total number of three independence variables and one dependent variable has been tested using Cronbach's Alpha. The first independent variable, which is Tangible in service quality found to be very good and reliable in the strength of Correlation (8 questions: $\alpha = 0.933$). Then, the Responsiveness in service quality (8 question: $\alpha = 0.929$) for Empathy in service quality was also found to be excellent in the strength of Correlation (8 question: $\alpha = 0.934$). Lastly, Customer Satisfaction in service quality is (5 question: $\alpha = 0.905$). The overall variables have remained with 29 questions as the current Cronbach's Alpha result is already above the good level. Therefore, the data were considered suitable for further analysis

Result of Pearson Correlation Analysis

Table 4 below shows the Pearson Correlation Analysis

Table 4: Pearson Correlation Analysis

Hypothesis	P. Value	Result (supported/ not supported)
H1: There is a significant relationship between tangible in service quality and customers satisfaction	0.812	H1 is supported
H2: There is a significant relationship between responsiveness in service quality and customers satisfaction	0.742	H2 is supported
H3: There is a significant relationship between empathy in service quality and customers satisfaction	0.805	H3 is supported

Based on the table 4, Pearson's correlation analysis was used to test the relationship between hypotheses on a significant relationship such as tangible, responsiveness and empathy in service quality with customer satisfaction. Based on the result, all hypotheses were accepted at a 0.01 significant level.

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The purpose of the present study was to analyse service quality that affects customer satisfaction at spas in Kota Bharu, Kelantan. Service quality has been measured in a variety of social sectors such as economy-banks (Culiberg & Rojsek, 2010), hotel industry (Alexandris, Dimitriadis & Markata, 2002), restaurant business (Wall & Berry, 2007), health-hospitals (Murthi, Deshpande & Srivastava, 2013) and many more. Nowadays, one of the most growing sectors worldwide is the spa market and spa industry ('Spas Global Market Analysis', 2016). Spas are service organisations. This study focuses on three dimensions of service quality which are Tangible, Responsiveness and Empathy. Tangible refers to the spa's physical environment of the service, such as the appearance of physical facilities, equipment, towels-decoration-tools, spa location and appearance of the employees). In comparison, Responsiveness refers to the spa's staff or management's ability to provide prompt service. Lastly is Empathy, that refers to providing caring and individualised attention to spa customers. The last result of this study shows the relationship between hypotheses on a significant relationship such as tangible, responsiveness and empathy in service quality with customer satisfaction. All hypotheses were accepted at a 0.01 significance level.

Several recommendations can be made to increase customer satisfaction at the spa, including willingness to help the customers, provide food and beverages to customers and train employees to be honest and empathic treatment of customers. The first recommendation is the willingness to help customers. It refers to the attitude of an employee who is willing to help a customer without being asked. This can be realized in each employee through training or company policy. So, the management of those spas must create an environment of willingness to help the customers.

Second is provide food and beverages to customers. Spas are usually a place to get beauty and personal health treatments. Most spas in Malaysia, without the exception of spas in Kota Bharu, do not provide food and beverages for their customers. So, to further increase customer satisfaction, the spa management should provide a café for their customers. This café will be the place for customers wait and eat before getting the treatment. This not only will help increasing customer satisfaction but also can be increasing in spa's profits.

Lastly are train employees to be honest and giving empathic treatment of customers. This is said to be so because some employees do not perform