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THE ASIAN SPA:  
A STUDY OF TOURIST MOTIVATIONS,  
“FLOW” AND THE BENEFITS OF SPA  
EXPERIENCES

---

Thesis submitted by

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SEPTEMBER 2012

for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)  
in the School of Business  
Faculty of Law, Business & the Creative Arts  
James Cook University, QLD  
AUSTRALIA

# STATEMENT OF SOURCES

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## **Declaration**

I declare that this thesis is my own work and has not been submitted in any form for any degree or diploma at any university or other institution of tertiary education. Information derived from the published or unpublished work of others has been acknowledged in the text and a list of references is given.

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Jenny H. Panchal

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# STATEMENT ON THE CONTRIBUTION OF OTHERS

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## **In undertaking this research for this PhD thesis:**

I recognise the Australian Government, particularly the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) through the Philippine-Australia Human Resource Development Facility (PAHRDF) for granting me the Australian Leadership Awards (ALA) Scholarship, which covered my tuition fees, financial support towards living and research expenses, and airfare to and from Australia.

I recognise James Cook University for providing the facilities and assistance in the conduct of my PhD research and in the completion of this thesis; I also recognise the Graduate Research School at JCU for conducting regular research skills workshops and seminars that enhanced my analytical and writing skills, and for granting me relevant research funding which aided in the enrichment of my PhD work.

I recognise the Faculty of Law, Business and the Creative Arts and the School of Business for providing physical resources during the course of my research, as well as financial support which provided me the opportunity to present my work at international and local conferences and events. I also recognise the school's professional support staff and their efforts in ensuring that PhD students get the best possible assistance and relevant advice.

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Most importantly, I recognise the tremendous contribution of my principal supervisor, Professor Philip Pearce, who has provided remarkable guidance, understanding and academic support for the duration of my PhD. Professor Pearce also provided editorial and critical feedback.

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Jenny H. Panchal

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Date



# DECLARATION OF ETHICS

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The research presented and reported in this thesis was conducted within the guidelines for research ethics outlined in the *National Statement on Ethics Conduct in Research Involving Humans* (1999), the *Joint NHRMC/AVCC Statement and Guidelines on Research Practice* (1997), the *James Cook University Policy on Experimentation Ethics, Standard Practices and Guidelines* (2001).

The proposed research methodology received clearance from the James Cook University Experimentation Ethics Review Committee (Approval Numbers *H3130* and *H3668*).

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Jenny H. Panchal

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Date

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---

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My principal supervisor, Professor Philip Pearce, has invaluable contributions not only in accomplishing this PhD but also in realising my potentials as an academic. Without his unswerving support, insight and guidance, this thesis would not have come to fruition. The high-calibre PhD supervision that I received from him was demonstrated by his professionalism, ethical and calm approach to research, teaching and learning. His undivided time and attention during supervision sessions as well as his sincere and constructive feedback made me feel respected as a student and as an individual. Throughout my PhD journey, he has consistently taught and led me by example for which I continue to admire and respect him. *My deepest gratitude to you, Prof! It has certainly been an honour to be mentored by you!*

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# DEDICATION

---

This PhD thesis is dedicated in the memory of my beloved mother,  
Maria Resurreccion (“Rose”) Hombrebueno, who:

Taught me...

to love and give unconditionally;

to value time, hard work, diligence, patience and discipline;

to be independent and “street-smart”;

to be pliant like a bamboo - to stand tall, but grounded; to hold on to my roots while  
bending with the wind; and, to survive and stand tall again with grace.

Belived...

in my dreams and my aspirations;

in my talents, capabilities and inner strength;

that I can achieve things beyond my perceived limits and imagination.

Had...

the patient ears to listen;

the heart to scold and the hands to hold;

the words that healed my brokenness; and,

prayers that calmed my soul.

On a fine day on the second year of my PhD, joined the Creator.

*You will always be loved, cherished and remembered.*

# ABSTRACT

---

This thesis aims to highlight the existing relationship between tourism and positive psychology in the context of Asian spa tourism by understanding tourist motivations, the experience of flow and the perceived benefits of spa going. The review of the literature suggested several clear research needs; hence, five opportunities were identified and explored. The first two opportunities consisted of highlighting spa tourism as a form of special interest tourism, and using South East Asia as the geographical context of the project. This shift in focus from the European and North American settings for spa research provided a timely approach in studying a rich and thriving component of Asian tourism. The third opportunity relates to the under-researched relationship between tourism and positive psychology. The vital relationship between these two contemporary fields of study provided a pathway to consider different approaches for studying spa-related tourist behaviour. The fourth opportunity lay in testing and expanding specific existing theories and conceptual schemes. In this project, the travel career pattern (TCP) and the flow construct were used and tested in ways that have not been previously undertaken. Finally, the opportunity to provide empirical work on the trajectory of tourist behaviour in the Asian spa-going context was identified. This thesis has used Clawson and Knetsch's (1966) five phases of tourist behaviour. It has focused on the three main phases: pre-travel (Chapter 3 – motivation), on-site experiences (Chapter 4 – “flow”), and reflection (Chapter 5 – benefits of spa experiences).

This thesis is divided into six chapters. The introductory chapter provides the background for the study by outlining the wellness context (as a phenomenon, as an industry and as a tourism product). A discussion about health, wellness and spa tourism is also presented. Further, the chapter presents a background of spa tourism by highlighting the history and types of spas, the recent global spa trends and the nature of the Asian spa industry. This chapter also includes the significance of the research. Chapter 2 provides further background for the research by outlining some key concepts in the thesis such as the TCP, the meaning of flow and the kinds of benefits-sought. Additionally, the research paradigm, perspectives and justifications of the geographical

context of the study are explained. Finally, the research gaps are identified in more detail; the research design is presented and the research aims are also laid out.

Three studies were conducted to support the overarching aim of the research. The first study involved on-site surveys in India, Thailand and the Philippines. The second study was framed from the initial results of the first study; it involved an online survey of spa-going tourists in South East Asia. The third and final study entailed an analysis of travel blogs about spa experiences in India, Thailand and the Philippines.

Chapter 3 consisted of two parts which discussed the tourist motivation-related findings from the on-site and online surveys. The aims of the first study were to profile the tourist spa-goers in India, Thailand and the Philippines and identify their key motives in visiting these countries. In exploring the pull factors, it was found that safety and security was the most important factor in choosing a destination. The TCP was the main theory used in analysing the push factors, and the results were very similar to the original TCP study (Lee & Pearce, 2002, 2003; Pearce, 2005; Pearce & Lee, 2005). Novelty, escape and relaxation were found to be the most important motives for the tourists in the three countries. Health as a travel motive was found to be moderately important among the respondents. Additionally, it was found that the pursuit of health motives was not as important to experienced travellers as it was to less experienced travellers. In effect, as one gains more travel experience, the importance of the health motive diminishes. The second part of Chapter 3 focused on the travel and spa motives of tourists who participated in the online survey. For both travel and spa-going sets of motives, it was found that novelty, relaxation and escape were the most important motives for the respondents. Unlike health in the previous study, *beauty, health and wellness* as a motive factor was the least important travel motive for overall holiday taking. As a motive for specifically going to spas, however, it was regarded as moderately important.

Chapter 4 applied the flow construct to spa and health experiences. The measure of flow, FSS-2 was used to address an aim of the study that is, to assess the tourists' propensity to experience flow during a spa experience. The data for this chapter were part of the same information collection process which surveyed travel motives among tourists in India, Thailand and the Philippines (Study 1). The nine dimensions of flow

(Mihalyi Csikszentmihalyi, 1990) were used as the framework of the FSS-2. Overall, the results of the study showed that the 319 spa-going tourists reported a moderately high propensity to experience flow during a spa treatment, thereby indicating that spa treatments generally provide positive experiences to tourists. Of the nine dimensions, autotelic experience – the domain which refers to the view that the individuals involved in the activity are inclined to undertake or repeat the experience – was the highest across the flow dimensions. Overall, tourist spa-goers are likely to experience intrinsic rewards from spa treatments. Also, the results suggested that tourists are likely to purchase spa treatments for their future holidays. To address the final aim and to highlight the novel approach used in this study, the mean scores of each flow dimension in the spa activity were compared with the mean scores of other activities that were previously studied by the developers of the FSS-2. The results indicated that loss of self-consciousness and action-awareness merging were lower in spa settings than the other activities. Meanwhile, the spa activity was comparatively higher on the concentration dimension than the other activities. In general, this comparison also suggests that spa-going while on holidays is a successful activity that is viewed as beneficial in terms of flow-related positive psychology outcomes.

Chapter 5 presented the benefits from spa experiences as reported by tourists in their travel blogs. Overall, it was revealed that the kinds of positive-experiences that tourist spa-goers gain from the spa activity was found to encompass the different dimensions of well-being. More specifically, physical, psychological and social dimensions benefited the most from spa experiences. The physical domain was usually affected by touch during spa treatments. Psychological dimensions of change (emotional, intellectual and sometimes spiritual domains) were reported during and after the spa experiences. Finally, the social dimension was also affected through perceived improvement in relationships as a result of the spa experience.

The concluding chapter provides a reconsideration of the main aims and an overview of the results. It highlights the theoretical and conceptual implications, and offers insights for commercial/marketing considerations from the project. Finally, the limitations and challenges are presented, and then the future directions of this area of inquiry are identified. Academic publications relating to this research are documented in a separate section.



# PRESENTATION & PUBLICATION NOTES

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This thesis is formatted according to the official James Cook University thesis guidelines for a Doctorate of Philosophy (PhD). Under such guidelines, candidates are encouraged to publish sections of their thesis before they are formally submitted for examination.

A big part of Chapter 3 has been presented at the 16<sup>th</sup> Asia Pacific Tourism Association Conference in Macau, SAR on 13-16 July 2010. A modified version of the paper was submitted to the Asian Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Research. Aspects of this PhD research were publicly presented at a university level, particularly as part of James Cook University's Celebrating Research initiative. More specifically, the presentations were for:

- Faculty Graduate Student Research Conference on 1 September 2010, organised by the Faculty of Law, Business and the Creative Arts.  
Title: *The integration of health as travel motive in the Travel Career Pattern (TCP) model*
- My Research in 3 Minutes Competition on 10 August 2010. The researcher qualified to represent the tourism discipline in the faculty heat.

Parts of Chapters 3 and 4 were also presented at the 6<sup>th</sup> World Conference for Graduate Research in Tourism, Hospitality and Leisure in Fethiye, Turkey on 24-29 April 2012. Sections from Chapters 3, 4 and 5 were re-written and submitted for publication as book chapters. The presentations and publications are summarised in a list below.

Panchal, J. H. (In Progress). Positive experiences: flow and the benefits from Asian spa experiences. To be published in *Aspects of Tourist Behaviour*. Newcastle, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

Panchal, J.H. (In Progress). Tourism, wellness and feeling good: A study of Asian spa experiences. In P. L. Pearce & S. Filep (Eds.), *Tourist Experience and Fulfilment: Insights from Positive Psychology*. New York: Routledge.

Panchal, J. (2012). *The 'positive tourism' linkage: A study of motivations, flow and benefits of spa experiences in Southeast Asia*. Paper presented at the 6th World Conference for Graduate Research in Tourism, Hospitality & Leisure.

Panchal, J. H., & Pearce, P. L. (2011). Health motives and the travel career pattern (TCP) model. *Asian Journal of Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 5(1), 32-44.

Pearce, P. L., & Panchal, J. H. (2010). *The integration of health as a travel motive factor in the Travel Career Pattern (TCP) model*. Paper presented at the 16th Annual Conference of the Asia Pacific Tourism Association.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

STATEMENT OF SOURCES.....	<b>i</b>
STATEMENT OF ACCESS.....	<b>ii</b>
ELECTRONIC COPY .....	<b>iii</b>
STATEMENT ON THE CONTRIBUTION OF OTHERS .....	<b>iv</b>
DECLARATION OF ETHICS .....	<b>v</b>
ACKNOWLEDGMENT.....	<b>vii</b>
DEDICATION .....	<b>x</b>
ABSTRACT .....	<b>xi</b>
PRESENTATION & PUBLICATION NOTES .....	<b>xiv</b>
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	<b>xvi</b>
LIST OF FIGURES.....	<b>xxii</b>
LIST OF TABLES .....	<b>xxiii</b>

# CHAPTER OUTLINE

---

## CHAPTER 1

### **The Wellness Context and the Asian Spa ..... 1**

---

1.2.1	Definition and History of Wellness.....	3
1.2.2	The Multidimensionality and Holism of Wellness: Health, Well-being and Satisfaction.....	4
1.1	INTRODUCTION: RESEARCH OVERVIEW.....	1
1.2	THE WELLNESS PHENOMENON.....	3
1.2.3	Wellness as a State of Being and a Continuous Process: Relative, Subjective and Self-Dependent.....	6
1.2.4	Wellness is Task-Oriented.....	9
1.4.1	Health and Wellness Tourism.....	13
1.4.2	Medical Tourism.....	19
1.3	THE WELLNESS INDUSTRY.....	10
1.4	WELLNESS AS A TOURISM PRODUCT & EXPERIENCE.....	13
1.4.3	Spa Tourism.....	19
1.4.3.1	History and Types of Spa.....	19
1.4.3.2	Global Spa Trends.....	21
1.4.3.3	The Asian Spa Industry.....	23
1.5	SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH.....	26
1.6	CHAPTER OVERVIEW.....	27

---

## CHAPTER 2

### **Key Concepts, Research Paradigm & Design ..... 28**

---

2.2.1	Tourist Behaviour and Its Phases.....	29
2.2.2	Tourist Motivation.....	29
2.1	INTRODUCTION.....	28
2.2	KEY CONCEPTS IN THE THESIS.....	29
2.2.3	Phase 1: Exploration.....	31
2.2.4	Phase 2: Debate.....	33
2.2.5	Phase 3: Transition.....	34
2.3.1	The TCP and Wellness.....	37
2.4.1	Positive Psychology.....	38
2.3	THE TRAVEL CAREER PATTERN (TCP) MODEL.....	34
2.4	POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY AND TOURISM.....	38

2.4.2	The relationship between positive psychology and tourism.....	40
2.4.3	Introduction to the Concept of Flow .....	41
2.4.4	Flow and the Tourist Experience.....	42
2.4.5	Measuring flow in tourist experiences .....	43
2.4.6	The Flow Scales and the Tourist Spa Experiences .....	44
2.5.1	Research Paradigms.....	48
2.5.2	Research Perspectives.....	52
2.5	RESEARCH PARADIGM & PERSPECTIVES.....	45
2.6	GEOGRAPHICAL CONTEXT OF THE PHD THESIS.....	53
2.7	SUMMARY OF KNOWLEDGE GAPS, RESEARCH AIMS AND DESIGN.....	53
2.7.1	Knowledge Gaps and Research Aims .....	53
2.7.2	Research Design: A Snapshot .....	55
<hr/>		
2.8	CHAPTER CONCLUSION.....	57

### **CHAPTER 3**

#### **Motivation: The Drive to Travel & the Impulse for Spas..... 60**

3.2.1	Research Gaps and Aims.....	62
3.2	ON-SITE SURVEY: RESEARCH AIMS, DATA AND METHODS .....	62
3.1	INTRODUCTION.....	61
CHAPTER 3 (Part 1) - The integration of health in the travel career pattern (TCP)		
model	.....	62
3.2.2	Research method.....	62
3.2.3	The Questionnaire.....	65
3.2.4	Data Analysis.....	66
3.2.5	Respondent Profile.....	66
3.2.6	MOTIVATION: “Pull” and “Push” Factors .....	68
3.2.7	Pull Factors .....	69
3.2.7.1	Spa and health experience.....	74
3.2.8	Travel motives: Test of normality .....	75
3.2.9	Health & the TCP .....	76
3.2.9.1	Travel Experience .....	79
CHAPTER 3 (Part 2) - Travel & Spa-Going Career Patterns .....		
3.3.1	Research gaps and objectives.....	83
3.3	ONLINE SURVEY: RESEARCH AIMS, DATA AND METHODS.....	83
3.3.2	The online survey: Rationale, sampling and limitations.....	83
3.3.3	The respondents .....	87
3.3.4	The spa treatments .....	88
3.3.5	The Spa-Going Plans .....	89
3.3.5.1	Pre-travel Stage .....	89
3.3.5.2	Factors influencing spa planning.....	90
3.3.6	The modified TCP: Travel motives of spa-going tourists .....	90
3.3.6.1	Parallels drawn between the TCP and the current study.....	91
3.3.6.2	Travel motives and travel experience.....	93
3.3.7	Spa-going motives .....	95
3.3.8	Previous Spa Experience .....	96

3.3.9	The Spa-Going Career Pattern (SGCP): A new development.....	99
3.4.1	Requirements of a good tourist motivation theory.....	104
3.4.2	The SGCP and its future.....	106
3.4	CHAPTER CONCLUSION.....	101

## CHAPTER 4

### Flow in spa experiences ..... 107

4.5.1	The survey: a review of aims, method and tools.....	114
4.5.2	The respondent profile.....	114
4.1	INTRODUCTION.....	107
4.2	A REVIEW OF THE FLOW MODEL AND THE FLOW STATE SCALES.....	108
4.3	MEASURING FLOW IN TOURIST EXPERIENCES.....	110
4.4	THE FSS-2 AND SPA EXPERIENCES.....	111
4.5	RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES, AIMS AND METHODOLOGY.....	113
4.6.1	The dimensions of flow from spa experiences.....	117
4.6.1.1	Challenge-skill balance.....	117
4.6.1.2	Action-awareness merging.....	117
4.6	THE FLOW DIMENSIONS AND SPA EXPERIENCES.....	115
4.6.1.3	Clear goals.....	118
4.6.1.4	Unambiguous feedback.....	119
4.6.1.5	Concentration on task.....	120
4.6.1.6	Sense of control.....	121
4.6.1.7	Loss of self-consciousness.....	121
4.6.1.8	Time transformation.....	122
4.6.1.9	Autotelic experience.....	123
4.6.2	Flow and spa treatments.....	124
4.6.2.1	Loss of self-consciousness and spa treatments.....	129
4.6.2.2	Unambiguous feedback and spa treatments.....	130
4.6.2.3	Sense of control and spa treatments.....	131
4.6.3	Gender, usual place of residence and the dimensions of flow.....	131
4.7.1	Overall flow.....	142
4.7.2	Challenge-skill balance.....	142
4.7	FLOW SCALES IN A NON-ACTIVE VS. ACTIVE PHYSICAL SETTING.....	138
4.7.3	Action-awareness merging.....	142
4.7.4	Clear goals and unambiguous feedback.....	143
4.7.5	Concentration and control.....	144
4.7.6	Loss of self-consciousness.....	144
4.7.7	Time transformation.....	145
4.7.8	Autotelic experience.....	145
4.8.1	Spa experience and survey time interval.....	145
4.8.2	Length and “repetition of questions”.....	146
4.8	REVIEW OF AIMS AND RELATED CHALLENGES.....	145
4.8.3	Language barriers.....	146

4.9	CHAPTER CONCLUSION.....	xix
-----	-------------------------	-----

**CHAPTER 5**  
**Reflections: The Benefits of Spa Experiences ..... 153**

---

5.1 INTRODUCTION ..... 153

CHAPTER 5 (Part 1) – “*What do I get from it?*”: Spa benefits and contributions to travel experience ..... 156

    5.2.1 Respondent Profile ..... 157

        5.2.1.1 The demographics ..... 157

5.2 STUDY 2 – ONLINE SURVEY: RESEARCH AIMS AND METHODOLOGY ..... 156

    5.2.1.2 Previous travel and spa experience ..... 157

    5.2.1.3 Type of spa-goer (by experience) ..... 160

    5.2.1.4 Types of spa ..... 161

    5.2.2 The Asian spa experience ..... 163

    5.2.3 Benefits Sought ..... 163

        5.2.3.1 A review of spa-going motives (from Chapter 3) ..... 164

    5.2.4 Contributions of the Spa Experience ..... 164

        5.2.4.1 The effects of spa experiences on tourists and travel ..... 164

    5.2.5 Spa Experiences, Wellness & Temporal Patterns ..... 175

        5.2.5.1 Date refined: The case of 58 respondents ..... 178

    5.2.6 Synthesis ..... 183

    5.2.7 Implications arising from the methodology ..... 184

CHAPTER 5 (Part 2) – Plucked from the Blogosphere: Of travellers’ spa experiences ..... 186

    5.3.1 Literature Review ..... 186

        5.3.1.1 Travel Blogs and Tourist Experiences ..... 186

5.3 STUDY 3 – BLOG ANALYSIS ..... 186

    5.3.1.2 Netnography ..... 187

    5.3.1.3 Previous blog-based research ..... 188

    5.3.2 Aims of the study ..... 189

    5.3.3 Methodology ..... 189

        5.3.3.1 Stage 1 – “How much has been reported by tourists about spa experiences?” .. 189

        5.3.3.2 Why India, Thailand and the Philippines? ..... 190

        5.3.3.3 Stage 2 – Filtering and coding of blogs ..... 191

        5.3.3.4 Stages 3 and 4 –Bloggers’ thoughts and feelings duringand after the spa experience 193

        5.3.3.5 Data analysis ..... 194

    5.3.4 Results & Discussion ..... 195

        5.3.4.1 The bloggers’ profile ..... 197

        5.3.4.2 “My thoughts, my feelings...”: Positive spa experiences during the spa treatment 199

        5.3.4.3 “Of myself, by myself, and by others...”: Post-spa experiences ..... 203

        5.3.4.4 The other side of the coin: Tourist’ negative experiences from spas ..... 208

    5.3.3 Overview of Findings ..... 209

    5.4.1 Highlights of findings ..... 210

    5.4.2 Methodological synthesis ..... 212

5.4 CHAPTER CONCLUSION ..... 210

---

**CHAPTER 6**  
**Conclusions, Implications & Future Directions..... 213**

---

6.2.1	Motivation (Pre-travel).....	214
6.2.2	Flow (On-site Experiences).....	215
6.1	INTRODUCTION: A REVIEW OF THE RESEARCH'S OVERARCHING AIM.....	213
6.2	OVERVIEW OF RESULTS.....	214
6.2.3	Benefits (Reflection).....	216
6.3.1	Theoretical/Conceptual Implications.....	218
6.3.2	Practical Applications & Commercial/Marketing Considerations.....	219
6.3	RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS, APPLICATIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS.....	217
6.4	LIMITATIONS, CHALLENGES AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS.....	220
6.5	FINAL REMARKS.....	222

---

**REFERENCES..... 224**

APPENDIX A.....	235
APPENDIX B.....	242
APPENDIX C.....	254
APPENDIX D.....	255
APPENDIX E.....	257



# LIST OF FIGURES

---

Figure 1.1 The health grid, its axes and quadrants .....	8
Figure 1.2 The Wheel of Wellness .....	10
Figure 1.3 The Wellness Industry Cluster .....	11
Figure 1.4 A conceptualisation of health and wellness tourism .....	15
Figure 2.1 The Travel Career Pattern (TCP) Concept .....	36
Figure 2.2 The differences between qualitative and quantitative research paradigms ...	51
Figure 2.3 Flow of Thesis Chapters.....	57
Figure 3.2.1 Study sites in India .....	63
Figure 3.2.2 Study sites in Thailand .....	63
Figure 3.2.3 Study sites in the Philippines.....	64
Figure 3.2.4 Respondents’ usual country of residence .....	68
Figure 3.2.5 Levels of travel experience and motivational patterns.....	82
Figure 3.3.1 Online survey respondents’ usual country of residence.....	88
Figure 3.3.2 Levels of travel experience (online survey) .....	94
Figure 3.3.3 Comparison of travel and spa-going motives from the on-site and online surveys .....	103
Figure 4.1 The flow experience: Spa activity vs. other physical activities .....	141
Figure 5.1 Difference in levels of spa experience (12 months vs. 5 years).....	160
Figure 5.2 Factorial ANOVA: Interactions between gender, residence and perceived benefits of spa experiences .....	170
Figure 5.3 Factorial ANOVA: Interaction between gender, residence and perceived benefits of spa experiences to the trip.....	174
Figure 5.4 Factorial ANOVA: Interaction between gender, residence and the statement “the spa experience made the trip a memorable one” .....	179

# LIST OF TABLES

---

Table 1.1 Common themes in wellness definitions and discussions .....	4
Table 1.2 Common dimensions of wellness .....	5
Table 1.3 The sub-sectors of the wellness industry .....	12
Table 1.4 <b>Health &amp; Wellness Segments: General Consumers, Tourists &amp; Sector Organisation</b> .....	18
Table 1.5 <b>Types of spas</b> .....	21
Table 1.6 <b>Global Spa Facilities by Region, 2007</b> .....	25
Table 2.1 <b>The Exploration Phase</b> .....	32
Table 2.2 <b>The Debate Phase</b> .....	33
Table 2.3 <b>Nine dimensions of flow</b> .....	42
Table 2.4 <b>Five modes of tourist experiences</b> .....	43
Table 2.5 <b>The major research paradigms</b> .....	47
Table 2.6 The Current Research Paradigm .....	49
Table 3.2.1 Survey sites by country .....	62
Table 3.2.2 Demographic profile of on-site survey respondents .....	67
Table 3.2.3 Pull factors for the study sites .....	70
Table 3.2.4 One-way ANOVA: Destination factors and the location of study .....	72
Table 3.2.5 Spa treatments used by respondents .....	75
Table 3.2.6 Normality tests of motives .....	76
Table 3.2.7 Motive factors and their mean scores .....	77
Table 3.2.8 The travel experience score (TES) .....	79
Table 3.2.9 Different levels of travel experience .....	80
Table 3.3.1 Types of probability in web-surveys .....	85
Table 3.3.2 Demographic profiles of on-site survey respondents .....	87
Table 3.3.3 Spa treatments received by respondents .....	89
Table 3.3.4 ANOVA: Gender, age group, destination and their relationship with spa-going plans .....	90
Table 3.3.5 Travel motive factors and their mean scores .....	92
Table 3.3.6 Spa-going motive factors and their mean scores .....	96
Table 3.3.7 <b>Health and wellness segments: Tourist spa goers</b> .....	98
Table 3.3.8 The key elements for a good tourist motivation theory and their application to the thesis .....	105
Table 4.1 The flow dimensions from spa experiences .....	116
Table 4.2 Means compared: Flow dimensions and spa treatments .....	126
Table 4.3 ANOVA –Flow dimensions and spa treatments .....	129
Table 4.4 Group statistics: Usual place of residence and flow dimensions .....	132
Table 4.5 Independent sample test: Flow dimensions and usual place of residence ....	134
Table 4.6 Group statistics: Gender and flow dimensions .....	135
Table 4.7 Disaggregated by gender: Usual place of residence and flow dimensions...	137

Table 4.8 Aggregate descriptive statistics: Spa activity vs. other physical activities...	140
Table 5.2.1 Previous domestic & international travel experience (past five years) .....	158
Table 5.2.2 Spa experience during previous travels (5 years and 12 months) .....	159
Table 5.2.3. <b>Types of spas and percentage use in this study</b> .....	162
Table 5.2.4 Benefits after the spa experience .....	165
Table 5.2.5 Respondents reported spa experience's benefit.....	168
Table 5.2.6 Tests of Between-Subjects Effects: Gender, residence and benefits to the trip .....	172
Table 5.2.7 <b>Gender and wellness dimensions (independent <i>t</i>-test group statistics)</b>	176
Table 5.2.8 Independent Samples <i>t</i> -Test Results: Wellness Dimensions and Gender	177
Table 5.2.9 Refined sample: Wellness dimensions .....	180
Table 5.2.10 Cross-tabulation: Well-being dimensions and duration .....	181
Table 5.2.11 Chi-square tests: Well-being dimensions and duration of benefits .....	182
Table 5.2.12 Strength of association between well-being dimensions and duration of benefits.....	182
Table 5.3.1 <b>Keyword combinations and number of related blogs</b> .....	191
Table 5.3.2 Number of blogs accessed and coded for the study.....	196
Table 5.3.3 The coded sample: Travel blog sites and location of spa experience.....	197
Table 5.3.4 Cross-tabulation: Blog site vs. (destination) location of spa experience..	198
Table 5.3.5 Stage 3 - Positive spa experiences during the spa treatment .....	199
Table 5.3.6 <b>The bloggers' perspective after the spa experience: Physical dimension</b> .....	204
Table 5.3.7 The bloggers' perspective after the spa experience: Psychological dimension.....	205
Table 5.3.8 The bloggers' perspective after the spa experience: Social/environmental dimensions .....	206
Table 5.3.9 The companions' perspective after the spa experience: Physical and social dimensions .....	208
Table 5.3.10 Negative experienced during and after the spa treatment.....	209

# CHAPTER 1

## The Wellness Context and the Asian Spa

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*"There are two main strategies we can adopt to improve the quality of life. The first is to try making external conditions match our goals. The second is to change how we experience external conditions to make them fit our goals better."*

**Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi**  
**Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience (1990, p. 43)**

### Chapter Structure

- 1.1 INTRODUCTION: RESEARCH OVERVIEW
- 1.2 THE WELLNESS PHENOMENON
  - 1.2.1 Definition and History of Wellness
  - 1.2.2 The Multidimensionality and Holism of Wellness: Health, Well-being and Satisfaction.
  - 1.2.3 Wellness as a State of Being and a Continuous Process: Relative, Subjective and Self-Dependent
  - 1.2.4 Wellness is Task-Oriented
- 1.3 THE WELLNESS INDUSTRY
- 1.4 WELLNESS AS A TOURISM PRODUCT & EXPERIENCE
  - 1.4.1 Health and Wellness Tourism
  - 1.4.2 Medical Tourism
  - 1.4.3 Spa Tourism
- 1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH
- 1.6 CHAPTER OVERVIEW

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION: RESEARCH OVERVIEW

The principal concerns of this thesis are tourist motivation for, experiences of and reflections about spa tourism. The context for the studies is South East Asia, specifically India, Thailand and the Philippines. The work is pursued within a post-positivist paradigm but attempts to consider carefully the *emic* and user perspective in the design and conduct of the studies.

This chapter discusses the wellness phenomenon and how it is related to tourism. In the first section, the term wellness is described and the difficulties in defining the concept explained. The complex conceptualisation of wellness is deeply rooted in its history (Ardell, 2004; J. W. Miller, 2005). Indeed, wellness has been defined and explained many times and in many ways in the literature. This chapter identifies and discusses the common themes that can be found in some of the definitions.

As a tourism product, health and wellness are popular contemporary tourism experiences. There is a consensus among thinkers in many disciplines and specialisms that a wellness industry exists (Furrer, 2010; Global Spa Summit (GSS) Report, 2008; 2010b; Pilzer, 2007; Smith & Puczko, 2009). Much information in this chapter explores information in the studies done by the International Spa Association (ISPA) as Global Spa Summit Reports which were prepared by Stanford Research International (SRI). At core, wellness is a relative and subjective state of being that is inherently multidimensional but where the integrative sum of the component parts must also be appreciated.

A common thread in the discussions of health and wellness both in general and tourism terms is the notion that one's state of being falls on a wellness-illness continuum. The use of a continuum was originally conceptualised by Halbert Dunn who coined the phrase *high level wellness* in the 1950s. His work has since been adopted and adapted by succeeding thinkers. In this chapter, the parallels between general wellness consumers (GSS Report, 2010b), wellness (holistic) tourists and the organisations that cater to these markets (Smith & Kelly, 2006b) will all be presented as linked concepts where the notion of an underlying continuum has relevance.

Spa tourism in particular is also described and defined in the latter part of this chapter. Although spas have very strong European origins and the treatments are usually thought of as water-based, it is argued that Asian spas are not just reliant on water. The use of nature derived products and the integration of traditional/indigenous healing techniques and practices in modern Asian spas enhances the descriptions and definitions of spa tourism in western conceptions and practices. Finally, this chapter identifies the central themes and significance of the thesis. A broad overview of the research will also be presented.

## 1.2 THE WELLNESS PHENOMENON

### 1.2.1 *Definition and History of Wellness*

In contemporary society, “wellness” can be viewed as a trite term that is widely used by the general public. While it is commonly used, wellness is also a slippery term that does not have a universal definition; it is a multifaceted concept that is challenging to pin down. The complexities of the term and the concept of wellness reflect its history. Miller (2005), who has provided a comprehensive review of the evolution and development of wellness admits: “the problem for the scholar that this malleability of the term wellness presents, is that it is extremely difficult to define precisely what is meant by it, and therefore to adequately trace its origins” (p. 98). The concept of wellness as we know today can be traced back to the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries in the United States (J. W. Miller, 2005). The term wellness has been used in the context of alternative medicine (i.e. the promotion of a healthy balance of the physical, mental and spiritual aspects) since Halbert L. Dunn coined the phrase *high level wellness* in the late 1950s. The initial articulation of the wellness concept later gave rise to wellness movements in the 1970’s in the United States (Ardell 2004) and the popularity of this movement continues today.

While most accounts of the development of the wellness concept are concentrated in the North American region, the origins of wellness are rather ancient. For example, Ayurveda, the ancient system of healing rooted in India dates back more than 5000 years (Lad, 1999). Similarly, traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) which views the human body as a whole and at the same time as part of nature, began in 2697 BC (Lao, 1999). Also in ancient Europe, the Greeks and Romans developed their own health and wellness systems which arguable constitute one of the foundations of modern medicine (GSS Report, 2010b).

The term wellness has been used in different contexts. It has now even been extended to animals such as in the promotion of pet food ("Wellness Pet Food," 2008). And because definitions vary from one context to another, a single universal definition is a challenge. In the literature, however, the definitions of and discussions about wellness in disciplines such as medicine, psychology and economics (i.e. financial wellness) have

key commonalities. The dominant themes are presented in Table 1.1 and discussed in the subsequent sections.

**Table 1.1 Common themes in wellness definitions and discussions**

Common themes	Author/s
Wellness is multi-dimensional and holistic	Dunn (1959); Finnicum & Zeiger (1996); Myers, Sweeney & Witmer (2000) Murray & Miller (2000; cited in Fain & Lewis, 2002); Puczko & Bachvaroz (2006); Smith & Kelly (2006a); Adams (2003; cited in Melanie Smith & Kelly, 2006a)
Wellness involves health, well-being and satisfaction	Finnicum & Zeiger (1996); Myers, Sweeney & Witmer (2000); Cowen (1991; cited in Carruthers & Hood, 2004); Adams (2003; cited in Melanie Smith & Kelly, 2006a)
It is a state of being and a process at the same time	Dunn (1959); Finnicum & Zeiger (1996) Travis (1984; cited in Mueller & Lanz Kaufmann, 2001); Fain & Lewis (2002)
It is about choice and self-responsibility	Mueller & Kaufmann (2001); Cowen (1991; cited in Carruthers & Hood, 2004); Finnicum & Zeiger (1996)
Wellness is relative and subjective	Travis (1984; cited in Mueller & Lanz Kaufmann, 2001); Mueller & Kaufmann (2001); Adams (2003; cited in Melanie Smith & Kelly, 2006a)

### ***1.2.2 The Multidimensionality and Holism of Wellness: Health, Well-being and Satisfaction***

Health is pivotal in the concept of wellness. The most recognised, much-cited and perhaps the most scrutinised definition of health is by the World Health Organisation (WHO). Since its 1948 Constitution Preamble, WHO (2003) continues to define health as “a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease and infirmity”. This definition highlights the multidimensionality of wellness which has been enriched through the years. When Dunn (1959) wrote about high level wellness, he meant holistic wellness. He clearly stressed that an integration of the body, mind and spirit is essential in achieving wellness. In the course of the history of wellness as a concept, academics and non-academics have identified many dimensions of wellness. The most frequent facets of wellness include physical, spiritual, mental and social dimensions. In recent years, intellectual and emotional (both psychological), as well as environmental and occupational dimensions have been noted (Miller, 2000, cited in Fain & Lewis, 2002; Finnicum & Zeiger, 1996; Puczko & Bachvarov, 2006). More recently, the financial dimension has also been included (e.g. Queensland University of Technology, 2007).

**Table 1.2 Common dimensions of wellness**

*(Based on Fain & Lewis, 2002; Finnicum & Zeiger, 1996; Puczko & Bachvarov, 2006; Queensland University of Technology, 2007; San Antonio College Wellness Committee, 2008)*

<p><b>Physical Wellness</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activity, exercise, nutrition, risk-taking and safety, one's perception of physical self, level of activity necessary to reach and maintain one's desired physical condition</li> </ul>
<p><b>Intellectual Wellness</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exploration of personal skills, cognitive, sensitivity and scholarly needs</li> <li>• Using the mind to create a greater understanding and application of the universe and oneself</li> <li>• Not dependent on intelligence or ability but on making and appreciating natural connections, examining one's opinions and questioning authority</li> </ul>
<p><b>Spiritual Wellness</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Philosophical understanding, personal responsibility and environmental sensitivity</li> <li>• The involvement of people in discovering the meaning and purpose of life</li> </ul>
<p><b>Emotional Wellness</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Locus of control, self-concept and stress management</li> <li>• Ability to understand one's own feelings, accept limitations and achieve emotional stability</li> </ul>
<p><b>Social Wellness</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One's personal support system, social responsibilities, and cultural influences</li> <li>• Creating and maintaining relationships through the choices one makes</li> <li>• Ability to relate with others and to maintain intimacy</li> </ul>
<p><b>Environmental Wellness</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conscious awareness of the natural environment's state; one's involvement in preserving and conserving natural resources</li> <li>• Making choices which will contribute to sustaining the quality of life in the universe</li> </ul>
<p><b>Occupational Wellness</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Future possibilities, personality as it relates to preferred work, and one's personal concept of work</li> </ul>
<p><b>Financial Wellness</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Active financial health, reasonable or low debt level, active savings and/or retirement plan</li> </ul>

Being a multidimensional and holistic concept, wellness involves not only health and well-being but also happiness and satisfaction. A close scrutiny of WHO's definition of health reveals a considerable link to happiness. Saracci (1997), for instance, argued that the wellness state relates more closely to happiness than to health, and that concepts of health and happiness are different even though both encompass the term 'wellness' (Smith and Kelly, 2006a). While health can be self-assessed, it is usually measured objectively by traditional medicine. Well-being and satisfaction, on the other hand, are subjective. The concept of happiness, like its counterparts well-being and satisfaction, is inherently subjective and can change over a period of time (Ryan & Deci, 2001, 2008)



(Richard M. Ryan & Deci, 2001; R. M. Ryan & Deci, 2008) (Richard M. Ryan & Deci, 2001; R. M. Ryan & Deci, 2008) (Richard M. Ryan & Deci, 2001; R. M. Ryan & Deci, 2008). For almost two decades now, authors have noted that happiness is associated with the presence of positive affect and the absence of negative affect (Headey & Wearing, 1992; Oishi, Deiner, & Lucas, 2007; Wallis, 2005). It is therefore argued that one can be happy but not essentially healthy, and vice versa. While this realisation may underpin the multi-dimensionality of wellness and suggests that people have to work towards wellness without neglecting any dimension, Cowen (1991) argues that well-being is about “a basic satisfaction with oneself and one’s existence” (cited in Carruthers & Hood 2004:237). The fundamental dimensions of wellness which underlie this discussion are summarised in Table 1.2

### ***1.2.3 Wellness as a State of Being and a Continuous Process: Relative, Subjective and Self-Dependent***

It has already been argued that wellness is a relative and subjective concept. The relativity and subjectivity of wellness is attributed to its varying degrees across time. As a state of being, wellness is not static (Travis 1984; cited in Mueller & Kaufmann 2001) and an individual’s state of wellness is entirely perceptual (Adams 2003; Smith & Kelly 2006a). It is deemed that perceptions can either be external (i.e. of others) or more stable, and internal (i.e. of one’s self). Since wellness is highly subjective and usually based on self-judgement, its manifestation is also highly dependent on the individual. This means that it is a person’s choice to have a “sense of control” over his/her fate (Cowen, 1991; cited in Carruthers & Hood, 2004, p. 237), by choosing a life that is “oriented towards optimal health and well-being in which the body, mind and spirit are integrated... to live more fully...” (Myers et al 2005; cited in Smith and Kelly 2006a p. no.)

Dunn’s (1959) seminal health model suggests that all individuals have a certain level of health or wellness depending on the environment they occupy (Figure 1.1). Ultimately, the health continuum is between death and peak wellness; Dunn suggests that the area along the continuum, i.e. from death towards wellness means that a person could be in a condition of serious to minor illness to very positive health. His model also includes an environmental axis that moves from a very unfavourable to a very favourable environment. He says “the environmental axis includes not only the physical and

biological factors of the environment but also socioeconomic components affecting the health of the individual” (1959:787).

While Dunn’s pioneering model is historically important, it is argued that it is highly subjective and inadequate for three reasons. Firstly, it is unclear whether health is solely physical, psychological, or both. Given that he considered the body-mind-spirit unity as a sine qua non in attaining high level wellness, and that one’s health may lie at a particular point on the continuum, it remains a question as to how one’s state of health can be plotted if he/she is physically fit, but mentally ill or vice versa. Secondly, it is impossible to plot one’s environment as a whole along the axis. Clearly, Dunn considered the physical, biological and socioeconomic aspects of a person’s environment but it is unclear how to make such an overall assessment. For instance, would it be a favourable/unfavourable environment if one has excellent social relationships but does not have a decent home and cannot afford to buy food? A further problem with Dunn’s approach is a question of whose perceptions matter in the grid: the assessed or the assessor? Again, it is not clearly explicated – what is more important, i.e. objective or subjective assessment by others based on what is seen of the assessed situation or the person’s self-assessment based on what he/she feels and experiences.

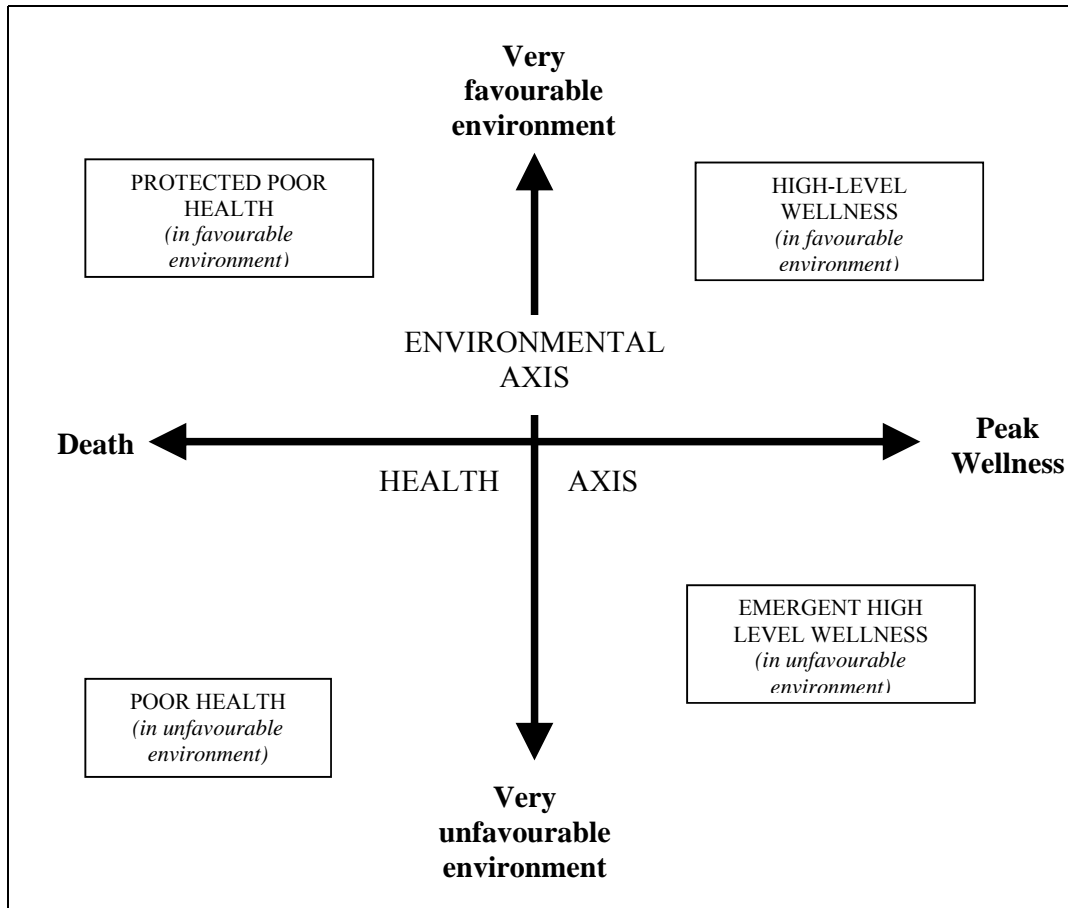


Figure 1.1 **The health grid, its axes and quadrants**  
*(Re-drawn from Dunn 1959:788)*

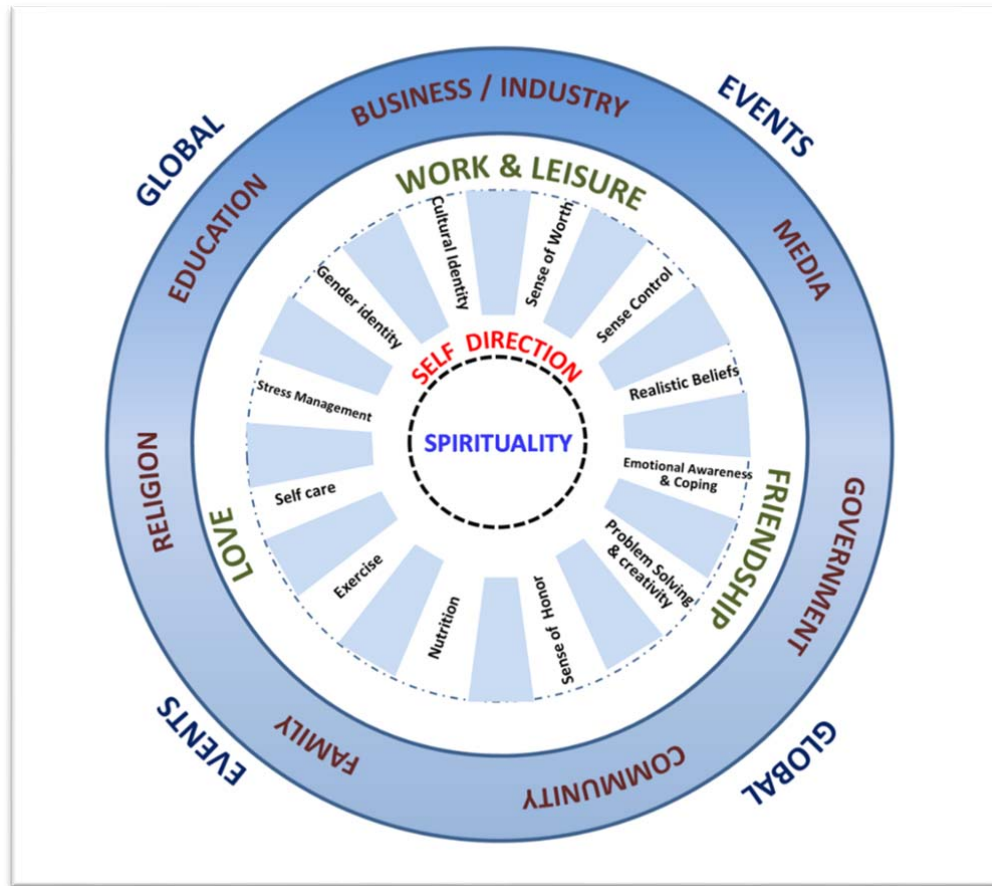
A further issue is the notion of the adequacy of a dimensional approach built on continuity in a uniform linear fashion. Arguably, there are degrees of wellness as there are degrees of illness (Travis 1894; cited in Mueller and Kaufmann 2001). Jensen and Allen (1993) argue however that the wellness-illness or health-disease dichotomies are not polar opposites. Although they acknowledge them as distinct, they suggest that they are “one in the same process, acknowledging the changing person in the changing world” (p. 220). This notion suggests that change processes can be deemed as a course of wellness, because regardless of a person’s state, i.e. healthy or ill, he/she aims for wellness; that is, to maintain a high degree of health or have the illness treated. A corollary of the view is that wellness-illness constructs are linked in a yoked or yin-yang fashion rather than being a simple point along a continuum.

#### ***1.2.4 Wellness is Task-Oriented***

The whole idea of wellness derived from the wellness movement is that the concept is about tasks and a sense of responsibility. This is to say that achieving wellness is a matter of choice and not of fate. This notion is underpinned by Myers et al (2000, pp. 252-257) who argue that achieving wellness is about undertaking life tasks represented in the wellness wheel (Fig. 1.2). The life tasks in the wheel include:

- a) *spirituality* or the awareness of a force that transcends the material world and provides a deep sense of wholeness;
- b) self-direction towards sense of humour, worth and control, gender and cultural identity, stress management, self-care, exercise, nutrition, problem solving and creativity, emotional awareness and coping and realistic beliefs;
- c) work and leisure;
- d) friendship; and
- e) love.

Myers and her colleagues suggest that the wheel represents the components of wellness over one's lifespan, and that "attention to each component has consequences that multiply over time. For those who make a wellness choice, the cumulative effect over the life span is one of increasing wellness in all dimensions thereby contributing to quality of life and longevity" (p. 258).



**Figure 1.2 The Wheel of Wellness**  
 (Myers, Sweeney, & Witmer, 2000, p. 253)

### 1.3 THE WELLNESS INDUSTRY

The use of the term wellness has become more wide-spread despite the consumers' vague understanding of the word and the lack of a clearly delineated wellness industry in the fields of economics and business (GSS Report, 2010b). Such an industry does, however, exist and is burgeoning (Smith & Puczko, 2009). In fact, the SRI which was commissioned by the Global Spa Summit Committee to analyse the global wellness market conservatively estimates that the current wellness industry represents a global market of nearly US\$2 trillion (GSS Report, 2010b). The SRI also reports that such rapid growth of the wellness industry is attributed to three key trends:

- a) *an increasingly older, segment of unhealthy people* (aging population, spread of death and disability-causing chronic diseases, obesity, stress, );

- b) *failing medical systems* (due to expensive ‘hospital-centrism’, fragmented/specialised care and commercialisation) ; and,
- c) *globalisation and connection* (e.g. the migration of people to urban areas leads to change of lifestyles hence higher consumption of processed food, lack of exercise, media influence, the abundance of self-help information on the internet).

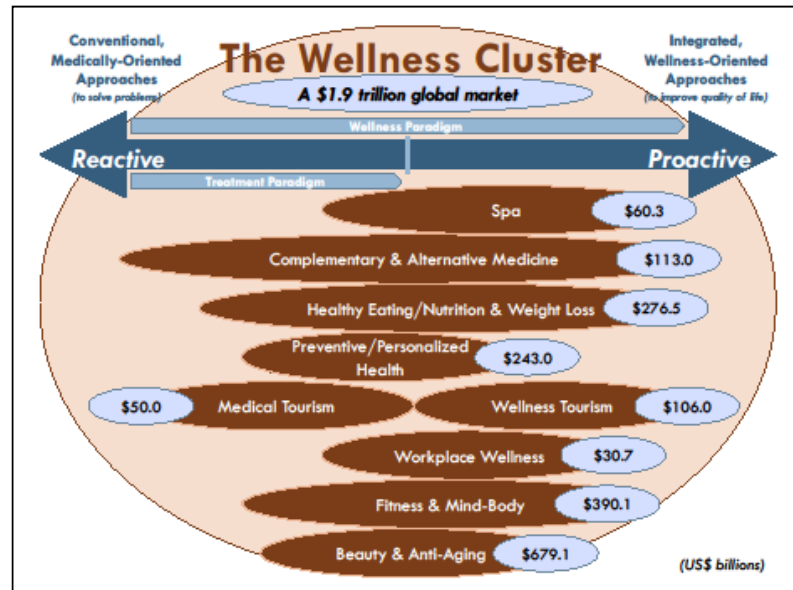


Figure 1.3 **The Wellness Industry Cluster**  
*(Global Spa Summit by the SRI, 2010b)*

The SRI has developed the wellness industry cluster model which was based on the works of Pilzer (2007) and Travis (GSS Report, 2010b; cf. Travis & Ryan, 2004). The developers of the model have taken Pilzer’s differentiation between the *proactive* wellness industry and the *reactive* “sickness industry”. The wellness industry involves the provision of integrated, wellness-oriented approaches towards better health and improved quality of life; it is also characterised by voluntary patronage of its customers. On the other hand, the sickness industry provides conventional and medically-oriented approaches to people who become customers by necessity and not by choice (2007, pp. 4-5). A similar notion adapted for the model is Travis’ pre-mature death – high level wellness continuum, which is also a version of Dunn’s health grid. Travis depicts that to the right and left of the continuum’s mid-point (the neutral point of no discernible illness/wellness) are progressively increasing levels of health and worsening state of

health, respectively. He further suggests two paradigms involved in his theory: the treatment paradigm which helps an individual reach the neutral point, and the wellness paradigm which assists a person to move towards higher levels of wellness even from a state of illness. Pilzer's and Travis' integrated works in the cluster model is shown in Figure 1.3.

**Table 1.3 The sub-sectors of the wellness industry**  
(GSS Report, 2010b)

<p><b>Beauty and anti-aging</b> Includes products and services that enhance self-image (salons, toiletries, personal care products, dermatology), defy age and treat age-related health issues</p>
<p><b>Fitness and mind-body exercise</b> Includes gyms/health clubs, personal training, yoga, Pilates, tai chi, fitness and exercise clothing and equipment.</p>
<p><b>Healthy eating, nutrition and weight loss</b> These include the vitamins and supplements, functional foods/nutraceuticals, health foods, natural and organic foods, weight loss and diet service providers and advisory services, foods and meal services, anti-obesity prescription and over-the-counter drugs.</p>
<p><b>Preventive/personalised health</b> This includes medical services that focus on treating “well” people, preventing disease, or detecting risk factors (e.g. routine physical exams, diagnostic/screening tests). Also included in this sector are the approaches that are not typically done by conventional medical providers (e.g. genetic/molecular/environmental screening, analysis and diagnostics, disease management services, electronic health records, remote patient monitoring)</p>
<p><b>Complementary and alternative medicine (CAM)</b> The diverse medical, health care, holistic and mentally or spiritually-based systems, practices and products that are not generally considered to be part of conventional medicine or the dominant health care system (e.g. homeopathic, naturopathic, chiropractic, traditional Chinese medicine, Ayurveda, meditation)</p>
<p><b>Wellness tourism</b> Refers to persons travelling to another city/region (within their country) or to another country to pursue holistic, preventive or lifestyle-based services that enhance personal well-being. It includes providers of services to wellness tourists – essentially, anything included in the definition of the wellness cluster, but specifically targeting wellness tourists, along with the lodging, food, shopping and other services supporting these tourists.</p>
<p><b>Spa</b> The core spa industry includes all types of spa operations, as well as spa-related education, spa-branded products, spa consulting, spa media, associations and events, spa capital investments.</p>
<p><b>Medical tourism</b> Refers to persons travelling to another city/region (within their country) or to another country in order to receive medical, surgical or dental care including invasive diagnostic and therapeutic procedures primarily because the care is more affordable, of higher quality or more accessible. The medical tourism sector includes any providers or services to medical tourists during their trips (e.g. hospital/clinic/doctor, the accommodation during the trip, food, shopping)</p>
<p><b>Workplace wellness</b> Includes programs offered by companies and businesses aimed at improving the health and wellness of employees in order to reduce costs and enhance productivity and performance. These programs raise awareness, provide education, and offer incentives that address specific health risk factors and behaviours (e.g. lack of exercise, poor eating habits, stress, obesity, and smoking) and encourage employees to adopt healthier lifestyles.</p>

The massive wellness industry is fragmented by various global sectors. The highest-generating sector is beauty and anti-aging (\$679.1 million). Mind and body fitness (\$390.1 million), nutrition and weight loss (\$276.5 million), and preventive health (\$243 million) are also identified as huge profit-generating sectors of the wellness industry. The estimated global magnitude of the wellness industry by the SRI which was based on consumer spending and industry size data from other secondary sources is represented by about 289 million wellness consumers in the world's 30 most industrialized and wealthiest countries (GSS Report, 2010b, p. 30). GSS report identifies sickness reactors (not active spa goers) and wellness focused (moderate to active spa goers) as the two main health and wellness consumer segments. The global wellness market is characterised by changing demographics (although notably by baby boomers) and a growing interest in complementary alternative medicine (CAM). (The GSS report of 2010 was the most current and most comprehensive publication available when the present research was being carried out.) The researchers, however, indicated the need for more research in terms of understanding in greater depth wellness consumer profiles and their motivations.

Although the estimates are superficially credible, it remains unclear how much overlap exists between and among some the sub-sectors. Wellness tourism, for instance, is delineated in very general terms as the movement of people from one place to another (city/region/country) to use one or all the wellness services identified in the cluster. In this sense, wellness tourists may also include spa-goers and CAM patients who may have been counted twice in the process. In addition, wellness tourism and medical tourism are clearly demarcated in the cluster as opposites along the continuum. Puczko and Bachvarov (2006), however, warn that a wellness tourist may submit to a medical check-up within the facility and receive medical services or therapy as a result of the examination, which makes it a challenge to identify services that maintain health from those that may be more directly connected to cures.

## **1.4 WELLNESS AS A TOURISM PRODUCT & EXPERIENCE**

### ***1.4.1 Health and Wellness Tourism***

The health-wellness-tourism interface represents a long standing relationship that dates back to ancient times. Owing to the Greek and Roman discovery of the healing qualities



of water, people started travelling to mineral springs and seaside resorts to recuperate, relax and/or escape from the imperial metropolis. In modern tourism, travelling for health and wellness persists as an activity as noted in the previous section of this chapter. Tourist experiences are tourism products; this is to say that the experience of travelling for wellness reasons as well as the experience of participating in tourist activities that promote health and wellness can be regarded as tourism products.

Despite being an old form of tourism, the demarcation between health tourism and wellness tourism is not always clear. Mueller and Lanz Kaufmann (2001), however make a distinction between the two. Following Kaspar (1996), they define health tourism as:

*“the sum of all the relationships and phenomena resulting from a change in location and residence by people in order to promote, stabilize and, as appropriate, restore physical, mental and social well-being while using health services and for whom the place where they are staying is neither their principal nor permanent place of residence or work”*(p. 7).

From this, they have specified a more detailed definition of wellness tourism as:

*“the sum of all the relationships and phenomena resulting from a journey and residence by people whose main motive is to preserve or promote their health. They stay in a specialised hotel which provides the appropriate professional know-how and individual care. They require a comprehensive service package comprising physical, fitness/beauty care, healthy nutrition/diet, relaxation/meditation and mental activity/education”*(p. 7).

While the above definition of wellness tourism can be regarded as comprehensive, it cannot be taken as a universal definition because it does not totally reflect current trends and has some restrictive components. Since the publication of Mueller & Lanz Kaufmann’s (2001) work, trends in the wellness industry have changed. In particular, the specification about accommodation is problematic. The term “hotel”, for instance, was used to imply that wellness tourists only stay in “specialised hotels” but there are also other accommodation providers that offer similar, and at times more than the resources and services outlined in Kaspar’s definition. Examples of these are the so-

called health resorts and spas (e.g. Chiva-Som Resort in Thailand) as well as wellness centres (e.g. Ayurvedic Retreats in India).

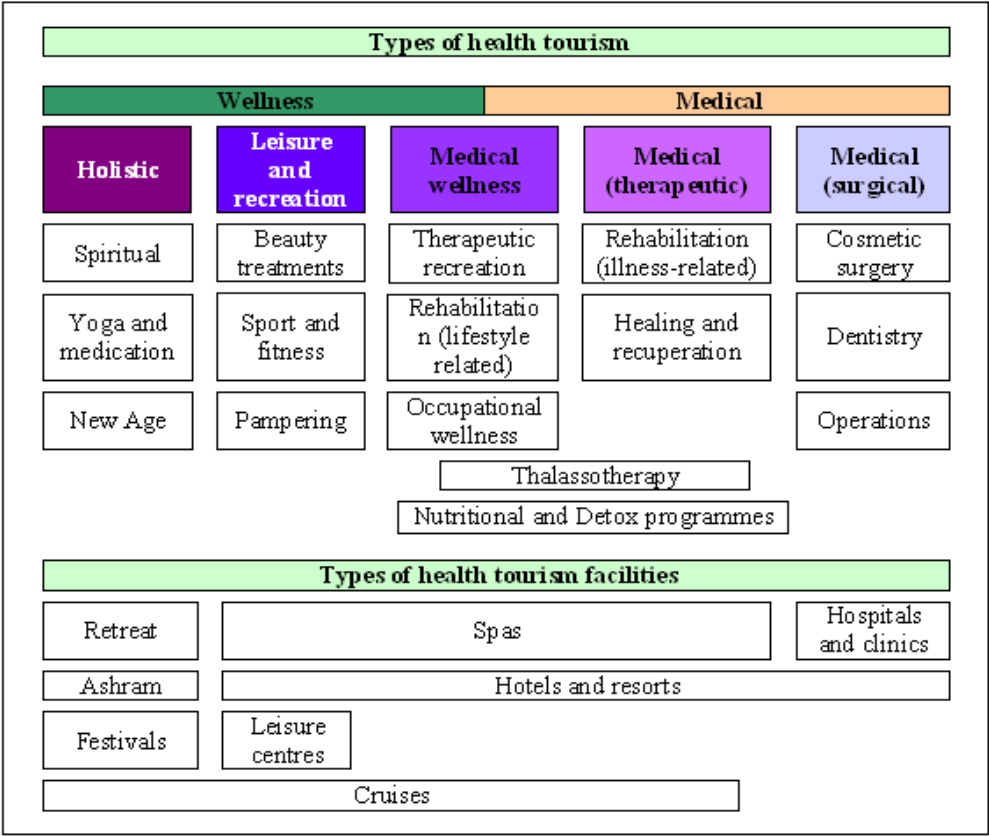


Figure 1.4 A conceptualisation of health and wellness tourism  
(Re-drawn from Melanie Smith & Puczko, 2009, p. 7)

Mueller and Lanz Kaufmann (2001) also claimed that wellness tourism is a sub-category of health tourism. This work argues otherwise because conceptually, wellness is broader; health is an element of wellness, as underpinned, although inconsistently, in the wellness literature. The holistic nature of both health and wellness concepts do suggest a close affinity but it is maintained in this work that wellness is a broader concept in which health is embedded, which relates back to WHO’s definition of health. The proposed approach is supported by the relative and subjective nature of wellness. Again, the term wellness is “a way of life oriented toward optimal health and well-being in which the body, mind and spirit are integrated by the individual to live more fully within the human and natural community” (Witmer, 2005; cited in Melanie Smith & Kelly, 2006a, p. 1). In addition, Miller (2005), outlining Dunn’s work, concludes that

wellness is “*a continuum rather than a fixed state... a holistic approach to health, encompassing physical, mental, social, cultural and spiritual dimensions*” (p. 90).

For the purpose of and guidance for this work, a working definition of health tourism is deemed necessary. Hence, **health and wellness tourism** will be broadly defined as “*a form of tourism which involves a journey from one’s usual place of residence chiefly for preservation or advancement of one’s physical, mental and spiritual health and well-being through engagement in holistic, preventive and lifestyle-changing activities in a leisure setting, but can also be integrated as part of a non-health related travel.*” The first part of the definition follows Goeldner’s (1989) proposition that health tourism involves three things: 1) staying away from home; 2) health as the most important motive; and 3) done in leisure setting (Hall, 1992:151). The latter part of the definition is based on the premise that tourists on a non-health-related journey (e.g. business tourists, leisure tourists) may be considered health tourists at some stage for taking part in healthy/health-related activities such as hiking, sauna, massage and the like. This also relates to Goeldner’s (1989) acknowledgement of Van Sliepen’s five components of the health tourism market, each identifying a more specific market segment (Hall, 1992, 2005). These are: 1) sun and fun activities; 2) engaging in healthy activities, but health is not the central motive (adventure and sports tourism activities such as hiking, cycling, or golf); 3) principle motive for travel is health (e.g. a sea cruise or travel to a different climate); 4) travel for sauna, massage and other health activities (spa resort); and, 5) medical treatment. Hall further points out that the last three components are specialty markets, with health as the principal motive for travel.

Some links between the definitions to be used in this thesis and recent reconsiderations of the wellness definitions can be established. Parallels can be drawn from the comprehensive GSS Report (2010) and the existing body of literature on wellness and tourism. The most common thread is the use of the continuum (Table 1.4), which was originally devised by Dunn (Dunn, 1959, 1961). One further congruence can be noted between the Global Market Development Centre’s (GDMC) health and wellness consumer segments (GSS Report, 2010b) and Smith and Kelly’s (2006b) continuum of holistic visitor typologies. Both are presented on a continuum which evolves from reactive approaches by consumers to a proactive approach to health. Similarly, Smith and Kelly’s holistic tourist types which range from experimenters to purists are

characterised by varying prior knowledge and experience, holiday choice, motives and instructions. Smith and Kelly have extended their analysis of the holistic wellness industry by creating a typology for organisations on a comparable continuum. Wellness organisations, they argue, fall on three progressive levels of operation, i.e. from ad hoc to highly organised sectoral operations. Each level is characterised by variables such as profit motives and operational costs.

Additionally, thinkers in the specialism of tourism (e.g. Mueller & Lanz Kaufmann, 2001; Puczko & Bachvarov, 2006) have already argued, even prior to the GSS 2010 report that although a wellness holiday may be located in an institution that provides a cure, it is important to distinguish between *medical* and *wellness* tourists. More specifically, Mueller and Kaufmann differentiate the two types of tourists, especially those who go to hotel/resort-based wellness facilities. They said that wellness in these facilities should not be mis-classified and should be clearly segmented as either “normal cure guests” (i.e. those for treatment or curing their illness/es) or “health guests” (i.e. those for illness prevention or current health maintenance. The demarcation between medical and wellness tourists has been made clear in the wellness industry cluster model that medical tourism (*reactive*) and wellness tourism (*proactive*) are located on the opposite sides of the continuum.

Table 1.4 Health & Wellness Segments: General Consumers, Tourists & Sector Organisation  
 (Based on SRI, 2010b; and Melanie Smith & Kelly, 2006b)

	Sickness reactors, not active spa-goers	Wellness focused, moderate-to-active spa-goers	
General consumers	<b>Periphery</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Entry level” health and wellness consumers</li> <li>• Aspire to be more involved in health and wellness, but their behaviours do not yet follow their aspirations</li> <li>• Are mostly “reactive” rather than “proactive” when it comes to matters of health and wellness</li> </ul>	<b>Mid-level</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Moderately involved in a health and wellness lifestyle</li> <li>• Tend to follow some of the trends set by the “core”</li> <li>• Purchase large amounts of both conventional and health and wellness-specific products</li> <li>• Still somewhat concerned with price and convenience, but also driven by knowledge and experience</li> </ul>	<b>Core</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most involved in health and wellness lifestyle</li> <li>• Serve as trendsetters for other consumers</li> <li>• Health and wellness is a major life focus for them</li> <li>• Driven by sustainability, authenticity and local sources.</li> </ul>
Tourists/ Participant travellers	<b>Lilac</b> (very light pinkish purple) <i>(Experimenters)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Little prior knowledge/practice</li> <li>• New experience</li> <li>• Self-contained/one-off holiday</li> <li>• Unlikely/may lead to integrative ‘better living’ upon return home</li> <li>• Seeks comfortable surroundings, guided instruction, scheduled programme</li> </ul>	<b>Lavender</b> (light purple) <i>(Intermittent User)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sporadic/occasional practitioner</li> <li>• Renewed/lapsed/motivational experience</li> <li>• May become regular holiday type</li> <li>• Likely to renew better living upon return home</li> <li>• Seeks a range of surroundings/accommodation type</li> <li>• Requires some guidance and a choice of activity programming</li> </ul>	<b>Deep Purple</b> <i>(Purists)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular practitioner</li> <li>• Continued/relocated experience</li> <li>• Typical holiday choice</li> <li>• Reinforces and consolidates home-based lifestyle/behaviour</li> <li>• Surroundings becomes less relevant than the quality of activity</li> <li>• Requires advanced instruction and space for self-directed practice</li> </ul>
Sector Organisation	<b>Ad-hoc</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual driven</li> <li>• Rooted in traditional practice/native cultural context</li> <li>• Low profit motive</li> <li>• Low cost (operator and visitor)</li> </ul>	<b>Emerging</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some purpose-built centres/retreats</li> <li>• Some adaptation of existing accommodation base</li> <li>• Developing profit motive</li> <li>• Low-mid cost (operator)</li> </ul>	<b>Highly Organised</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small but increasingly expanding and well defined sector</li> <li>• Well-organised</li> <li>• Mainly purpose-built retreat centres</li> <li>• High profit motive</li> <li>• Mid-high cost (operator and visitor)</li> </ul>

### ***1.4.2 Medical Tourism***

It is also suggested in the literature that a demarcation between medical and wellness tourism is imperative (Mueller & Lanz Kaufmann, 2001; Puczko & Bachvarov, 2006). Medical tourism has indeed been growing and diversifying rapidly and is expected to increase and expand steadily in the future (Connell, 2006; Herrick, 2007). Previously, the market was dominated by the wealthy patients from developing countries travelling to developed countries for high quality medical care. Herrick (2007) has observed that in recent years, a growing number of less-affluent patients are travelling from developed countries to “third world” countries in the search for high quality medical care at more affordable rates. The “first world service at third world cost” (Connell, 2006) notion is attributed to the countries’ lower labour costs, less involvement of third parties (e.g. insurance and government) and lower malpractice litigation costs (Herrick, 2007).

Connell (2006) describes medical tourism as “deliberately linked to direct medical intervention, and outcomes are expected to be substantial and long-term” (p. 1094). Horowitz and Rosenweig (2007) also suggest that medical tourists must submit themselves for medical check-ups and may undergo health surgeries. More obtrusive aesthetic/cosmetic procedures include but are not limited to cosmetic surgery, cosmetic dentistry/extensive dental construction and body contouring. In more extreme cases, treatment of infertility and sex change operations are also performed. Although medical tourism in this context is acknowledged as within the rubrics of wellness tourism, it is not a concentration of the present set of studies.

### ***1.4.3 Spa Tourism***

#### **1.4.3.1 History and Types of Spa**

The literature on health and wellness tourism provides two established categories: medical and spa tourism. The health and relaxation component that spas offer in addition to the traditional holiday makes health and wellness tourism an area of rising popularity (Didascalou, Nastos, & Matzarakis, 2007). Although this is a more recent observation, historical accounts on the origins of spa assert otherwise. While medical tourism is a more contemporary form of tourism, the earliest forms were directly aimed

at increased health and well-being; one of which is spa tourism (Connell, 2006). Although it was not termed as such, “taking the waters” was common by the 17<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> centuries in many parts of Europe (N. Douglas, 2001; Henry, 2005; Iovine, 2005; Kaspar, 1990; Laing & Weiler, 2008). Spa tourism is a subtle subset of health and wellness tourism in terms of treatments and therapies.

The term spa is an acronym for an expression from Nero’s era, *salus per aqua*, which means “healing through water” (Iovine, 2005). It may have also been derived from the town of Spa in Belgium. The name of the town, as its official website attests, is synonymous with 'thermal bath' or 'health resort' where a curative thermal spring was discovered in the 14<sup>th</sup> century- was named (Van Tubergen & Van der Linden, 2002). The healing qualities of water have been recognised at this site since the early days. The Greeks and Romans bathed in fresh water from natural resources as well as in the sea (thalassotherapy). Bathing became a hygienic routine which was proven to be healthy and beneficial in the treatment of diseases, and was later integrated in sports, in education as precursors of the gymnasium, in walking and as a prelude to massage (Van Tubergen & Van der Linden, 2002). Private and public baths were built in many locations by the Romans.

The renaissance period saw a changing image for the spa industry. While two types of spas were rediscovered in France, i.e. hot springs for drinking and bathing, and cold springs for drinking only (Brockliss, 1990), public baths had become more expensive in many places. Many also closed as they had become sources of communicable diseases (Looman, 1989; cited in (Van Tubergen & Van der Linden, 2002). Van Tubergen and van der Linden (2002) observe, however, that the medical significance of bathing was acknowledged by doctors, especially by rheumatologists in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

The 21<sup>st</sup> century spas, according to the International Spa Association (ISPA, 2008d), are places devoted to the enhancement of one’s overall being through professional services that promote mind, body and spirit renewal. The term and content of spa has evolved into a complex and diverse phenomenon as almost any service provider with health-oriented services “can and does call itself a spa” (Puczko & Bachvarov, 2006, p. 85). ISPA (2008d) provides one of the most comprehensive definition and types of spa (Table 1.5).

Table 1.5 **Types of spas**  
(SRI, 2008, pp. 10-11)

Spa type	Description
Day/Club/Salon Spas	Facilities that offer a variety of spa services (e.g. massage, facials, body treatments) by trained professionals on a day-use basis. They typically offer private treatment rooms and a quiet and peaceful atmosphere. *Club spas are similar to day spas, but operate out of facilities whose primary purpose is fitness. *Salon spas are also similar in nature but operate out of facilities that provide beauty services (e.g. hair, make-up, nails).
Destination Spas and Health Resorts	Offer a full-immersion spa experience in which all guests participate. All-inclusive programs provide various spa and body treatments along with a myriad of other offerings such as fitness activities, healthy cuisine, educational classes, nutrition counselling, weight loss programs, preventive or curative medical services, mind/body/spirit offerings, . . . Because of their similar business structures (e.g. overnight stays in which all guests participate in full-immersion spa and wellness-based activities), traditional European style-health resorts and Indian Ayurvedic resorts are included in the same category as destination spas.
Hotel/Resort Spas	Similar to a day spa, but the spa facility is located within a resort or hotel property. Unlike destination spas, at hotel/resort spas services are typically paid for on an a la carte basis, and meals are not included. Spa treatments and services generally complement a hotel stay or a wide range of other activities at a resort.
Medical Spas	A spa facility that operates under the full-time, on-site supervision of a licensed health care professional. These provide comprehensive medical and/or wellness care in an environment that integrates spa services with traditional or alternative medical therapies and treatments.
"Other" Spas	This encompasses all other spas that are not captured by the above categories, and include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Historically/culturally-based spas</b> (e.g. European bath houses and saunas, Japanese <i>onsens</i> and <i>sentos</i>, Turkish-style <i>hammams</i>, Indian Ayurveda centres, Thai massage establishments)</li> <li>• <b>Mobile spas</b> (i.e. spa services are provided on-site at a customer's home or workplace)</li> <li>• <b>Single service spas</b> (similar to a day/club/salon spa, but specialises in a single service such as massage and facial)</li> <li>• <b>Cruise ship spas</b></li> <li>• <b>Mineral/hot springs spas</b> (i.e. day-use spa facility with an on-site source of natural mineral, thermal or sea water that is used in spa treatments; accommodation is not provided)</li> </ul>

#### 1.4.3.2 Global Spa Trends

Spa trends around the world are not uniform. The Canadian Tourism Commission (CTC, 2006) for instance, reports that Australia, the United Kingdom and Germany have different features as Canada's benchmarks, competitors and potential markets. The Australian spa industry is relatively young but well-organised and is recognised as an important asset of the country, while the UK is less organised and apparently lagging behind other destinations despite its long history of spas (CTC, 2006). Germany's spa



industry is viewed as well organised, established and recognised. The Commission contrasted Germany's spa industry with its North American counterparts in that many spa treatments in the former are covered under the national health care system.

The past two decades have seen major trends in the spa industry (Furrer, 2010). Apart from becoming more main stream around the world, the demographics and lifestyles of spa-goers have varied through the years (SRI, 2010b; ISPA, 2007a; 2007c, 2008a, 2008b). Yesawich (quoted in Furrer, 2010) says that spa going activity has been one of the few growing leisure activities in the past decade and continues to rise when other activities such as golf have "flat lined". In relation to this, ISPA's (2008b) Global Consumer Study reports that spa goers average four spa visits per year.

The demographics of spa goers have also changed in the past 20 years. A generational shift in the spa industry has become more apparent; from a traditionally-baby-boomer-dominated industry (McNeil & Ragins, 2005), the modern spas are now shaped by savvy spa-goers who include members from Generations X and Y (ISPA, 2008a). Monteson and Singer (2004) also once observed that women who are under 40 years old find spas appealing because of their busy lifestyle, while women over 50 acknowledge the healing properties of spas. In more recent years, however, there is an increasingly younger spa-going market. In the US and Canada, for instance, about 16 per cent of spas offer packages for children and teenagers (ISPA, 2008a). Likewise, spas are not exclusive to females. Monteson and Singer (2004) have also reported that while women make up the bulk of spa-goers, men also go to spas for relaxation. This is underpinned by ISPA's (2007b) study, which showed that men accounted for more than 40 per cent of spa-goers in Australia, Austria, Germany, Japan, Singapore, Spain and Thailand.

The changing demographics in the spa industry can be linked to the changing lifestyles of spa goers. Spa-going activity has presumably grown as a result of the busy and fast-paced lifestyle of people in many urban areas by becoming a form of preventive care and stress management (Furrer, 2010). In fact, ISPA's (2008b) Global Consumer Study reports that "to relax and reduce stress" has become the core motive of many spa-goers. In addition, customised spa experiences which fit one's needs have become available in many spas (e.g. Wi-Fi internet). Indeed, spa-going is no longer about luxury but has increasingly become a necessity; it has become more about the notion of health and the

spa lifestyle. The spa lifestyle means wellness is more important than just being “pampered”. The approach is being promoted by destination spas (Furrer, 2010). Ironically, however, there is also an increasing number of luxury branded spas such as the Armani spas in Tokyo, the Versace Group’s spa on the Gold Coast in Australia and several Bulgari properties in Milan and Bali. Regardless of the brands, contemporary spas also focus on their customers’ holistic well-being, i.e. the integration of body, mind and spirit. The inclusion of nutrition, exercise and stress management programs have become more common in modern spas. Cooking experiences, for example, are now integrated in spa facilities to promote healthy cuisine (ISPA, 2008a). Other activities such as yoga, meditation, art and music classes are increasingly becoming popular in spas.

In the travel and tourism sector, the spa experience has evolved to be a fundamental part of one’s holiday and it can be expected that one will find a spa within a hotel/resort (Furrer, 2010). The advent of shorter vacations (e.g. weekend getaways) has facilitated the process of packaging and promoting spa experiences. Yesawich comments, “the idea that one has to ‘hurry up and relax’ is an oxymoron. It’s the travel industry’s correlation to speed dating” (quoted from Furrer, 2010, p. 75).

On the supply side of the spa industry, variations in processes, management and promotional styles of spa owners and operators have also been observed. The rise in the number of spa professionals and experts, the increase in more sustainable spa operations and the emergence of spa boutique chains are just some aspects that have been observed in the past 20 years (Furrer, 2010). Additionally, environment-friendly products, services and practices have become part of the trend. The use of green/organic products such as mineral make-up in salons and organic produce in health spas, for instance, are widespread. In terms of spa marketing, operators have also moved from the traditional advertising schemes and are increasingly using social networking sites such as Facebook (e.g. Spa Finder (on Facebook), 2010) to directly interact with consumers around the world.

#### **1.4.3.3 The Asian Spa Industry**

Smith and Kelly (2006a) describe spa tourism as “tourism which focuses on the relaxation or healing of the body using water-based treatments, such as pools, steam

rooms and saunas. Emphasis tends to be focused on relaxation and health and beauty treatments rather than the spiritual aspect of certain exercises such as yoga.

Surroundings are usually sumptuous with pricing schemes to match” (p. 17). Similarly, Hall (2005, p. 275) defines spa tourism as “a component of health tourism that relates to the provision of specific health facilities and destinations which traditionally include the provision of mineral waters by which may also be used to refer to tourist resorts that integrate health facilities with accommodation.” Both definitions suggest that water is a significant element in spa tourism, especially in Europe – the home of spa.

While these definitions may be used in context (e.g. European, North American), they cannot be used as universal definitions of spa tourism because they are not necessarily applicable in Asian spas. The inclusion of the term water in these definitions makes it appear that water is the main element used in spa treatments and therapies. Water and its natural sources such as mineral hot springs are also recognised to have therapeutic effects in Asia (e.g. Japan and Korea). Nonetheless, many other Asian spa practices are not just reliant on water. The use of nature-derived mineral and essential oils is a widespread Eastern practice (e.g. massages).

Indeed, nature is an integral part of the Asian spa. The Asian spa phenomenon is more than just a massage or a scrub; in particular, the daily rituals and ceremonies are all part of Asians’ way of life which are designed to restore the body and soul (Chapman, 2006). Chapman (2006) suggests that the prime focus of most Asian spas is to return the body to a balanced state through ancient botanical recipes and time-honoured rituals. Apart from minerals and oils, herbs, spices, certain root crops (e.g. ginger) and parts of plants and trees are believed to have healing and/or soothing benefits and hence are used in spa traditional spa treatments.

Revered as the “home to the world’s richest and most diverse spa culture” by the Spa Wellness Council (2008), the Asia Pacific region is the world’s third largest spa market in terms of revenues (more than 24% of the global spa revenues) and the second largest market in terms of number of spas employing more than 360,000 (Table 1.6). The 2007 Global Spa Economy contains the most complete and most recent data on Asia-Pacific’s spa industry profile. Even without the Pacific region (i.e. Australia, New Zealand and the small island states), the Asian spa industry is considerable with an estimated

combined revenue of about US\$8,642 million in Japan, China and South Korea alone. Additionally, India and Thailand have a combined contribution estimated to US\$778 million (SRI, 2008).

**Table 1.6 Global Spa Facilities by Region, 2007**

*(Source: 2007 Global Spa Economy by the SRI, 2008)*

	Estimated Total Number of Spas	Estimated Total Spa Revenues (US\$ billions)	Estimated Total Spa Employment
Europe	22,607	\$18.4	441,727
<b>Asia-Pacific</b>	<b>21,566</b>	<b>\$11.4</b>	<b>363,648</b>
North America	20,662	\$13.5	307,229
Middle East-North Africa	1,014	\$0.7	20,938
Latin America-Caribbean	5,435	\$2.5	82,694
Africa	349	\$0.3	7,273
<b>Total</b>	<b>71,672</b>	<b>\$46.8</b>	<b>1,223,510</b>

Much of Asia's age-old wellness traditions which have been a way of life for many generations are now being shared with the rest of the world through their practice not only in Asian spas but also in Western societies' spas. The Thai massage and the Japanese shiatsu massage, for instance, are traditional healing methods that have gained popularity across the globe. Arguably, almost every spa in the world offers shiatsu massage. Similarly, relaxation practices of Eastern origins such as yoga and meditation have also become well-liked worldwide.

Each country in Asia has its own spa heritage to offer (Chapman, 2006; Spa Wellness Council, 2008). At a fundamental level, it can be said non-Western countries share their wealth of traditions and ancient practices with each other, if not the world. Cupping (suction through the skin), for example, is not just a Chinese tradition but it is also practiced in Arab countries (Mind Body & Soul, 2009). Apart from treatments, the use of indigenous ingredients and materials are now being used in modern-day spas.

In the Indian sub-continent, Ayurveda is the oldest and widely practised health and wellness system and India is the top destination for this type of healing. Ayurvedic tourism is also marketed as part of the global growth in health tourism fuelled by widespread trends including aging populations, high rates of stress and increased interest in health most specifically amongst affluent individuals (Messerli & Oyama, 2004). The literature on Ayurveda tourism describes the practice as a gentle system of holistic healing that is rooted in old traditions while exhibiting a modern and

professionalised stance supported by scientific research (Spitzer, 2009). Sahoo (2006; cited in Spitzer, 2009) suggests that this type of tourism in India “attracts Westerners exploring the ancient art and science of the exotic other as well as citizens of South East Asia, West Asia, and members of the global South Asian diaspora of 20 million persons who reside in 70 countries” (p. 139). Apart from international tourists, domestic tourists visit popular Ayurvedic destinations such as the state of Kerala in South India. The treatments in Ayurveda are akin to those of spas (e.g. massage, facials) which promote relaxation and harmony of mind, body and spirit (Kerala Ayurveda Tourism, 2009). As noted by ISPA, the Ayurvedic resorts can be classified as destination spas, while day-use Ayurveda centres are categorised as “other spas”.

In other parts of Asia, traditional/indigenous healing methods are also used in spas. In the Philippines, for instance, ‘hilot’ is an ancient massage technique that is now in spa menus in the country. Alave (2008) notes that its benefits are comparable to the Chinese acupuncture, aromatherapy and even Western medicine. Apart from ‘hilot’, some spas in the Philippines also include ‘dagdagay’ (an indigenous tribal foot massage using bamboo sticks) and the use of the 7-herb concoction (known as ‘pito-pito’) in bath treatments (Sanctuario Spa, 2009). Also in many parts of Asia, traditional Chinese treatments are common; acupuncture, body smoking and cupping (suction through the skin) are being offered in spas (The Spa Village, 2008) and are also used in Western societies (Mind Body & Soul, 2009). The products used in Asian spa treatments and therapies may also be indigenous. In spas in the Cordillera region in the Philippines, for instance, local produce such as rice, coffee and strawberries are used as scrubs (North Haven Spa, 2007). In traditional Malay treatments, turmeric, piper betel and pandanus leaves are widely used (The Spa Village, 2008).

### **1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH**

Spa and wellness tourism in Asia is recognised as a booming industry (SRI, 2008; Laing & Weiler, 2008). While enthusiastic promotional statements about rapidly growing tourism sectors often exaggerate the rising importance of a special area, the basic numbers of properties and participants support a claim that in this instance, spa tourism is of considerable importance. Research focussing on this form of tourism in the Asia Pacific region, nonetheless, is very limited. There are descriptive accounts the spa

industry, much promotional material and many claims, but little published academic research. This research gap has been taken as an opportunity to study tourist behaviour in the light of spa-going activities in Asia. Hence, at core, this thesis explores tourists' spa experiences in Asia. More specifically, the study of travel and spa-going motivations, spa benefits and spa-related "flow" or optimal experiences in Asian spa tourism is a prime focus in this thesis. It is recognised that people travel for varying reasons, hence this research identifies motivational factors that drive tourists to: 1) visit South and Southeast Asian destinations; and, 2) to subsequently visit spas whilst travelling in these regions. Positive psychology, i.e. the field of study that focuses on human thriving, is linked in this work through the concept of "flow" or optimal experiences which are explored in relation to tourists' spa experiences. A further exploration of the post-spa experiences helps identify key benefits that may result from tourists' spa experiences.

## **1.6 CHAPTER OVERVIEW**

This study has provided a context for the study of spa tourism in Asia. It has considered the nuances and definitions in health and wellness tourism and provided key distinctions amongst related terms. A definition to be used for health and wellness tourism in this thesis was crafted from these discussions. This definition is repeated here as a key summary of the scope of the elements of the research. Health and wellness tourism is "*a form of tourism which involves journey from one's usual place of residence chiefly for preservation or advancement of one's physical, mental and spiritual health and well-being through engagement in holistic, preventive and lifestyle-changing activities in a leisure setting, but can also be integrated as part of a non-health related travel.*"

The specific components of the wellness industry were reviewed and a focus on spa tourism considered. It was established that Asian countries offer distinctive forms of spa tourism and that while there are broad descriptions about the benefits of their activities little empirical and in-depth psychological research has been included in these appraisals. This thesis seeks to provide foundation research in this area of tourist behaviour and experience analysis, particularly in South East Asia.

# CHAPTER 2

## Key Concepts, Research Paradigm & Design

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*“The man who is striving to solve a problem defined by existing knowledge and technique is not just looking around. He knows what he wants to achieve, and he designs his instruments and directs his thoughts accordingly.”*

**Thomas Khun**

**The Structure of Scientific Revolutions (1970, p. 96)**

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### Chapter Structure

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- 2.1 INTRODUCTION
  - 2.2 KEY CONCEPTS IN THE THESIS
    - 2.2.1 Tourist Behaviour and Its Phases
    - 2.2.2 Tourist Motivation
    - 2.2.3 Phase 1: Exploration
    - 2.2.4 Phase 2: Debate
    - 2.2.5 Phase 3: Transition
  - 2.3 THE TRAVEL CAREER PATTERN (TCP) MODEL
    - 2.3.1 The TCP and Wellness
  - 2.4 POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY AND TOURISM
    - 2.4.1 Positive Psychology
    - 2.4.2 The relationship between positive psychology and tourism
    - 2.4.3 Introduction to the Concept of Flow
    - 2.4.4 Flow and the Tourist Experience
    - 2.4.5 Measuring flow in tourist experiences
    - 2.4.6 The Flow Scales and the Tourist Spa Experiences
  - 2.5 RESEARCH PARADIGM & PERSPECTIVES
    - 2.5.1 Research Paradigms
    - 2.5.2 Research Perspectives
  - 2.6 GEOGRAPHICAL CONTEXT OF THE PHD THESIS
  - 2.7 SUMMARY OF KNOWLEDGE GAPS, RESEARCH AIMS AND DESIGN
    - 2.7.1 Knowledge Gaps and Research Aims
    - 2.7.2 Research Design: A Snapshot
  - 2.8 CHAPTER CONCLUSION
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### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter further provides the background of the research by identifying and discussing the key concepts that are central to this thesis. The travel career pattern (TCP) and its evolution as conceptual scheme in the study of tourist behaviour is also discussed. In establishing the contextual framework of this work, positive psychology

and tourism are briefly discussed. The relationship between positive psychology and tourism is further highlighted. More specifically, the concept of flow is introduced and specified how this construct is used in measuring flow in tourist experiences. The tourists' propensity of experiencing peak experiences or flow is measured through their spa experiences. Further, the research paradigms and perspectives are discussed. A brief justification of the geographical context of the research is also presented. Finally, the research gaps and aims are identified, and an overview of the research design is offered.

## **2.2 KEY CONCEPTS IN THE THESIS**

### ***2.2.1 Tourist Behaviour and Its Phases***

Tourist behaviour is a stimulating topic where the actions tourists undertaken are examined in all their varied forms (Bowen & Clarke, 2009). Pearce (2005) suggests that much of what has been written about tourists and their views of travel is sociological and often relates to social structures and abstract systems, but nonetheless there is much to be gained by a close analysis of tourists' motivations and experiences. The approach used in this thesis is framed by Clawson and Knetsch's (1966) idea of travel behaviour. They proposed that tourist behaviour involves five distinct phases: 1) anticipation or pre-purchase, 2) travel to the destination, 3) on-site experience; 4) return travel; and, 5) extended recall and recollection stage. The anticipation phase involves planning, preparation and decision-making processes before the actual travel. In the current work, tourist motivation is the central conceptual scheme for the pre-travel phase. The second and fourth phases of tourist behaviour refer to the actual travel to and from the destination. In between these travels is the on-site experience which is about what the tourist does and experiences at the destination. Pearce (2005, p. 10) notes, "the deeply personal reactions and sometimes the socio-environmental consequences of the tourists' on-site behaviour are distinctive". In the final phase, tourists manifest reflective behaviour about the experiences by recalling events through stories, photographs and other means of recollection.

### ***2.2.2 Tourist Motivation***

Tourist motivation is one of the key concepts in the study of tourism (Crompton, 1979; Dann, 1981; Pearce, 2005). The need to study tourist motivation was acknowledged by Lee and Pearce; they argued, "there is a general consensus that travel motivation



research makes a significant contribution to both academic and commercial interests” (2003, p. 65). The understanding of tourist motivation provides a better insight in managing tourists’ on-site experience, and consequently in improving tourists’ post-experience outcomes (such as satisfaction, enjoyment, learning), host communities’ well-being and the setting’s conditions and management challenges (Pearce, 2005). Although it is easy to answer the who, when, where and how questions relating to tourist behaviour, the why question which is most pertinent to tourist motivation is inherently challenging (Crompton, 1979).

Tourist motivation is long term. Indeed, the motivation to travel is manifested even before the trip is planned. The core motives *to escape and to relax*, for example, act as *push* factors for a tourist to actually plan a holiday. The realisation of this need and the planning stage of the holiday is therefore the pre-travel stage which ceases upon the tourists’ arrival at the destination. Hence, tourist motivation is not a simple short-term process measured by factors that cause travel behaviour and satisfaction (Pearce, 1982). Essentially, tourist motives include long-term incentives and rewards. Pre-travel plans are usually set weeks or months in advance. At the destination, tourists enjoy the instantaneous satisfactions of the holiday and bring home with them memories which are enjoyed long after the holiday is over. Following Atkinson and Raynor’s (1975) achievement motivation approach, Pearce (1982) argues that motivation is a function of how the holiday is related to the life-space of the tourist, and to the perceived success and incentive value of future tasks and outcomes.

As well as being a long-term process, tourist motivation is also intrinsic in nature rather than purely extrinsic; travel is intrinsically rewarding (Hsu & Huang, 2008). Dann (1977) proposed that tourists travel primarily due to intrinsic needs such as their sense of anomie, ego-enhancement and desire for self-understanding recognition. Hill (1965) argues that an individual regards a holiday as a period of replenishment and restoration of some internal damage or depletion; the tourist thus hopes to “take in and store ‘internal goods’ with which he will return enriched, regenerated and recharged to his own environment” (cited in Crompton, 1979, p. 411).

Motivation is core to the study of tourist behaviour. A definition of the area is offered as follows: “motivation is the total network of biological and cultural forces which give

value and direction to travel choice, behaviour and experience” (Pearce, 1988, p. 25). In the study of mainstream psychology, several motivation theories are valuable to better understand human behaviour. Some approaches of interest include Freud’s work on sex and aggression, Maslow’s (1943) hierarchy of needs, and McClelland’s need for achievement theory (cf. Pearce, 2005). Another example is Csikszentmihalyi’s (1975, 1990) concept of flow or optimal/peak experiences which will be discussed further in this chapter. Harrill and Potts (2002) stressed that the basic components of a general model of motivation are needs and motives, behaviour or activity, goals or satisfaction, and feedback. They further stated that such a model is “iterative in that the feedback component leads back into the initial needs and motives phase” (p. 106).

The seminal works of tourism scholars and researchers have provided considerable foundations for studying tourist behaviour. A review of the material can be developed following Harrill & Potts (2002) who identified three important phases in the development of tourist motivation models. Each phase roughly corresponds to the decades of the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s. The exploratory period is the first phase which attempted to identify tourist types and identify reasons why such tourist types have specific travel preferences. The second phase is characterised by debates which are consistent with the development of social psychology in tourism. The third and last phase was the transition period which exhibited initial fragmentation and then synthesis of different disciplinary positions. A good understanding of the development of tourist motivation models is beneficial in building the linkages between motivation, the concept of flow and the benefits of the spa experiences of tourists in Asia.

### ***2.2.3 Phase 1: Exploration***

The 1970s marked the era of argument about motivation from sociological and psychological standpoints (Table 2.1). Cohen’s (1972) classification of tourists implicitly included psychological characteristics, but it is largely sociological. Similarly, Plog’s allocentric-psychocentric typology is “more sociological than psychological, with little predictive validity” (Harrill & Potts, 2002, p. 108). Plog’s contribution to this developmental phase in tourist motivation was largely criticised on methodological and theoretical grounds. In a rejoinder in the *Journal of Travel Research* (Plog, 1990; S. L. J. Smith, 1990), Smith showed how Plog’s model failed to support

the theorised linkage between personal preferences and personality types. Plog, however, maintained that Smith was not able to assess the survey items which were used to measure the model.

Table 2.1 **The Exploration Phase**  
(Based on Harrill & Potts, 2002)

Author	Contributions/Theory
Cohen (1972) Position: <i>Sociological</i> Basis: <i>strangeness vs. Familiarity</i>	Classification of tourists based on their relationship to tourist business and the host country: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Institutional: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Organised mass tourist</li> <li>○ Individual mass tourist</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Non-institutional: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Explorer</li> <li>○ Drifter</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Plog (1972, 1990, 1991) Position: <i>Sociological/Psychological</i> Bases: <i>linkages between preferences and personality types; he used a trait approach</i>	Typology: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allocentric (tourists who more outgoing, curious, inquisitive and often express exploring behaviours)</li> <li>• Psychocentric (tourists who are often self-inhibited, non-adventuresome, rarely take on new leisure activities, prefer familiar and comfortable settings)</li> </ul>
Dann (1977) Position: <i>Sociological</i>	Motivations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anomie (normlessness; travel to fulfil the need to escape)</li> <li>• Ego-enhancement (temporary restoration of one's ego through travel)</li> </ul>
Crompton (1979) Position: <i>Sociological/Psychological</i>	Motives fell within a <i>cultural-sociological-psychological continuum</i> based on an individual's state of disequilibrium
Cohen (1979) Position: <i>Sociological/Psychological</i>	Groups of travellers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pilgrims <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>Experiential</i> (with spiritual needs/in search of the meaning of life from others)</li> <li>○ <i>Experimental</i> (in search of an alternative lifestyle)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Pleasure-seekers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>Diversionsary</i> (to escape boredom)</li> <li>○ <i>Recreational</i> (for entertainment)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Towards the end of this phase, Crompton (1979) and Cohen (1979, cited in Harrill & Potts, 2002) have attempted to synthesise psychological and sociological motivations. Crompton suggests that tourists can be motivated by cultural motives such as novelty and education. He also adds that tourists can also be driven by socio-psychological motives such as escape, self-evaluation, relaxation, prestige, regression, enhancement of kinship and social interaction. Lastly, Cohen (1979) divides travellers into two: pilgrims (experiential or experimental) and pleasure-seekers (diversionary or recreational).

#### 2.2.4 Phase 2: Debate

Mayo and Jarvis (1981) stressed that “travel is a complex, symbolic form of behaviour through which the traveller is usually striving to satisfy multiple needs” (p. 149). They also suggested that the concepts of consistency and complexity are important in understanding travel motivation.

Reviews and rejoinders also marked this era of the development of tourist motivation. Dann’s (1977, 1981) contributions to the advancement of the concept particularly his work which provides a model based on symbolic interactionism, for example, was criticised by Iso-Ahola (1982). Symbolic interactionism suggests that individuals “tend to accord causal significance to social interaction. Thus, meaning stems not from solitary mental processes but from interaction” (quoted from Ritzer, 1990; Harrill & Potts, 2002, p. 109). In this light, Dann (1981) notes that meaningful travel experiences are visualised by tourists prior to the trip. Iso-Ahola, however, argued that Dann failed to recognise motivation research developed within the traditional interest area of psychology. Iso-Ahola suggested that motivation is not a sociological concept; he writes: “...motivation is purely a psychological concept, not a sociological one” (1982, p. 257).

Table 2.2 **The Debate Phase**  
(Based on Harrill & Potts, 2002)

Author	Contributions/Theory
Iso-Ahola (1980, 1982)	“The Social Psychology of Leisure and Recreation” (book) Seeking & escaping
Mayo & Jarvis (1981)	The Ulysses Factor Consistency vs. complexity Approach and avoidance
Dann (1981)	Symbolic interactionism
Pearce (1982, 1988)	Travel Career Ladder

As a result of the debates, some authors called for a more balanced approach from both psychological and sociological positions (cf. Pearce, 1982; Stringer & Pearce, 1984). Stringer and Pearce (1984) argued that the middle ground is ideal, i.e. that social-psychological knowledge is neither too general nor too specific. They also added, “It is in the study of relationship, as such, between the individual and the social that social psychology can find a unique and less schismatic identity” (p. 11). Pearce further

suggested that Maslow's hierarchy of needs model was an appropriate framework for studying tourist motivation. The Travel Career Ladder (TCL) and its contemporary version, the Travel Career Pattern (TCP) will be discussed further in this chapter.

### ***2.2.5 Phase 3: Transition***

Two new areas of research in tourist motivation have emerged in this era: rational choice theory and functional theory. Mansfeld (1992) observed that tourist motivation is challenging to isolate, hence researchers must choose from a single motive, a primary motive or a multimotivational situation. He also argued that travel preferences based on intrinsic motivation is difficult to measure because previous tourist motivation researches failed to provide a clear explanation of its role as a determinant. Likewise, Fodness (1994) pushed for the application of functional theory to tourist motivation and suggested that functionalism implies certain attitudes that individuals have serve psychological needs. Such an approach suggests that people's leisure travel motivation embodies the psychological functions (needs) which the vacation satisfies (Fodness, 1994). Some of Fodness' ideas, however, were not novel and potentially circular. For example, establishing that a vacation satisfies certain needs should not be used to imply that only these needs exist or drive the holiday choice. Further, his identification of ego-enhancement, for example, is akin to Dann's (1977) notion that temporary ego-fulfilment is an important motive.

Harrill & Potts' (2002) depiction of the three phases of the development of tourist motivation research reveals the richness of this formative component of tourist behaviour study. Additionally, Hsu and Huang (2008) have also provided a more recent review of tourist motivation concept. In their work, Hsu and Huang reviewed Pearce et al's much-cited Travel Career Ladder (TCL) model and its adaptation, the Travel Career Pattern (TCP). These two theories emerged initially in terms of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, but the approach evolved to focus on the patterns of needs.

## **2.3 THE TRAVEL CAREER PATTERN (TCP) MODEL**

In the light of Maslow's work, Pearce (1982, 1988, 2005) and his colleagues (Moscardo & Pearce, 1986; Pearce & Caltabiano, 1983; Pearce & Lee, 2005) have developed an

approach from the original hierarchy of needs theory. Maslow's (1954, 1970) model posits that human needs are hierarchical in nature and that meeting lower-level needs is a pre-requisite for reaching higher level needs; the hierarchy consists of physiological, safety, belongingness/love, esteem and self-actualization needs. One of the most-cited Maslow-based works of Pearce et al. is the Travel Career Ladder (TCL). More recently, the TCP – a modified version of the TCL – has been presented as the contemporary replacement for and an improved version of the earlier travel career ladder approach.

The TCL was first introduced by Pearce in his book *The Ulysses Factor*(1988). The model's structural notion was based on Maslow's model, while the concept of career was linked to works of Hughes' (1937) work on leisure careers. The TCL proposed that there are five travel motivational levels: relaxation needs, safety/security, relationship, self-esteem and development, and self-actualization/self-fulfilment (Pearce, 2005). It also suggested that people's motivation changes with their travel experience. The theory, however, has been criticised and re-appraised (Bowen & Clarke, 2009; Hsu & Huang, 2008; C. Ryan, 1998); some commentaries focused on the term *ladder* and its analogy to a physical ladder where one goes one step at a time and stays for a period (Pearce, 2005). Kim, Pearce, Morrison and O'Leary (1996) suggested that individuals can start at different need levels and that they may change levels during their life cycle. Pearce (2005), however, observes that the TCL was not construed as a sequential theory that implied that the lower level needs must be satisfied first before the upper level needs were met as one accumulates travel experiences.

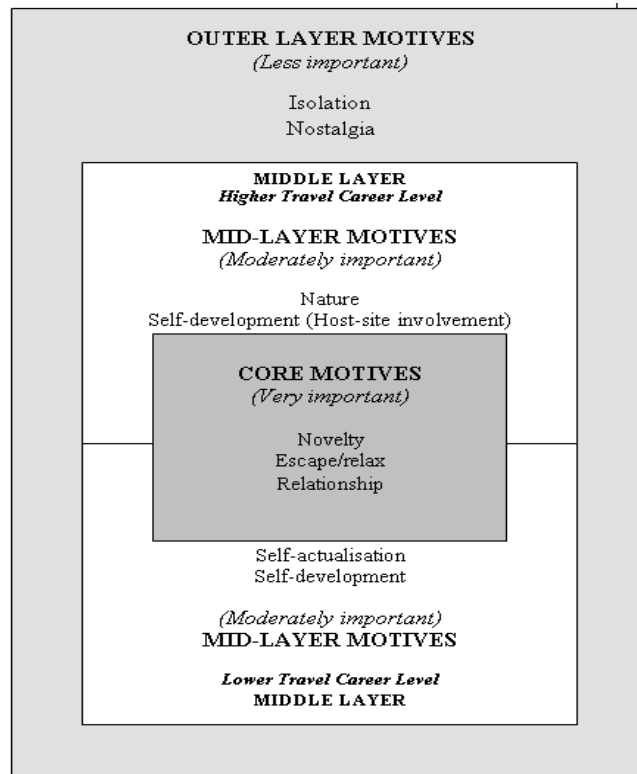


Figure 2.1 **The Travel Career Pattern (TCP) Concept**  
*(Re-drawn from Pearce, 2005, p. 79)*

Toning down the TCL’s analogy to a physical ladder is important. Hence, changing the term *ladder* to *pattern* (cf. Pearce, 2005; Pearce & Lee, 2005) makes the theory’s hierarchical components less pronounced. The use of the three-layer TCP concept which suggests that core (the most important motives: novelty, escape/relax and relationship) influence travellers in their decision making regardless of their travel career levels de-emphasises TCL’s analogy to a physical ladder, and is indeed more comprehensive. Two other layers of motivation define the TCP that is a moderately important layer which tends to focus on more self-enhancement and community host contact needs. The third and least important layer is defined by a grouping of somewhat specialist needs including nostalgia, romance and adrenaline-based adventure. Despite the modification of the TCL, nonetheless, the concept of a *travel career* remains essential to the TCP. The TCP, therefore, puts “more emphasis on the change of motivation patterns reflecting career levels than on the hierarchical levels” (Pearce, 2005, p. 56). It posits that tourists manifest “changing motivational patterns over their life-stages and/or with travel experience” (p. 54).

The original study using the TCP framework used a two-phase process: interviews and a large scale survey (Lee & Pearce, 2002). The exploratory interview phase yielded key motive categories from 12 sources. The motive categories were later framed using existing literature and tested in a large-scale survey of 1012 respondents from different Western countries (Lee & Pearce, 2002). In general, the study revealed that there are three core travel motivations regardless of travel experiences: novelty, escape/relax and relationships (Fig. 2.1). The study was replicated in a non-Western setting (i.e. in South Korea), which underpinned the findings in the first study (Lee & Pearce, 2003). In the second study, however, the sample with higher travel experience levels displayed extrinsic motivations (i.e. nature and self-development through host-site involvement). In contrast, respondents with lower travel experience displayed internal-oriented motives such as romance, autonomy and kinship. The present work explores the TCP further. In Chapter 3, the model will be expanded by adding an extra dimension and a mid-level travel experience.

### ***2.3.1 The TCP and Wellness***

There is no existing understanding about the relationship between the TCP theory and wellness. It is recognised in the literature on wellness, however, that studies on wellness have a special dependence on tourist motivation. Lea (2006), for example, explores festival spaces and body massage in understanding tourist motivation, i.e. the tourists' physical dimension. In terms of the spiritual and existential modes of experience, Smith and Kelly (2006b) offer a robust understanding of holistic tourism and launch a paradox of escapism, i.e. the desire to find oneself. Likewise, Deveraux and Carnegie (2006) discuss wellness tourism in relation to pilgrimage as an opportunity for "self-reflection and community involvement in a challenging setting" (p. 54).

Escapism and relaxation, being the core motives for wellness, are identified in the literature (Patterson & Pan, 2007; Melanie Smith & Kelly, 2006a, 2006b). These motives are consistently related to health, considering that one's physical-mental-spiritual union is essential to wellness (Dunn, 1959; Lehto, Brown, Chen, & Morrison, 2006; Mueller & Lanz Kaufmann, 2001). While these and the general continuity of life are labelled as intrinsic motivations, seeking better health and more free time with family are arguably extrinsic motivations (Patterson & Pan, 2007).



In the more specific realms of the spa industry, relaxation is frequently described as the core reason for going to a spa. Self-indulgence and feeling better about one's self were the core motives for visiting a spa, according to the 2003 ISPA study of American spa-goers (Monteson & Singer, 2004). These reasons have not apparently changed since Health Fitness Dynamic's (HFD) survey in 1997 (Monteson & Singer, 2004). They also found out that 77% of the spa goers said they would return to the spa if they were "at peace with themselves after the visit".

The long-term effects of spa therapy have been underpinned in medical research. A study by Strauss-Blasche, Ekmekcioglu, Klammer and Markti (2000) found that there was a positive change in subjects' well-being months after a three-week resort-based spa therapy. While it was not clear as to whether the subjects were locals or foreign travellers, the long-term benefits of a spa therapy are important. Hence, it can be argued that self-actualisation/self-development, the mid-layer of the TCP/moderately important motives, may be thought of by tourists –consciously or subconsciously- in pursuing a spa holiday.

The opportunity to provide insight into the spa tourists' motivations and simultaneously test and extend the TCP work and tourist motivation studies is a central aim of the first phase of this research. Additionally, in this phase of the project, spa tourists' concepts and dimensions of flow will be explored.

## **2.4 POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY AND TOURISM**

### ***2.4.1 Positive Psychology***

Recent developments in assessing human well-being in general provide some new pathways for understanding the Asian spa experience. Much of this work is implicitly covered by the label Positive Psychology. Positive Psychology is a new field of study that focuses on human thriving. Some of the contributions which developed this area of study are:

- the pioneering work of Maslow (1954, 1970) on the motivations and hierarchy of human needs;

- Erikson(1963) who theorised developmental passages involving the need of coming to terms with loss at all human developmental stages;
- Works on intrinsic motivation and self-determination (Deci & Ryan, 1985); and,
- studies on the importance of psychological well-being (Ryff & Singer, 1996)

Following Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000), Pearce (2007) defines positive psychology as a “scientific study of positive emotions, character strengths and positive institutions serving or concerned with human happiness and well-being”(p. 3). Positive psychology is a result of a “shift in gaze” among many psychologists from human frailties to human thriving. In the past, particularly after the Second World War, psychologists were mostly concerned about understanding and repairing the damage to humans. In the last decade, however, positive psychology has paved the way to a better understanding of and an attempt to identify the causes of human flourishing.

It can be noted that positive psychology advocates are not dismissing the importance and contributions of clinical psychology. For example, Pearce(2007)claims that positive psychology is an addition rather than an opposition to general or clinical psychology, and that the former does not mean to take the place of the latter; it merely seeks “to provide a fuller picture of human conduct” (p. 3). Such an assertion gives the impression that positive psychology provides a sense of equilibrium in the general study of psychology, i.e. it is important to study both sides of human nature: the best and the worst.

Happiness and well-being are central to the study of positive psychology. Mainstream happiness and well-being research are characterised by two traditions (R. M. Ryan & Deci, 2008). One is the hedonistic tradition that focuses on happiness, and the other is the eudaimonic tradition that focuses on “living life in a full and deeply satisfying way” (p. 1). Additionally, Pearce (2007) identifies a third and a rather embryonic tradition, i.e. the one that focuses on institutions and organisations that cater to human happiness and wellness. This budding domain is notable in the above definition by Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi’s (2000). In addition, the Positive Psychology Centre’s (2007) and Sheldon and King’s (2001, p. 16) respective definitions of positive psychology also implicitly identify happiness as a core. The Centre defines it a “scientific study of

strengths and virtues that enable individuals and communities to thrive”, while Sheldon and King simply describes it as providing a clear focus on “the scientific study of human strengths and virtues”.

#### ***2.4.2 The relationship between positive psychology and tourism***

As mentioned above, positive psychology is not just about the individual, but also about communities, institutions and/or organisations. Tourism businesses, making up one of the most global and people-oriented industries, attempt to be profitable through serving happiness, satisfaction and wellness. It is therefore surprising that the relationship between tourism and human thriving remains under-researched (Gilbert & Abdullah, 2002, 2003; Hunter-Jones & Blackburn, 2007; Smith & Kelly, 2006a).

Indeed, the literature that attempts to establish the relationship between positive psychology and tourism is limited, although research interest is undoubtedly growing. Studies such as the effects of holiday-taking on tourists’ mood, life satisfaction and well-being (De Bloom et al., 2010; Filep, 2008; Gilbert & Abdullah, 2002, 2003; Nawijn, 2010, 2011; Nawijn, Marchand, Veenhoven, & Vingerhoets, 2010; Sirgy, Kruger, Lee, & Yu, 2011) with special emphasis on senior travellers (Milman, 1998; Patterson & Pan, 2007) have been undertaken. Other studies cover the role of tourism in improving tourists’ quality of life (Michalko, Kiss, Kovacs, & Sulyok, 2009; Puczko, 2006), and the therapeutic benefits of leisure and tourism (Carruthers & Hood, 2004; Hunter-Jones, 2003, 2004). Hunter-Jones and Blackburn (2007) provide an understanding that a relationship between tourism and human well-being exists. In their exploratory study of senior tourism, they found out that holiday taking offered significant benefits to senior tourists in terms of personal health (psychological and physical) and social effectiveness.

Wellness as a facet of positive psychology has also received attention recently. It has already been established that the wellness-tourism interface has deep roots (e.g. ancient pilgrimages, travels for health and wellness). Nevertheless, recent studies and arguably the pioneering literature on wellness tourism (cf. wellness issue of *Tourism Recreation Research*, 2006) are more of an exposition of an ostensibly brand new form of tourism. Many of the Special Issue articles are introductory or exploratory in nature but more beyond discussing the origins, definitions and characteristics of the term (J. W. Miller,

2005; 2006a; Steiner & Reisinger, 2006). There are studies that highlight the importance of tourism as a wellness-and-leisure industry (Mueller & Lanz Kaufmann, 2001; Puczko & Bachvarov, 2006; Smith & Kelly, 2006a; Smith & Kelly, 2006b; Steiner & Reisinger, 2006). There are also work identifying the implications of segmenting wellness tourists in hotels (Mueller & Lanz Kaufmann, 2001).

Clearly, wellness is an indispensable factor in the study of both tourism and positive psychology. The concept of flow, as it is integrated in this research, provides fuller insight into tourists' experience particularly in the context of spas. The fusing of conceptual schemes in tourism (i.e. TCP) and positive psychology (i.e. flow) offer some of the key conceptual building blocks of this thesis.

### ***2.4.3 Introduction to the Concept of Flow***

The concept of *flow* was introduced by Csikszentmihalyi (1975). He defines it as “an optimal experience that stems from people’s perceptions of challenges and skills in given situations” (Ellis, Voelkl, & Morris, 1994). Flow occurs when the individual is completely engrossed in a challenging activity that does not necessarily provoke too much stress. The experience per se is highly rewarding, hence flow is a satisfying state (Filep, 2008). Csikszentmihalyi (1990) identifies the elements of enjoyment, which Jackson (1996) refers to as the dimensions of flow (Filep, 2008, p. 2) (Table 2.3). Collectively, these dimensions represent the optimal state of flow; individually, they connote the building blocks of the state (Jackson & Eklund, 2002).

Table 2.3 **Nine dimensions of flow**

(Based from Mihalyi Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; Filep, 2008; Jackson & Eklund, 2002, 2004)

Dimension of Flow	Description
Challenge-skill balance	There is a match between perceived skills and challenges
Action-awareness merging	Deep involvement leads to automaticity and spontaneity; there is no awareness of self as separate from the actions one is performing
Clear goals	There is a strong sense of what one is going to do
Unambiguous feedback	Clear and immediate feedback that the person is doing his/her activity well and is succeeding in his/her goal
Concentration on task	Total concentration on the task at hand
Sense of control	Sense of exercising control without actively trying to be in control
Loss of self-consciousness	Concern for the self disappears and the person becomes one with the activity
Time transformation	Time disorientation or a loss of time awareness
Autotelic experience	An intrinsically rewarding experience involving a sense of deep enjoyment

#### **2.4.4 Flow and the Tourist Experience**

The concept of flow is applicable to tourist experiences (Filep, 2008). Bredasley's (1982) concept of aesthetic experience states that a person's object focus, felt freedom (time transformation) and detached affect (the loss of self-consciousness) are used to characterise flow, enabling tourist experience to be appraised the way flow is measured. Likewise, active discovery (challenge-skills balance and sense of control) and wholeness (the clear goals and unambiguous feedback) typify flow (Filep, 2008)

The phenomenology of tourists' experience posits that tourist experience range from the search for mere pleasures to the quest for a spiritual self (Cohen, 1996). These ideas are introduced at this point because the flow concepts are perhaps best limited to the first two of the five phases of this well-known tourist experience classification. The five modes of tourist experience, although described individually (Table 2.4), are suggested to be in a virtual continuum from a recreational (hedonic) to an existential mode (eudaimonic). The studies of wellness tourism implicitly or explicitly discuss these modes of tourist experience; many of them focus on the existential mode (Devereaux & Carnegie, 2006; Lehto, et al., 2006; Pernecky & Johnston, 2006; Melanie Smith & Kelly, 2006a; Steiner & Reisinger, 2006). The present concern while not ignoring the

latter stages may be best seen as using the flow concept for recreational and diversionary modes.

Table 2.4. **Five modes of tourist experiences**  
(Cohen, 1996)

Mode	Description
Recreational Mode	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Tourist enjoys because the activity provides him/her a general sense of well-being</li> <li>● Distantly related to and derived from the religious voyage</li> <li>● Tourists thrive on pseudo-events</li> <li>● “Idle pleasure</li> </ul>
Diversionary Mode	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Experience is not meaningful (i.e. “meaningless pleasure of a centre-less person” (p. 96)</li> <li>● Also thrive on pseudo-events</li> </ul>
Experiential Mode	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Tourist searches for authenticity</li> <li>● Tourist remains a “stranger even when living with people whose authentic lives he/she observes” (p. 98)</li> </ul>
Experimental Mode	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Tourist searches for an “alternative spiritual centre” and “search of himself” (p. 100)</li> <li>● Tourist is unsure of his real desires and needs</li> <li>● Tourist may be an eternal “drifter”, i.e. his quest may become a way of life</li> </ul>
Existential Mode	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Tourist travels to an “elective” (not given) external centre other than his/her usual or permanent centre</li> <li>● Existential tourists could be:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Realistic Idealists (accept the social and cultural shortcomings even in the most ideal place)</li> <li>2. Starry-eyed Idealists (see perfection in anything at the elective centre but deny the realities of life)</li> <li>3. Critical Idealists (attached to the ideal, but reject the reality they found at it)</li> </ol> </li> </ul>

#### **2.4.5 Measuring flow in tourist experiences**

Flow is measured in various ways. The Experience Sampling Method (ESM), Self-Initiated-Tape Recording Method (SITRM), Flow State Scale (FSS), Dispositional Flow Scale (DFS) and flow in-depth interviews are the mainstream flow-measuring methods in the social sciences. The ESM which was developed by Csikszentmihalyi and his colleagues. It involves the use of a device (usually a buzzer/beeper) that goes off at random times to prompt respondents to answer some questions that are related to the participant’s situation and ephemeral psychological state (Mihalyi Csikszentmihalyi & Larson, 1987; Mihalyi Csikszentmihalyi & LeFevre, 1989). The SITRM has been used in leisure studies where the participant tape records the responses to a set of questions about their psychological state and experiences during or immediately after an activity

or event (Filep, 2008). Filep (2007), however, suggests that there are two issues with these methods. One is the lack of participants' compliance (i.e. the respondent may not feel like completing the questionnaire while enjoying his/her self). Additionally, there is the issue of altering participants' experience due to the reactivity of the task.

Flow interviews have also been used for on-site studies. This method requires an orientation of participants' attention towards the concept flow with a set number of quotes (usually three) and consequently asking them to talk about their on-site experiences. The FSS and DFS are ESM-related methods that were developed by Jackson and Eklund (2002, 2004). The former was developed to assess events recently experienced and is based on the retrospective recall of the participants' activities (Jackson & Eklund, 2002). The latter follows from the FSS and uses instructions that focus on the frequency of flow to assess one's propensity to experience flow (Jackson & Eklund, 2002).

These methods are potentially helpful but may need subtle modification in studying tourist experiences. Due to the dynamic nature of the tourism industry and the heterogeneity of tourist experiences, the use of these methods may be difficult to apply and potentially inappropriate especially for spa activities. While these issues are important, the lack of understanding of spa experiences as they relate to flow experiences persists. Hence, the use of the DFS and FSS, for instance, could be regarded as a positive attempt to bridge the gap in the literature. In relation to methods, how a study is designed and guided by certain beliefs also plays a crucial role.

#### ***2.4.6 The Flow Scales and the Tourist Spa Experiences***

A specific measuring tool is important in measuring a specific experience. In this research, the revised version of the FSS, that is the FSS-2 also known as *Event Experience Scale* by Jackson and Eklund (2004) will be used to measure tourist spa experiences. The FSS-2 was designed to assess flow in physical activity settings such as sports, dancing and yoga among others. This set of scales is used as an immediate post-event assessment flow as well as a tool in measuring a specific peak experience of an individual.

From the review of related literature and observations from various flow studies, two areas for research attention have been identified. One relates to the lack of empirical and conceptual studies that link spa experiences and the flow construct, specifically the flow scales. The other gap lies in the application of the flow scales in a setting which is entirely different from the backdrop in which the flow state scales have been designed for, that is, using the FSS-2 in a passive activity such as receiving a spa treatment rather than in a more interactive activity (physical setting). These gaps will be further discussed in the aims section of this chapter. The next section discusses the research paradigms and approaches used in this thesis. The discussion commences with a review of the paradigms in social and behavioural studies and the value of these perspectives lies in reconsidering how to approach several of the measurement challenges in researching spa tourism.

## **2.5 RESEARCH PARADIGM & PERSPECTIVES**

Schools of thought on the ways to conduct a study and report its outcomes are known as *paradigms*. The term paradigm was given contemporary meaning by Thomas Kuhn (1970) as he described it as the set of customs that characterise a particular discipline; hence, it is an essential element to scientific inquiry. He writes, “*men whose research is based on shared paradigms are committed to the same rules and standards for scientific practice*”(p. 11). Following Kuhn (1970), Sarantakos (1998) describes a paradigm as a “*set of beliefs, values and techniques which is shared by members of a scientific community, and which acts as a guide or map, dictating the kinds of problems scientists should address and the types of explanations that are acceptable to them*”(p. 32).

A paradigm is distinguished by the stance of its proponents in three fundamental ways: 1) *ontology* (the nature of reality/what is thought to be a “reality”); 2) *epistemology* (what is known and the researcher’s position in relation to the subjects being studied); and, 3) *methodology* (the process of conducting research). Heron and Reason (1997, cited in Guba & Lincoln, 2005) suggest a fourth basis in distinguishing paradigms. They suggest *axiology* that involves the type of knowledge that is valued and how it is valued, and takes into account the role of values in the research processes. The major paradigms in contemporary social and behavioural sciences and their basic assumptions are presented in Table 2.5.



A positivist paradigm allows the researcher to view the world through scientific rules that explain behaviour or phenomena (Jennings, 2010; Veal, 2006). Sociologists in particular have been critical of attempts to use natural science perspectives in the social sciences (Rojek, 1989). Criticisms of positivism have led to the emergence of post-positivism, which recognises that reality cannot be absolutely understood. Interpretivism, critical theory, pragmatism and other paradigms later transpired as distinctive breaks from positivism.

In the study of tourism, Hollinshead (2004) identifies four paradigms: positivism, constructivism, critical theory and post-positivism (also in Gale & Botterill, 2005).

Although mainstream tourism research often works within a positivist/post-positivist paradigm (Phillimore & Goodson, 2004; Walle, 1997), the rejection of positivism is also commonplace in this field of study (Franklin & Crang, 2001; Nash, 2001; Pearce, 2004; Rojek & Urry, 1997). Pearce (2004) argues that it is important to understand what is being rejected, and it should be recognised that positivism is a fundamental perspective in studying the natural sciences. He argues that tourism is heir to positivism through its parent disciplines in economics, psychology, sociology and geography. He further warns, “[t]here is a danger, however, in the over-enthusiastic and simplistic rejection of positivism as the bad boy of scientific thinking. There can be a value in natural science style methods for investigating human behaviour and there is a role for generalizations about tourism and tourist behaviour even if they are not law-like” (2004, p. 61). More recently, Jennings’ (2010) observed that although more emphasis on positivist/post-positivist paradigms was given to research in the past, the recent years have seen a gradual shift in the employment of qualitative approaches to obtain “deeper meanings people attribute to tourism and tourism experiences, events and phenomena” (p. 58).

**Table 2.5 The major research paradigms**

*(Based on Greenwood & Levin, 2005; Guba, 1990; Guba & Lincoln, 2005; Jennings, 2010; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2003)*

	Paradigms					
	Positivism	Post-positivism	Critical Realism	Critical Theory	Constructivism/ Interpretivism	Pragmatism
Ontology <i>(the nature of reality/what is thought to be a "reality")</i>	Reality exists "out there" and is driven by immutable natural laws and mechanisms.	Reality exists but can never be fully apprehended. It is driven by natural laws than can only be incompletely understood	Fallible truths are produced by social and historical circumstances	Virtual reality shaped by social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic and gender values; crystallised over time.	Realities exist in the form of multiple mental constructions, socially and experientially based, local and specific, dependent for their form and content on the persons who hold them.	Pragmatic view of the world that what works is what is "real" or true; hence the acceptance of external reality
Epistemology <i>(what is known and how one is positioned in relation to reality)</i>	It is both possible and essential for the inquirer to adopt a distant, non-interactive posture. Values and other biasing and confounding factors are thereby automatically excluded from influencing the outcomes. (Dualist/Objectivist)	Objectivity remains a regulatory ideal, but it can only be approximated, with special emphasis placed on external guardians such as the critical tradition and the critical community The possibility of researcher bias is acknowledged (Modified objectivist)	Objectivity can be attained The possibility of researcher bias is acknowledged (Modified objectivist)	Values mediate inquiry (Subjectivist)	Inquirer and inquired into are fused into a single (monistic) entity. Findings are literally the creation of the process of interaction between the two. (Subjectivist)	Experience emerges in a continual interaction between people and their environment; accordingly, this process constitutes both the subjects and objects of inquiry (Both subjectivist and objectivist)
Methodology <i>(the process of acquiring knowledge, i.e. research)</i>	Questions and/or hypotheses are stated in advance in propositional form and subjected to empirical tests (falsification) under carefully controlled conditions.	Emphasise critical multiplism. Redress imbalances by doing inquiry in more natural settings, using more qualitative methods, depending more on grounded theory and reintroducing discovery into the inquiry process.	Emphasise multiplism Primarily quantitative but may use qualitative methods	Eliminate false consciousness and energize and facilitate transformation	Individual constructions are elicited and refined hermeneutically, and compared and contrasted dialectically, with the aim of generating one (or a few) constructions on which there is substantial consensus.	Mixed methods
Axiology <i>(what and how knowledge is valued)</i>	Knowledge is propositional and of intrinsic value	(the same as positivism)	Knowledge is proposition, of intrinsic value and a potential means to social emancipation	Knowledge is propositional, transactional and a way to achieve social emancipation	(the same as critical theory)	(the same as critical realism)

### 2.5.1 *Research Paradigms*

This PhD is guided by two paradigms: post-positivism and critical realism. The approach follows Jennings' (2010) view that one topic can be studied using different paradigms. This position, which can be termed as “intermediate paradigmatic ground”, is derived from similarities, if not meshing, of the two perspectives in terms of ontological stances, epistemologies, methodologies and even axiologies. It is noteworthy that these two paradigms are classified as one in the works of Hollinshead (2004) and Gale and Botterill (2005). The latter authors, following Stockmaan's (1983), argue that critical realism is not simply post-positivist; it is *anti*-positivist (p. 153). While such a notion is accepted in this work, post-positivism and critical realism are each presented as individual paradigms in the justifications concerning why and how this research was developed. The following sections consider how the studies are shaped by ontological, epistemological, methodological and axiological considerations.

*Ontologically*, the post-positivist stance suggests that a “real” reality exists out there which is not fully understood. Such reality driven by laws needs to be checked, evaluated and negotiated. Similar to the critical theory stance, the critical realist ontology proposes that reality is shaped by different factors and is crystallised over time (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). These two stances mesh in the context of the burgeoning health and wellness phenomena. The following studies do not, however, seek to identify laws that create the perceived reality. Nonetheless, the value of historical foundations of concepts in understanding the world is recognised. In a more concrete sense, this present work recognises that the evolution of wellness based on historical accounts is well-acknowledged as a source of its complexity and richness. This complexity is due to the negotiability of the term and concept. As discussed in the previous chapter, wellness is a multidimensional phenomenon that can be defined, interpreted and projected in different disciplines, norms and even scenarios. Despite the complex nature of the term, the wellness industry exists and continues to grow globally.

**Table 2.6 The Current Research Paradigm**

(Based on Guba, 1990; Guba & Lincoln, 2005; Jennings, 2010)

	Paradigm Checklist		Current Research Paradigm
	Post-positivism	Critical Realism	
Ontology	<p><i>Critical realist:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> There is a "real" reality out there but can never be fully understood (that is external to the researcher)</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reality is driven by natural laws than can only be incompletely understood</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reality needs to be checked, evaluated and negotiated about ("Does it really exist?")</li> </ul>	<p><i>Historical realist</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reality is shaped by social and historical circumstances</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reality is crystallised over time</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Treating social structures as a result of past practices as "reality" can be re-examined</li> </ul>	<p><i>Post-positivist/Critical realist</i></p> <p>There is a "real" reality outside the observer that has been/being crystallised over time. The researcher's ability to understand it is imperfect and there must be a wide examination to get the best understanding of it. Such reality needs to be evaluated.</p>
Epistemology	<p><i>Modified objectivist</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Objectivity remains a regulatory ideal, but it can only be approximated (absolute researcher objectivity is <i>unattainable</i>).</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Observations are theory-laden and influenced by theory, but the researcher can construct theory inductively.</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Special emphasis is placed on external guardians such as the critical tradition and the critical community.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Modified objectivist/Modified subjectivist</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The possibility of research bias is acknowledged</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Separating the researcher from what is being studied is a challenge</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> The credibility of our position in relation to what is known can be checked by interested communities</li> </ul>	<p><i>Mostly post-positivist</i></p> <p>Absolute researcher objectivity is unattainable, and observations are theory-laden. The "emic" approach embedded the researcher in the phenomenon being studied, and is willing to have the credibility/trustworthiness of her epistemological stance be checked and evaluated by the critical community (i.e. the people involved in the study or other researchers).</p>
Methodology	<p><i>Modified experimental/manipulative</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Emphasise critical multiplism: Chiefly quantitative with some tendency to see qualitative methods as a precursor to quantitative methods</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Researches in more natural settings using more qualitative methods</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Depends more on grounded theory and reintroducing discovery into the inquiry process.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Dialogic, transformative</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Eliminate false consciousness and energize and facilitate transformation</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Encourage reflection</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Encourage conversation and dialogue</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Question people's current experiences</li> </ul>	<p><i>Post-positivist/Critical realist</i></p> <p>A single perfect scientific method does not exist. Qualitative and quantitative methods can be compromised. In this study, however, quantitative approaches are primarily used in this study. Qualitative methods eliciting participants' ways of reflecting and knowing (i.e. blogs/texts) are used. Research designs aim at boosting emergent or new discovery.</p>
Axiology	<p><i>Knowledge:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> is propositional and of intrinsic value</li> </ul>	<p><i>Knowledge:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> is propositional and of intrinsic value</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> potential means of social emancipation</li> </ul>	<p><i>Post-positivist/Critical realist</i></p> <p>In both paradigms, knowledge proposes facts/realities rather than beliefs, which makes it value-free and neutral. Although knowledge may be a potential driver of social change, it is not an ultimate goal of the study.</p>

The approach adopted in this thesis is that the historical development of a concept contributes much to its clarity and most importantly acceptability. The development of tourist behaviour as an area of study, for example, is vital in how it is understood today. In the review of the literature, it was observed that much of the seminal works that heavily contribute in the understanding of tourist behaviour are inclined towards post-positivism, albeit implicitly. The academic negotiations, debates and rejoinders that exist in Harrill and Potts' (2002) three phases of tourist motivation models development are evidence of post-positivists' need for evaluation and negotiation about the perceived reality. As Goodson and Phillimore (2004) also observed, positivism and post-positivism paradigms provide the context within which many tourism researchers operate.

In terms of *epistemology*, what is known and how one's self is positioned in relation to reality is the key issue. Again, Harrill and Potts'(2002) accounts of the development of tourist motivation can be examples of post-positivist observations. Guba (1990) observes that post-positivists are epistemologically modified objectivists whose "objectivity remains a regulatory ideal, but it can only be approximated" (p. 23). The exploration of tourist spa-goers behaviour in Asia is guided by tourism-related theories (e.g. motivation) and positive psychology theories (e.g. "flow", well-being). The meshing of the two epistemological positions comes into play with the inherent approximations of the observations, inability to reach total objectivity yet openness of the researcher's position to be evaluated in terms of credibility (partly subjective). Subjectivism is an epistemological stance where the knower and the known become inseparable (Guba, 1990; Guba & Lincoln, 2005).

*Methodologically*, both post-positivist and critical realist paradigms emphasise methodological pluralism where both quantitative and qualitative methods are used. It should be noted, however, that quantitative measures are primarily used. Ambercrombie, Hill and Turner (1988, p. 86) wrote that "an empirical statement or theory is one which can be tested by some kind of evidence drawn from experience" (cited in Jennings, 2010, p. 37). The motivations and flow experiences in an Asian spa context will be measured quantitatively (using questionnaires) and statistical calculations will be employed in the studies. Blog analysis too will be used as a

qualitative method. The methods used in this project will be further discussed in each study undertaken. The studies will be presented in Chapters 3, 4 and 5.

The wars between qualitative and quantitative users have shaped three major schools of thought: the *purists*, the *sensationalists*, and the *pragmatists* (Rossman & Wilson, 1985). These three approaches (Fig. 2.2) can be differentiated with the extent to which each regards how qualitative and quantitative styles can co-exist and can be used together (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005). Although this differentiation has been developed by pragmatists, it is worth noting that the current research also falls within the spectrum of combined qualitative-quantitative methods. Much value is given to both quantitative and qualitative approaches despite the employment of a single method in each study undertaken in this project. Hence, this work uses a *sensationalist perspective* in methodology.

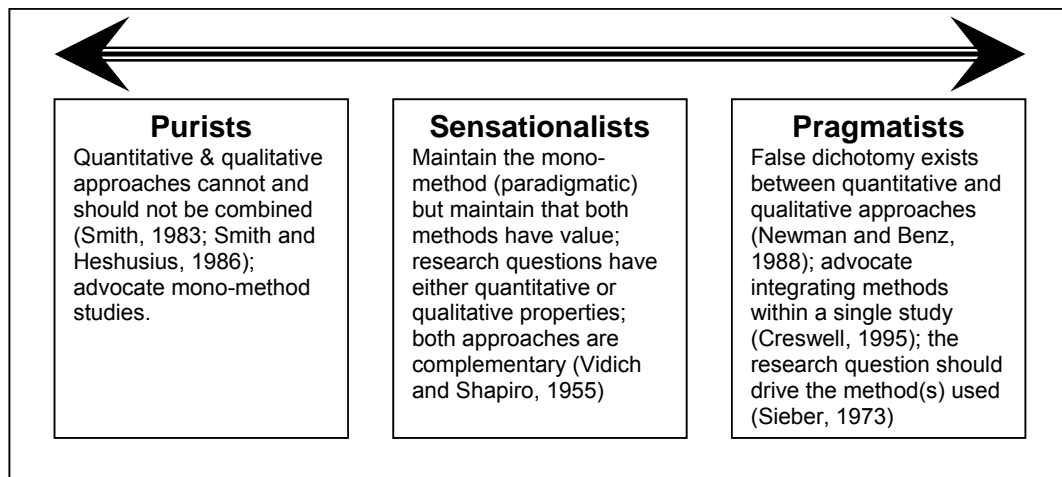


Figure 2.2 **The differences between qualitative and quantitative research paradigms**

Based on Onwuegbuzie & Leech (2005, pp. 376-377)

The *axiological base* for both paradigms is simple. Knowledge in both post-positivist and critical realist is proposed by facts and not by beliefs. Such propositional knowing about the world is an end in itself (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). The critical realist's axiology, however, is extended to the possibility of shaping social emancipation. While such an objective is admirable, the topic for this research is narrow and does not extend significantly to social-change and policy-making imperatives.

The combination of two paradigms that guide this research is underpinned by the works of Walle (1997) and Jennings (2010). More specifically, Walle maintains that the field of tourism is broad and distinct and must recognise the validity of different research strategies and tools. It is recognised in this research that each paradigm has its advantages and disadvantages. Jennings' belief that a single topic can be studied using plural paradigms has therefore driven the adoption of post-positivism and critical realism to guide this project.

### **2.5.2 Research Perspectives**

This project employs a mixture of *emic* and *etic* perspectives, which is an approach for a good ethnography (Fetterman, 1989). Ethnography is described by Fetterman as “the art and science of describing a group or culture” (1989, p. 11). An *emic* approach refers to a study where the researcher becomes an insider and uses the knowledge bases of the setting, the people and the latter's explanations and language to describe the phenomenon being studied. It takes the perspective of the individual who is engaging in the behaviour. On the other hand, an *etic* approach involves providing to the participants a world view or perspective to which they respond (Pearce, 2005).

As an insider (*emic*), the researcher has taken part in activities that tourist spa-goers would do while collecting data. More specifically, whenever possible, the researcher stayed in several spa resorts, bought spa packages and a la carte spa treatments and services which were vastly available to tourists in India, Thailand and the Philippines. This approach provides two opportunities for the researcher. One prospect was to get a feel of what are offered to tourists in terms of spa experiences. The other opportunity was a more practical application to data collection. Being an insider (as a fellow tourist/spa-goer) gave the chance to get the freshest reflections possible from tourists' most recent spa experience, since the idea of the Flow State Scale (FSS-2) was to measure the flow state immediately after an activity.

The researcher's critical realist epistemological position made it very challenging to be an outsider and adopt fully an *etic* approach. Fetterman (1989) points out that a researcher may employ an *emic* perspective while collecting data, but must detach himself from the data at some stage to make sense of the empirical material. Hence, the

etic approach was undertaken at two levels. The first level of detachment was the conduct of the blog analyses which allowed the researcher to explore the unknown amongst tourist bloggers. The other level of detachment was during the data analysis stage, where the researcher was no longer a “fellow” spa tourist, but an interpreter of the collected data.

## **2.6 GEOGRAPHICAL CONTEXT OF THE PHD THESIS**

One of the five areas of research opportunities identified in the previous chapter was the potential shift in gaze in a geographical sense. The focus on Asian spa tourism is one of the novel points of this project. The terms “Asia” or “Asian spa”, however, is too broad to identify the geographical milieu of this study. Hence, in order to clarify this, it is important to demarcate the specific focus of this research in geographical terms.

This PhD project concentrates on the South and Southeast Asian regions. According to the UN’s geographical region classification (United Nations Department of Economic & Social Affairs, 2011), South Asia comprises India, the Maldives, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran. The same geographical classification identifies Thailand, the Philippines, Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, Timor-Leste and Vietnam as the sub-region consisting Southeast Asia. Although South and Southeast Asia are two different sub-regions, they are collectively labelled as “South East Asia” in this thesis for a practical reason: to avoid redundancy and verbosity in the text (i.e. “South East Asia” instead of “South and Southeast Asia”). The term “South East Asia”, which will be used throughout this thesis, therefore pertains to both South and Southeast Asian sub-regions.

## **2.7 SUMMARY OF KNOWLEDGE GAPS, RESEARCH AIMS AND DESIGN**

### ***2.7.1 Knowledge Gaps and Research Aims***

The dearth of literature on spa tourism provides opportunities for research. Key points and research opportunities have been derived through the reviews of related literature. There were five areas of opportunities seized in this research:



- *Highlighting a form of special interest tourism*

Spa-going is an ancient activity in tourism, but not all tourists are interested in this form of tourism. This project highlights health and wellness tourism, and more narrowly, spa tourism.

- *A shift in gaze in geographical contexts*

This refers to the change in focus from North American and European to Asian contexts in terms of spa tourism. Because most of the academic works done on spas (markets and industry) are focused on North American and European regions, this research provides a fresh look at tourist behaviour in South East Asian spa tourism.

- *Linking specialisms*

In the context of Asian spa experience, this research highlights the relationship between tourism and positive psychology by measuring “flow” in relation to spa experiences among tourists.

- *Theory testing and expansion*

In each study, a theory will be tested and expanded. The Travel Career Pattern (TCP) theory will be used in a different geographical location and expanded in terms of the number of dimensions and levels of travel experience (Chapter 3). In the positive psychology realm, the flow state scale, specifically the FSS-2 will be used among tourists who participated in a very passive activity that is, receiving spa treatments (Chapter 4). It should be noted that the Flow Scales have been heavily used physical activities such as sport, yoga and dancing among others.

- *The pre-travel, on-site and post-travel experience of tourist spa-goers in a snapshot*

At core, this research seeks to explore and subsequently presenting the travel and spa-going motives, on-site spa experiences and perceived benefits from spa-going activities of tourists. It will investigate the relationships between and among motivation factors,

previous travel and spa experiences, flow experiences and future plans that may arise from the current spa experience.

### ***2.7.2 Research Design: A Snapshot***

Research design is imperative at the outset of any research. This section provides a snapshot of the research designs used in this project. It briefly identifies the data collection and analysis methods used in each study. The methods will be discussed in more detail as the core studies are presented in the body of the thesis. Three studies were undertaken in this project. Each study contributes to the discussions in Chapters Three, Four and Five, as shown in Fig. 2.3.

#### *Study 1: On-site survey*

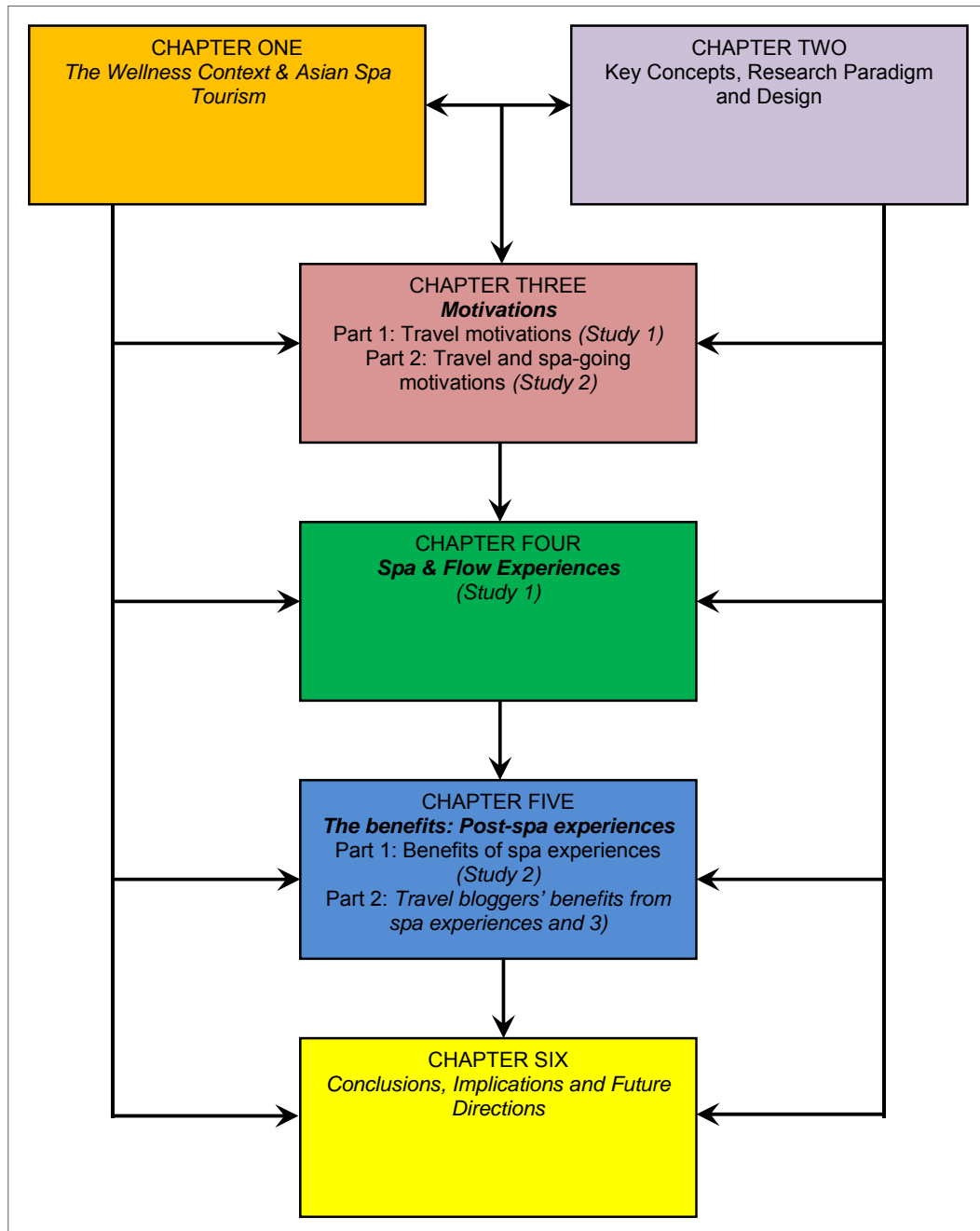
The surveys were conducted in India, Thailand and the Philippines. Spa-going tourists (domestic and international) were the participants in this study. The questionnaire included the flow and TCP scales, previous travel and spa experiences and some profiling information among others (see *Appendix A*). The results of this study are divided into two parts in this thesis. The core results in the motivation section of the study will be presented in Chapter 3 (Part 1), while the findings related to the flow construct are discussed in Chapter 4.

#### *Study 2: Online survey*

This questionnaire used in this study is similar to that of the on-site survey, except for modifications (see *Appendix B*). The online survey maintained the TCP scales, but the respondents had to rate each statement at two different levels: their general travel motives and their spa-going motives. It also contained questions on how beneficial their most recent spa experience in Asia. This survey, however, did not contain the flow scales because the experience may be too remote in time to be measured, as the scales require the freshest possible memory of the experience. The target respondents of this study were any individual above 18 years old who had a South East Asian spa experience within 12 months upon participating in the online survey.

### Study 3: Blog analysis

The method involved in this study is referred to as *netnography*, or “online ethnography”. It entailed searching, coding and analysis of travel blogs that contained information on tourists’ spa experiences in South East Asia, particularly in India, Thailand and the Philippines. According to Walker (2005), blogs are a special type of webpage which is ideally frequently updated and consists of dated entries arranged in a chronological order in such a way that whichever appears first is the most recent entry. Three travel blog sites were identified as sources of the blogs: Travel Blog ([www.travelblog.org](http://www.travelblog.org)), Travel Pod ([www.travelpod.com](http://www.travelpod.com)), and Lonely Planet Blogs ([www.lonelyplanet.com/blogs](http://www.lonelyplanet.com/blogs)). All the blogs included in this study were written between 2005 and 2010.



**Figure 2.3 Flow of Thesis Chapters**

## 2.8 CHAPTER CONCLUSION

This chapter has reviewed the major conceptual schemes and theoretical ideas informing this thesis. The approach explored in sequence the TCP and the concept of flow and related these approaches to spa tourism within a post-positivist and critical realist paradigmatic fusion. The study sites were briefly identified as being South East

Asian. The results of these considerations and a succinct review of the design of the studies form the background to the aims of each chapter which are stated below.

Chapter 3 (Part 1):

1. To profile spa-going tourists in South East Asia, specifically in India, Thailand and the Philippines by considering demographic information including previous travel experiences, travel party and length of travel;
2. To measure pre-determined factors that may affect tourists' decision making in choosing a destination in these three countries;
3. To measure and identify the key motivators of spa-going tourists in India, Thailand and the Philippines using the Travel Career Pattern (TCP) theory; and,
4. To assess the role of varied levels of travel experience modifying the importance of health as a travel motive.

Chapter 3 (Part 2):

1. To further profile tourist spa-goers in South East Asia in terms of demographic information, travel and spa-going motivations and experiences;
2. To test the flexibility of the TCP theory by:
  - a. measuring not only travel motives, but also spa-going motives;
  - b. incorporating another motivational dimension to the model;
  - c. expanding travel experience levels; and,
  - d. applying the modified model in tourists' spa-going context;
3. To explore motivational patterns between travelling and spa-going using the TCP model;

Chapter 4:

1. To measure and understand the applicability of the *flow* model in spa experiences;
2. To identify the extent of flow that tourists experience in relation to their spa experiences;
3. To use the FSS-2 in a passive setting rather than an active physical setting; and,
4. To compare previous FSS-2-related data with the current study that used the scale in a passive (non-active) setting, i.e. spa-going activity.

Chapter 5 (Part 1):

1. To identify what literature-derived benefits from spa experiences (as tested from the literature) contributed to spa-going tourists' well-being and travel experience in South East Asia;
2. To understand the temporal dimension of the perceived benefits of spa activities using the multidimensional concept of wellness; and,
3. To explore how gender and residence (that is, whether the tourists were travelling domestically or internationally) relate to the benefits of spa experiences.

Chapter 5 (Part 2):

1. Identify the body of travel blogs about spa experiences in South East Asia, and particularly in India, Thailand and the Philippines.
2. Profile, as closely as possible, those who write blogs about their spa experiences in India, Thailand and the Philippines while travelling;
3. Identify the themes within the reported material during and after a spa treatment.

# CHAPTER 3

## Motivation: The Drive to Travel & the Impulse for Spas

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*“A dominant impulse on encountering beauty is to wish to hold on to it, to possess it and give it weight in one’s life. There is an urge to say, ‘I was here, I saw this and it mattered to me.’”*

**Alain de Botton**  
**The Art of Travel (2002, p. 214)**

### Chapter Structure

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#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

#### CHAPTER 3 (Part 1)

The integration of health in the travel career pattern (TCP) model

#### 3.2 ON-SITE SURVEY: RESEARCH AIMS, DATA AND METHODS

- 3.2.1 Research Gaps and Aims
- 3.2.2 Research method
- 3.2.3 The Questionnaire
- 3.2.4 Data Analysis
- 3.2.5 Respondent Profile
- 3.2.6 MOTIVATION: “Pull” and “Push” Factors
- 3.2.7 Pull Factors
- 3.2.8 Travel motives: Test of normality
- 3.2.9 Health & the TCP

#### CHAPTER 3 (Part 2)

Travel & Spa-Going Career Patterns

#### 3.3 ONLINE SURVEY: RESEARCH AIMS, DATA AND METHODS

- 3.3.1 Research gaps and objectives
- 3.3.2 The online survey: Rationale, sampling and limitations
- 3.3.3 The respondents
- 3.3.4 The spa treatments
- 3.3.5 The Spa-Going Plans
- 3.3.6 The modified TCP: Travel motives of spa-going tourists
- 3.3.7 Spa-going motives
- 3.3.8 Previous Spa Experience
- 3.3.9 The Spa-Going Career Pattern (SGCP): A new development

#### 3.4 CHAPTER CONCLUSION

- 3.4.1 Requirements of a good tourist motivation theory
  - 3.4.2 The SGCP and its future
-

### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter is related to the pre-travel or pre-purchase phase of travel behaviour as suggested by Clawson and Knetsch (1966). As a pre-travel construct, motivation is a pivotal part of travel behaviour and effectively summarises the nature of consumer demand (Pearce, 1996). The studies reported in this chapter seek to explore the motivation concept in terms of tourists' travel and more specifically, in terms of spa-going while on holiday. One may argue that while travel motives are undoubtedly an element of the pre-travel phase, tourists' spa-going motives may not be known until tourists have reached their destination. In this study, however, the motives of individuals who visit spas are identified prior to the purchase of the services.

This chapter is divided into two parts. The first part presents the findings on the motivation component from Study 1 (the on-site survey), while the second section reports the motivation-related results from Study 2 (the online survey). The first part of the chapter introduces the study aims, objectives and methodology of the survey conducted in India, Thailand and the Philippines. It presents the findings in terms of the push and pull motive factors involved in the study of tourist spa-goers in the three countries. More importantly, it discusses how the TCP was modified by integrating a new motive, that of health, to the model.

The results related to the pre-travel stage in Study 2 include spa-going plans and motivation. This part of the motivation chapter explains how the online survey was conducted and what type of tourists participated in the study. The key and common link among respondents was their Asian spa experience. In analysing the relationship between the tourists' spa-going plans and other variables, the roles of gender and the spa destination will be considered. Further, links between travel motives and spa-going motives will be reviewed. Additionally, the spa-going career pattern (SGCP), which was modelled from the TCP to fit the much specialised spa-going activity in tourism will be presented. Its relationship with leisure and the concept of career will also be discussed. Finally, the chapter will briefly conclude with some implications of the study for tourist motivation and travel behaviour as a whole.



## CHAPTER 3 (Part 1)

### *The integration of health in the travel career pattern (TCP) model*

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#### 3.2 ON-SITE SURVEY: RESEARCH AIMS, DATA AND METHODS

##### 3.2.1 *Research Gaps and Aims*

As discussed in the previous chapters, very little is known about spa-going travellers' behaviour in Asia. In an attempt to explore the Asian spa tourism phenomenon, the on-site survey aims to:

1. Profile spa-going tourists in South East Asia, specifically in India, Thailand and the Philippines by considering demographic information including previous travel experiences, travel party and length of travel;
2. Measure pre-determined factors that may affect tourists' decision making in choosing a destination in these three countries;
3. Measure and identify the key motivators of spa-going tourists in India, Thailand and the Philippines using the Travel Career Pattern (TCP) theory; and,
4. Assess the role of varied levels of travel experience in modifying the importance of health as a travel motive.

##### 3.2.2 *Research method*

Data collection for Study 1 was done in three different countries: India (Fig. 3.2.1), Thailand (Fig. 3.2.2) and the Philippines (Fig. 3.2.3) between December 2008 and May 2009. The specific places in these countries where the survey was conducted are shown in the relevant maps, and a brief description of the settings is provided in Table 3.2.1. Before the survey was carried out, approval from the Human Ethics Committee at James Cook University was obtained.

Table 3.2.1 Survey sites by country

Country	Specific city/town/region
India	Mumbai
	Goa
	Alappuzha (also known as <i>Allepey</i> ) in Kerala
Thailand	Bangkok
	Phuket
Philippines	Manila
	Baguio
	Bohol



Figure 3.2.1 Study sites in India



Figure 3.2.2 Study sites in Thailand



Figure 3.2.3 Study sites in the Philippines

The questionnaire was originally designed for a very narrow segment of tourists, i.e. those who were on a spa holiday. Inevitable changes to the research plan, however, were necessary. The researcher arrived in Mumbai for the pilot study on the morning of the 26<sup>th</sup> of November 2008, which was on the same day when the terrorist attacks happened. The chilling incident in the city compelled major alterations to the research plan. As reported well by the global media, tourist places in the city were assaulted including the Gateway of India, the Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus (train station), and a local café which tourists frequented. The other places attacked which were of interest in this research were hotels and resorts, some of which had been contacted previously by the researcher regarding the study.

The original target samples of the study were domestic and international tourists who were specifically on a spa/health holiday, i.e. tourists whose main motives were to promote or preserve their health while on holiday. Because the study was originally designed for a very narrow segment of tourists, contacts with spa hotels and resorts had been established earlier. A ready access to spa/health tourists was a major requirement for the study; hence permission from the establishments was necessary. The attacks in Mumbai, however, left the researcher with very few potential respondents as most of the health/spa hotels and resorts contacted prior to the commencement of the data collection had to tighten their security and only allowed guests and/or staff within their facility.

Following the attacks, it was assumed that the tourists may have felt vulnerable to security and/or privacy breaches considering that information was being obtained from them. These restrictions not only applied to Mumbai, but also in Goa and Kerala where the surveys were conducted. It was therefore decided to open the study to a much broader sample. The study was no longer limited to those who were specifically on a spa holiday but on a holiday in general. The only requirement for a respondent to be able to participate was a “spa experience” during the current holiday.

Given that the study was to be carried out in three different countries, consistency had to be taken into account at all times. And so although the attacks only happened in India, the same approach was used in conducting the surveys in Thailand and the Philippines. As a result of the changes, the data were gathered mostly in tourist areas such as the lobbies of day spas (with the managements’/operators’ permission), public beaches, shopping centres and waiting areas of domestic and international airports. Thus, while earlier plans had proposed a simple random sampling from spa holiday makers, the actual data collection was carried out employing judgement sampling, which is a type of purposive sampling (cf. Cavana, Delahaye, & Sekaran, 2001). This technique entailed asking respondents whether they had used spa services and other similar products while they were at the destination (the city/town where the survey was taking place, e.g. Bangkok).

### ***3.2.3 The Questionnaire***

The on-site survey data were collected using a 6-page self-administered questionnaire with four main sections (Appendix A). The first section addressed the respondents’ thoughts and feelings during the spa experience and measured satisfaction. It included the Flow State Scale (FSS-2), which will be further discussed in Chapter Four. The second section combined push and pull factors in decision-making processes. The push factors were presented as the motivational statements in the TCP, while the pull factors involved destination characteristics that may have attracted the tourists. Both these subsections were measured by how the respondents perceived their importance. The third sections focused on the participants’ travel motives, past spa experiences and future spa-going plans respectively. Finally, the fourth section sought information about the respondents’ demographic and current general trip information. It also contained

questions about previous travel experiences. This chapter focuses on all the sections, except the first one which will be examined in more detail in Chapter 4.

As this study aims to integrate a health dimension into the TCP, it has adopted all the 69 statements in the foundation TCP study (cf. Pearce and Lee, 2005). The statements themselves can be organised into 14 motive factors: *escape/relax, novelty, strengthening relationships, autonomy, nature, self-development (host-site involvement), stimulation, personal development, securing relationships, self-actualization, isolation, nostalgia, romance and recognition*. Essentially, only two statements were added to the model for this study: “*to maintain my health*” and “*to improve my health*” both of which make up the health cluster as an implicit fifteenth motivational factor. The respondents were asked to rate the importance of each statement using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = *not important at all*; 5 = *very important*).

#### **3.2.4 Data Analysis**

Key statistical procedures from the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software were used to analyse the data. The data analysis involved descriptive statistics to identify the sample profile and the spa treatments that the respondents used. K-means cluster analysis and independent t-tests were also used to classify the respondents according to their travel experience level, and to explore the differences in motivational patterns among travel experience groups.

#### **3.2.5 Respondent Profile**

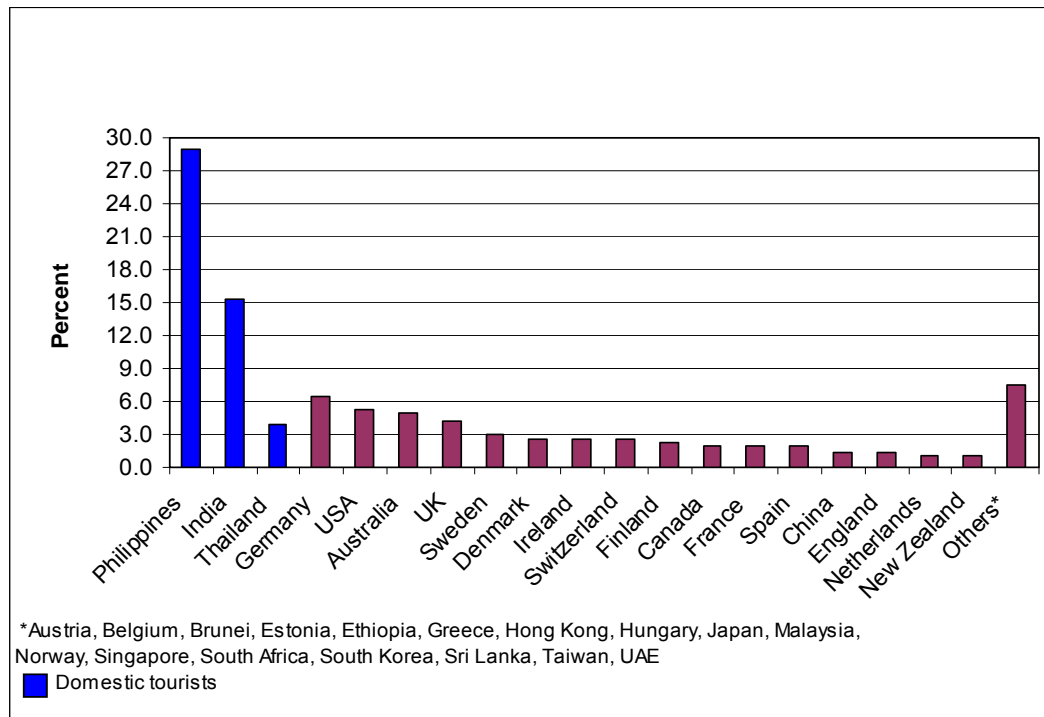
This section addresses the first aim of the study, which is to profile the spa-going tourists in India, Thailand and the Philippines based on this research. A total of 336 questionnaires were collected, and 319 (92.6%) were usable. A breakdown of respondents per country is presented in Table 3.2.2. The sample consisted of a slightly greater number of females (59.4%) than males (40.6%). Respondents in their twenties and thirties constituted about 66 per cent of the sample, with those in the age range of 21-30 making up nearly 43 per cent. In terms of occupation, about a quarter of the sample consisted of individuals who were in professional or technical employment.

More than half of the sample comprised international tourists (54.9%) to India, Thailand or the Philippines.

**Table 3.2.2 Demographic profile of on-site survey respondents**

		India		Thailand		Philippines		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Gender	Female	34	18.6	70	38.3	75	41.0	183	59.4
	Male	45	36.0	57	45.6	23	18.4	125	40.6
<b>Age Group</b>									
Age Group	Under 18	1	100	--	--	--	--	1	0.3
	18-20	1	4.8	13	61.9	7	33.3	21	7.0
	21-30	29	22.7	64	50.0	35	27.3	128	42.7
	31-40	17	23.9	28	39.4	26	36.6	71	23.7
	41-50	15	30.6	14	28.6	20	40.8	49	16.3
	51-60	8	36.4	5	22.7	9	40.9	22	7.3
	60+	2	25.0	4	50.0	2	25.0	8	2.7
<b>Occupation</b>									
Occupation	Homemaker	7	70.0	3	30	--	--	10	3.3
	Professional/technical	16	21.1	31	40.8	29	38.2	76	25.1
	Executive/administrator	8	61.5	2	15.4	3	23.1	13	4.3
	Labourer	1	33.3	1	33.3	1	33.3	3	1.0
	Middle management	8	26.7	12	40.0	10	33.3	30	9.9
	Tradesman/machine operator	--	--	2	66.7	1	33.3	3	1.0
	Sales/marketing	7	20.0	15	42.9	13	37.1	35	11.6
	Self-employed/Business owner	18	46.2	13	33.3	8	20.5	39	12.9
	Clerical or service	1	4.5	6	27.3	15	68.2	22	7.3
	Retired	3	37.5	3	37.5	2	25.0	8	2.6
	Student	6	15.4	23	59.0	10	25.6	39	12.9
	Others	4	16.0	15	60.0	6	24.0	25	8.3
<b>Country of residence</b>									
Country of residence	Domestic	45	32.4	12	8.6	82	59.0	139	45.1
	International	33	19.5	117	69.2	19	11.2	169	54.9

The respondents in the on-site survey are diverse in terms of usual place of residence (Fig. 3.2.4). It should be noted that the country of residence is not necessarily the respondents' country of origin or nationality. The participants surveyed in the Philippines, for example, include citizens of Japan, South Korea and USA. In Thailand, many of the domestic tourists are originally from North America or Europe but have been living in the country for several years.



**Figure 3.2.4 Respondents' usual country of residence**

### 3.2.6 MOTIVATION: "Pull" and "Push" Factors

The push-pull model is a foundation approach for understanding tourist motivations (Dann, 1977). This framework posits that people travel because they are pushed and pulled by certain forces (i.e. motivational factors). Such factors describe how individuals are pushed by motivational variables into making a travel decision and how they are pulled (attracted) by the destination area. The push factors have been traditionally thought to be useful in explaining the desire for travel. On the other hand, the pull factors refer to the features, attractions, or attributes of the destination itself.

The push factors, which are considered to be socio-psychological motivations that prompt individuals to travel, constitute one of the focal points in this thesis. The TCP is a push factor model that will be further discussed later in this chapter. Meanwhile, the results of the study relating to the pull factors will be discussed in this section.

### **3.2.7 Pull Factors**

There seems to be a consensus among tourism researchers that tourist attractions are the most important component of the tourism system, and a major factor which draw tourists, and shape the development of any destination (Goeldner & Ritchie, 2006; Weaver & Lawton, 2010). Characterising tourist destinations plays an integral part in exploring tourist behaviour. Tourist destinations are frequently shaped by marketing efforts, which include but reach beyond the efforts of the tourism industry. Further, tourist destinations are viewed and presented in selective and diverse ways. Pearce (2005) suggested a six-system approach to characterising tourist destinations. The system has two emphases: physical and social. The physical aspect includes the activities (listings, profiles), settings (use of zones using a biophysical basis), and facilities (immediate physical features of the tourist space). The social aspect, on the other hand, include service (characteristics of staff in the service quality framework), hosts (community responses and reception), and management (marketing labels, management actions, branding).

One of the aims of the study was to measure the importance of destination characteristics in the pre-travel planning of tourists. The respondents in the on-site survey were asked to rate the importance of a pre-determined list of destination qualities that encompass both physical and social components. Certain factors that were deemed essential to the study were also added. Safety and security was viewed as the most important. Table 3.1.3 shows the factors in order of importance (total mean scores) as assessed by the respondents.



**Table 3.2.3 Pull factors for the study sites**

Destination Factors	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Min	Max	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound			
Safety and security	India	77	4.21	1.04	0.12	3.97	4.44	1	5
	Thailand	113	3.66	1.11	0.10	3.46	3.87	1	5
	Philippines	102	4.41	0.80	0.08	4.25	4.57	2	5
	Total	292	4.07	1.04	0.06	3.95	4.19	1	5
Affordability	India	80	3.46	1.15	0.13	3.21	3.72	1	5
	Thailand	126	3.86	0.96	0.09	3.69	4.03	1	5
	Philippines	105	4.04	1.03	0.10	3.84	4.24	1	5
	Total	311	3.82	1.05	0.06	3.70	3.93	1	5
Natural setting of the place (e.g. beaches, mountains)	India	79	3.84	1.07	0.12	3.60	4.07	1	5
	Thailand	126	3.67	1.14	0.10	3.47	3.88	1	5
	Philippines	105	3.86	1.18	0.12	3.63	4.09	1	5
	Total	310	3.78	1.14	0.06	3.65	3.90	1	5
Local culture	India	75	3.73	1.12	0.13	3.48	3.99	1	5
	Thailand	120	3.74	0.95	0.09	3.57	3.91	1	5
	Philippines	102	3.39	1.31	0.13	3.13	3.65	1	5
	Total	297	3.62	1.14	0.07	3.49	3.75	1	5
Climate at the destination (e.g. cooler, warmer)	India	78	3.38	1.14	0.13	3.13	3.64	1	5
	Thailand	125	3.45	1.33	0.12	3.21	3.68	1	5
	Philippines	104	3.53	1.25	0.12	3.29	3.77	1	5
	Total	307	3.46	1.25	0.07	3.32	3.60	1	5
Traditional treatments	India	76	3.75	1.19	0.14	3.48	4.02	1	5
	Thailand	120	3.70	1.07	0.10	3.51	3.89	1	5
	Philippines	105	2.85	1.27	0.12	2.60	3.09	1	5
	Total	301	3.42	1.24	0.07	3.27	3.56	1	5
Nature-based activities at the destination	India	79	3.67	1.12	0.13	3.42	3.92	1	5
	Thailand	126	3.06	1.01	0.09	2.88	3.23	1	5
	Philippines	105	3.22	1.13	0.11	3.01	3.44	1	5
	Total	310	3.27	1.10	0.06	3.15	3.39	1	5
Treatments other than the traditional	India	79	3.28	1.32	0.15	2.98	3.57	1	5
	Thailand	124	2.98	1.16	0.10	2.77	3.18	1	5
	Philippines	105	3.58	1.10	0.11	3.37	3.79	1	5
	Total	308	3.26	1.21	0.07	3.12	3.40	1	5
Popularity of the destination (i.e. to both international and domestic tourists)	India	78	3.28	1.15	0.13	3.02	3.54	1	5
	Thailand	119	2.98	1.15	0.11	2.77	3.19	1	5
	Philippines	101	3.49	1.19	0.12	3.25	3.72	1	5
	Total	298	3.23	1.18	0.07	3.10	3.37	1	5
Season/time of the year (e.g. winter)	India	77	3.13	1.22	0.14	2.85	3.41	1	5
	Thailand	124	3.01	1.34	0.12	2.77	3.25	1	5
	Philippines	104	3.56	1.24	0.12	3.32	3.80	1	5
	Total	305	3.23	1.29	0.07	3.08	3.37	1	5
Local cuisine	India	80	2.96	1.03	0.12	2.73	3.19	1	5
	Thailand	124	3.30	1.21	0.11	3.08	3.51	-1	5
	Philippines	102	3.14	1.30	0.13	2.88	3.39	1	5
	Total	306	3.16	1.20	0.07	3.02	3.29	-1	5
Proximity (i.e. nearer/farther from home)	India	78	2.97	1.31	0.15	2.68	3.27	1	5
	Thailand	125	2.78	1.22	0.11	2.56	2.99	1	5
	Philippines	105	3.56	1.13	0.11	3.34	3.78	1	5
	Total	308	3.09	1.26	0.07	2.95	3.24	1	5
Historical significance of the place	India	78	3.09	1.31	0.15	2.79	3.39	1	5
	Thailand	119	2.81	1.16	0.11	2.60	3.02	1	5
	Philippines	100	3.07	1.39	0.14	2.79	3.35	1	5
	Total	297	2.97	1.28	0.07	2.82	3.12	1	5
Luxurious lifestyle (e.g. lifestyle that	India	76	2.96	1.28	0.15	2.67	3.25	1	5
	Thailand	126	2.60	1.17	0.10	2.39	2.80	1	5

spa/resort/hotel is offering as part of its services)	Philippines	105	3.09	1.21	0.12	2.85	3.32	1	5
	Total	307	2.85	1.23	0.07	2.72	2.99	1	5
Non-nature based activities at the destination (e.g. shopping)	India	77	2.94	1.23	0.14	2.66	3.21	1	5
	Thailand	116	2.83	1.06	0.10	2.63	3.02	1	5
	Philippines	105	2.71	1.21	0.12	2.48	2.95	1	5
	Total	298	2.82	1.16	0.07	2.68	2.95	1	5
Name/brand of spa/hotel/resort	India	75	3.12	1.38	0.16	2.80	3.44	1	5
	Thailand	124	2.18	1.02	0.09	2.00	2.36	1	5
	Philippines	103	2.93	1.13	0.11	2.71	3.15	1	5
	Total	302	2.67	1.23	0.07	2.53	2.81	1	5

Safety and security was assessed as the most important factor that respondents considered when choosing a destination ( $\bar{x} = 4.07$ ). Weaver and Lawton (2010) proposed that the tourist market is sensitive to any suggestion of social or political instability within a destination. The importance of destination security stems from the immediacy of tourists' interaction with and consumption in the setting. It is therefore unsurprising to observe significant declines in tourist arrivals during periods of warfare or conflicts at a destination. However, beyond the forces of war, unrest and terrorism, the appeal of a destination is affected by the extent to which tourists perceive a destination to offer a high level of personal safety. Certain factors such as crime levels, susceptibility to natural disasters, unsafe drinking water and food, and prevalence of diseases may also dissuade tourists from visiting a destination.

Table 3.1.4 indicates a highly significant difference between location and safety/security as a destination factor ( $F = 16.26, p < .05$ ). The differences in mean scores for these destinations suggest that tourists in India and in the Philippines were more concerned about their safety and security than the tourists who participated in Thailand. The incident in Mumbai, which occurred before the data collection began in India, may have affected this result. A non-parametric correlation test between location and safety and security was also carried out. Results from Kendall's ( $r = .09, p = .04$ ) Pearson's ( $r = .10, p = .04$ ) non-parametric tests indicated significant differences between the two variables.

**Table 3.2.4 One-way ANOVA: Destination factors and the location of study**

<b>Destination Factors</b>		<b>Sum of Squares</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Mean Square</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
Safety and security	Between	32.03	2	16.01	16.26	.000
	Within	284.60	289	0.98		
	Total	316.63	291			
Affordability	Between	15.39	2	7.69	7.20	.001
	Within	329.16	308	1.07		
	Total	344.55	310			
Natural setting of the place (e.g. beaches, mountains)	Between	2.27	2	1.13	0.88	.418
	Within	397.38	307	1.29		
	Total	399.64	309			
Local culture	Between	8.03	2	4.02	3.16	.044
	Within	373.97	294	1.27		
	Total	382.00	296			
Climate at the destination (e.g. cooler, warmer)	Between	0.95	2	0.48	0.30	.739
	Within	479.29	304	1.58		
	Total	480.24	306			
Traditional treatments	Between	52.08	2	26.04	18.88	.000
	Within	411.01	298	1.38		
	Total	463.09	300			
Nature-based activities at the destination	Between	18.71	2	9.36	8.06	.000
	Within	356.54	307	1.16		
	Total	375.26	309			
Treatments other than the traditional	Between	20.86	2	10.43	7.43	.001
	Within	428.36	305	1.40		
	Total	449.22	307			
Popularity of the destination (i.e. to both international and domestic tourists)	Between	14.03	2	7.02	5.19	.006
	Within	398.99	295	1.35		
	Total	413.02	297			
Season/time of the year (e.g. winter)	Between	18.04	2	9.02	5.54	.004
	Within	491.35	302	1.63		
	Total	509.39	304			
Local cuisine	Between	5.74	2	2.87	2.00	.137
	Within	434.64	303	1.43		
	Total	440.38	305			
Proximity (i.e. nearer/farther from home)	Between	36.75	2	18.37	12.47	.000
	Within	449.52	305	1.47		
	Total	486.27	307			
Historical significance of the place	Between	5.29	2	2.65	1.62	.201
	Within	481.44	294	1.64		
	Total	486.73	296			
Luxurious lifestyle (e.g. lifestyle that spa/resort/hotel is offering as part of its services)	Between	14.94	2	7.47	5.10	.007
	Within	445.47	304	1.47		
	Total	460.40	306			
Non-nature based activities at the destination (e.g. shopping)	Between	2.19	2	1.10	0.82	.443
	Within	396.66	295	1.34		
	Total	398.85	297			
Name/brand of the spa/hotel/resort	Between	52.35	2	26.17	19.54	.000
	Within	400.54	299	1.34		
	Total	452.89	301			

The science of economics, specifically income and price, influence tourist behaviour (Bowen & Clarke, 2009). And indeed, setting the budget is an important task in choosing a destination. The affordability of holiday-making at a destination refers to the range of prices in which the tourist is willing to pay. The results in this study indicate that the affordability of visiting a destination was the second most important factor that tourists considered when choosing a place for a holiday ( $\bar{x} = 3.82$ ). The ANOVA results also show a significant difference in the responses of participants among locations ( $F = 7.2, p < .05$ ). It can be noted in Table 3.1.3 that tourists in the Philippines rated affordability more highly than tourists in India and Thailand.

In relation to these economic influences, three other destination characteristics were found to be significantly different in terms of location, but were the least important to the respondents overall. The geographical proximity of the place ( $F = 12.47, p < .05$ ), the luxurious lifestyle that the destination offered ( $F = 5.10, p < .05$ ), and the name or brand of the spa/hotel/resort that tourists preferred to stay at or get their spa experience from ( $F = 7.2, p < .05$ ). The geographical proximity of the destination is thought to be linked to income and price. For the respondents from the Philippines who rated this factor much higher than their counterparts from India and Thailand ( $\bar{x} = 3.56$  vs.  $\bar{x} = 2.97$  and  $2.78$ ), for example, were mostly domestic tourists ( $n = 82, 26.6\%$  of the total sample). An inference that can be drawn from these figures is related to affordability, and that this specific cohort of respondents could afford domestic than international holidays.

Another set of destination characteristics had significant differences in location. The local culture ( $\bar{x} = 3.62$ ) in the destination was a moderate important pull factor for the tourists, and had moderately significant differences in responses across locations ( $F = 3.16, p = .04$ ). The popularity of the place (to domestic and international markets,  $\bar{x} = 3.23, F = 5.19, p < .05$ ), the nature-based tourist activities at the destination ( $\bar{x} = 3.27, F = 8.06, p < .05$ ), and the respondents' time of visit ( $\bar{x} = 3.23, F = 5.54, p < .05$ ) had moderate importance to the participants whose responses had significant differences in terms of location.

In terms of spa-related pull factors, the availability or accessibility of traditional and non-traditional spa treatments were also moderately important to the respondents ( $\bar{x}$  = 3.42 and 3.26 respectively). It is thought that treatments which are traditional or indigenous to the destination provided a sense of novelty for the tourist spa-goers. The significant differences found across locations ( $F = 18.88, p < .05$ ). The perceptions on the importance of non-traditional treatments were also significantly different across locations ( $F = 10.43, p < .05$ ).

### **3.2.7.1 Spa and health experience**

As discussed earlier, the original target sample for this study consisted of individuals on a highly specific “health/spa holiday”. The subsequent changes in the study following the Mumbai attacks resulted in a very small proportion of the sample (4%) with this focused interest. These respondents were staying exclusively in health or spa resorts for the duration of their holiday. Despite the changes to the study design, new and rich data have been obtained from those who are not necessarily on a specific health or spa holiday.

The complexity of the respondents’ spa and health experiences was measured by the number of treatments used and the length of time of the whole experience, as well as the frequency of visits to a spa during the holiday. In this study, commonalities in spa treatments used by respondents were established. The study revealed that about 67 per cent of the sample had a full body massage, while nearly 14 per cent combined the treatment with other services such as sauna, foot spa/foot scrub or a facial treatment (Table 3.2.4). The popularity of massage in this study was somewhat predictable, considering that it is the most common treatment available in all spas, even in Ayurveda resorts and health centres in India.

Table 3.2.5 Spa treatments used by respondents

Treatments/Services	N	%
Full body massage only	214	67.1
Massage + sauna	15	4.7
Massage + foot spa/foot scrub	9	2.8
Massage + facial	20	6.3
Facial only	11	3.4
Foot spa/scrub only	4	1.3
More than 2 treatments (including but not limited to the abovementioned treatments)	30	9.4
No answer	16	5
<i>Total</i>	<i>319</i>	<i>100</i>

A full body massage ranges from 45 minutes to about two hours, where oils and sometimes aromatic essences are used. Thai massage is an exception since it is meant to be a dry treatment. Shorter massages are for the neck, back and legs, which range from 10-45 minutes. The other treatments such as sauna, facial, foot spa/foot scrub are usually combined with a full body massage. Additional or alternate treatments experienced by respondents were body wraps, body scrubs, manicure and pedicure, which were also complementary to a whole body massage.

### 3.2.8 Travel motives: Test of normality

Several preliminary statistical procedures are required to establish the credibility of the motive data for multivariate analysis. These included testing for the normality of the data, and data distribution including skewness. The normality of the motive clusters were tested using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov (K-S) and the Shapiro-Wilk tests. The K-S test was used to see if the distribution of scores significantly differs from a normal distribution. It is a general assumption in normality tests that if the K-S test is significant ( $p < .05$ ), then the scores are reliably different from a normal distribution. Similarly, the Shapiro-Wilk test also explores the distribution of scores, but has more power to detect difference from normality (Field, 2009). The percentages on the motive clusters are presented on Table 3.2.6, and reveals that all motives were significantly non-normal. This result is likely to reflect the negatively skewed distribution of scores in all motives. It may also be a reflection of mixed distributions amongst the motives; some distributions are leptokurtic (also known as positive kurtosis, i.e. *novelty, escape/relax, strengthening and securing relationships, nature, self-development, stimulation, self-actualization, isolation and health*), while some are platykurtic

(negative kurtosis, i.e. *autonomy, personal development, nostalgia, romance and recognition*). The subsequent interpretation of the data in this study is therefore guided by these features of the distributions, including the generally positive response reported on most dimensions.

**Table 3.2.6 Normality tests of motives**

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Novelty	.152	302	.000	.917	302	.000
Escape/Relax	.110	302	.000	.921	302	.000
Strengthen Relationships	.094	302	.000	.962	302	.000
Autonomy	.120	302	.000	.946	302	.000
Nature	.109	302	.000	.936	302	.000
Self-development (host-site involvement)	.085	302	.000	.968	302	.000
Stimulation	.076	302	.000	.974	302	.000
Self-development (personal development)	.081	302	.000	.965	302	.000
Security in relationships	.074	302	.000	.975	302	.000
Self-actualization	.098	302	.000	.956	302	.000
Isolation	.105	302	.000	.958	302	.000
Nostalgia	.160	302	.000	.932	302	.000
Romance	.151	302	.000	.936	302	.000
Recognition	.092	302	.000	.974	302	.000
Health	.183	302	.000	.896	302	.000

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

### 3.2.9 Health & the TCP

One of the implicit objectives of this study is concerned with locating the importance of health motives among other traveller motives. As this study primarily aims at integrating health into the TCP in the light of Asian experiences, testing the TCP model involves taking all the existing motivational factors which represent a 14-dimensional space of travel motivation (Pearce & Lee, 2005). The items comprising the original factors were summarised and mean scores for the factors computed. Table 3.1.6 provides these mean factor scores and presents the mean scores for the newly defined health “factor” in this context. A designation of very important, moderately important and less important bands of scores was employed and follows the substantive levels of importance scores used in the original formulations of the TCP work.

Table 3.2.7 Motive factors and their mean scores

Motive Factor	Level of importance	Cases (n)	Mean
Escape/relax	Very important (Core)	310	4.23
Novelty		311	4.19
Nature	Moderately important (Middle layer)	309	3.79
Self-actualization		307	3.79
<b>HEALTH</b>		<b>306</b>	<b>3.75</b>
Isolation		307	3.74
Self-development (host-site involvement)		310	3.69
Personal development		310	3.67
Stimulation		311	3.63
Strengthen relationships		309	3.59
Secure relationships		311	3.58
Autonomy		308	3.50
Nostalgia	Less important (Outer layer)	307	3.17
Romance		304	3.00
Recognition		307	2.93

As in the original model, the most important travel motives identified in this study were *novelty* and *escape/relaxation*. The items which comprised these score included *resting and relaxing* (mean = 4.42), *giving my mind a rest* (4.33), *getting away from everyday psychological stress/pressure* (4.31), *having fun* (4.25), and *experiencing something different* (4.22). All the novelty and escape/relax-related statements had a mean of four and above. Interestingly, however, the motives of strengthening and securing relationships, a core motive in the original study, were rated amongst the moderately important motives.

Health as a brand new set of travel motivation items added to the model was rated as moderately important in terms of mean scores. The mean scores of health in relation to nature, self-actualization and isolation can be noted as very close. Nature (*viewing the scenery and being close to nature* = 3.85) can be linked to a certain degree of relaxation and escape. Although seemingly isolated from their original factors, the other three most important motivational statements: *experiencing different cultures* (4.08), *feeling inner harmony/peace* (4.01), and *experiencing the peace and calm* (4.03), which reflect host-site involvement, self-actualization and isolation motivation factors respectively are likewise related to the core motives, hence also associated with health. Experiencing different cultures, for instance, may be linked to a degree of novelty. Similarly,



experiencing inner harmony and/or peace and calm of the place contribute to one's relaxation or their perception of escape.

The pursuit of health, that is *to improve health* (3.79) or to simply *maintain health* (3.71), is the third most important composite motive as conceived in this study in terms of mean scores (3.75). The relationship between health and the core motives identified previously is supported by the literature (Coleman & Iso-Ahola, 1993; Iso-Ahola, 1997; Patterson & Pan, 2007; Stanton-Rich & Iso-Ahola, 1998). Getting away from routine, responsibilities and stress is a key travel motivation (Iso-Ahola, 1982, 1983; Mannell & Iso-Ahola, 1987). Escape through leisure activities (e.g. travelling and/or using spa services/treatments) buffer the adverse consequences of stress on health (Coleman & Iso-Ahola, 1993; Iso-Ahola, 1997; Stanton-Rich & Iso-Ahola, 1998). Escape and relief from stress is indeed a path to relaxation, which is an essential physiological need to be able to meet higher level needs as underpinned in Maslow's (1954, 1970) hierarchy of needs.

The less important motives were *nostalgia*, *romance* and *recognition*. The ratings of the least important motivational statements were *leading others* (2.69), *being recognised by other people* (2.81), *having others know that I have been there* (2.92), and *showing others I can do it* (2.99) – all of which reflect the recognition motive. Even though these motives were also the least important in Pearce and Lee's work, it is rather intriguing that ego-enhancement or recognition has been noted as an important motive for travelling (Dann, 1977). It is also noteworthy that Schutte and Ciarlante's (1998) Asian equivalent of Maslow's hierarchy of needs suggest that status and admiration which are socially directed needs are the two highest level needs, in place of self-actualization and esteem (Schutte & Ciarlante, 1998). Several explanations of these findings may be offered. There may be an unwillingness to admit to status motives, such motives may be less important than is claimed or status motives may be important in select domains of Asian experience but less so in the South East Asian holiday context. The level of data obtained in this study do not afford a full explanation of this topic but it can be registered here as of further academic and applied interest (cf. De Botton, 2005). One suggestion here is that travel status, as reported in the works by de Botton is not yet well defined within the Asian spa destinations considered.

### 3.2.9.1 Travel Experience

In order to provide core information relevant to the fourth aim of the study related to travel experience, specific computations of scores from the data obtained were undertaken. To determine the respondents' travel experience, they were asked how many times they have travelled “*within*” and “*out*” of their usual country of residence. The options in the survey were assigned the following values:

- 0 = Never (*inexperienced*)
- 1 = 1-4 times
- 2 = 5-10 times
- 3 = more than 10 times (*very experienced*).

A standardized variable (termed the *travel experience score* (TES) in this study) which combines the respondents' domestic and international travel experiences was created on SPSS. With the assumption that international travel is arguably twice as important to experience levels as domestic travel (Pearce, 2005), both travel experiences were included in a computation which resulted in a lowest possible score of zero (*no experience at all*) and a highest possible score of nine (*very experienced*). The Travel Experience Score (TES) was calculated as the sum of domestic travel activity added to the international travel activity weighted by a factor of 2. Scores of 0-3 were *low* (n = 130); scores of 4-6 were *moderate* (n = 87); and, scores of 7-9 were *high* (n = 88). Using the 9-point scale of travel experience, three different variables were again created. The new variables had two, three and four levels of travel experience (Table 3.1.8). Each motive cluster was analysed using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) against these new variables.

Table 3.2.8 The travel experience score (TES)

2-Level Travel Experience	3-Level Travel Experience	4-Level Travel Experience
0 to 4 = Low 5 to 9 = High	0 to 3 = Low 4 to 6 = Moderate 7 to 9 = High	0 = No experience 1 to 3 = Low 4 to 6 = Moderate 7 to 9 = High

Table 3.2.9 Different levels of travel experience

Travel Experience	2-level		3-level		4-level	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
No Experience	--	--	--	--	12	3.9
Low	158	51.8	130	42.6	118	38.7
Moderate	--	--	87	28.5	88	28.9
High	147	48.2	88	28.9	87	28.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>305</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>305</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>305</b>	<b>100</b>

The four-level travel experience scheme was not chosen because about 4 per cent of respondents were segmented as no travel experience. It was considered that such a small percentage of the sample is best merged with the low experience cohort instead. The expansion of the travel experiences measure from two to three levels provides a more differentiated testing of the TCP than the two-levels reported in the previous work. This development is a partial response to observations by Hsu and Huang (2008) that further testing of the levels of experience is desirable in the development of the TCP.

As a preliminary comment to the reporting of the results in this study, it should be noted that age was disregarded as a variable in the overall travel experience. While this is seen as another deviation from the original study, it serves as a way of customising the TCP model in this project. Although age is an important demographic variable that is traditionally used in studying tourist behaviour and market segmentation (March & Woodside, 2005; Swarbrooke & Horner, 2007), it is also reported to be an unreliable predictor of travel experience, particularly in developing Asian countries (Kim, et al., 1996).

The relationships among the respondents' travel experience, and the importance scores for the motive factors were analysed (Figure 3.1.5). The core motives novelty and escape are always regarded as very important regardless of one's travel experience. Similarly, the most peripheral motives – nostalgia, romance and recognition – are less important among the three travel experience cohorts. The mid-layer motives are perceived in varying degrees. The diagram explicitly suggests that the more inexperienced travellers perceive more motives as more important. A premise that could be offered is that there is an emerging tendency in motivation research for inexperienced travellers to see all motives as important compared to their more

experienced counterparts. That is a lack of travel experience is tantamount to a greater degree of curiosity, excitement and uncertainty about what matters. *Strengthening and securing relationships, personal development, self-actualization, isolation and health* exhibit similar patterns suggesting that they are more important to less experienced travellers than they are to more experienced travellers. *Nostalgia* and *recognition* show the same format, except that these factors are in the outer layer of the model. These findings are consistent with the results reported by Pearce and Lee (2005) who also suggested that with greater travel experience, tourists develop a more discriminating and less inclusive motivational profile.

One pattern of motives that is distinct is that of health. For this composite set of items, (improving and maintaining one's health), the three levels of travel experience are spread out almost equally across the three layers of importance. Improving and maintaining one's health are not as important to experienced travellers as they are to less experienced travellers. This suggests that the importance of health as a motive cluster diminishes as one gains more travel experience.

Overall, three key motivational patterns have been identified in terms of importance and travel experience. The prevailing pattern depicts the importance of the motivational factors as one gains more travel experience. This finding operates across all the levels of motive (core, middle and outer layer) of the TCP approach. These patterns are communicated in Figure 3.2.5 as symbols attached to the motives along the x-axis of the figure. The patterns are: 1) *the triangle pattern motives* are those that become less important with increased travel experience; 2) *the inverted triangle pattern motives* are those that become more important with increased travel experience; and, 3) *the square pattern motives* are those that are more likely to remain steady or fluctuate in importance with increased travel experience. These key motivational patterns suggest that as tourists gain travel experience over time there is an effect on the perceived importance of their travel motives.

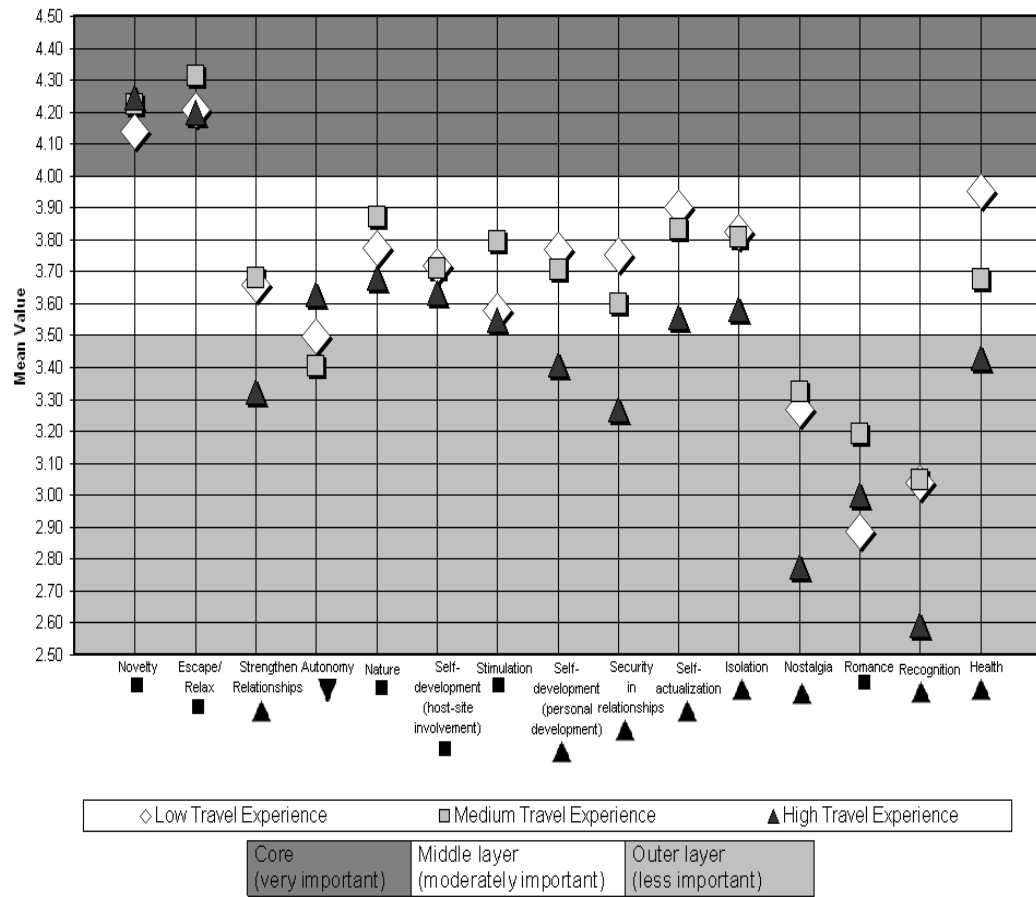


Figure 3.2.5 Levels of travel experience and motivational patterns

**CHAPTER 3 (Part 2)**  
***Travel & Spa-Going Career Patterns***

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**3.3 ONLINE SURVEY: RESEARCH AIMS, DATA AND METHODS**

***3.3.1 Research gaps and objectives***

The specific Study 2 objectives that will be addressed in this section are the following:

1. To further profile tourist spa-goers in South East Asia in terms of demographic information, travel and spa-going motivations and experiences;
2. To test the flexibility of the TCP theory by:
  - a. measuring not only travel motives, but also spa-going motives;
  - b. incorporating another motivational dimension to the model;
  - c. expanding travel experience levels; and,
  - d. applying the modified model in tourists' spa-going context;
3. To explore motivational patterns between travelling and spa-going using the TCP model;

***3.3.2 The online survey: Rationale, sampling and limitations***

Based on the results of the initial analysis of Study 1, the basic framework for the web-based survey was created. It was realized that the use of the TCP in a different geographical location and an addition of a 15<sup>th</sup> motive factor can be explored further. The six-part online questionnaire (Appendix B) is therefore two-dimensional in terms of the TCP; it not only explores travel motivation, but also investigates the drivers that predispose tourists to visit spas and purchase treatments. The six main parts are: 1) pre-travel spa plans; 2) the most recent spa experience in South East Asia; 3) travel and spa-going motivation; 4) post-spa experience; 5) previous spa and travel experience; and, 6) basic profiling information.

The advantages of collecting survey data via the worldwide web have been well-documented. The elimination of printing, postage and data entry make web-based surveys inexpensive. Substantial improvement in response speed over traditional mail surveys is also reported (Bachmann, Elfrink, & Vazzara, 1996; Dillman, 2000; Fricker & Schonlau, 2002; Mehta & Sivada, 1995). Also in today's fast-paced world, survey

timeliness is emphasised. Hence, another advantage of the online survey is that it provides a ready access across time zones and geographic boundaries.

This method of data collection, however, also has its disadvantages. Appraisers of online surveys point out coverage error as the most common shortcoming of online surveys. In addition, data quality is another potential weakness of this method. Data quality is usually measured by the number of respondents with missing items or the percentage of missing items (Fricker & Schonlau, 2002). Further, Fricker and Schonlau (2002) also identified sampling error as a weakness in a web-based survey. Nonetheless, they also claim that sampling issues are generally the same for conventional surveys, and that the ubiquity of the internet makes it easier to access a larger sample.

Having considered its advantages and disadvantages, a web-based survey was chosen over the conventional survey methods mainly because it eliminated the need for the researcher to travel widely. The approach is therefore cheaper, more convenient and more practical. Couper (2000) distinguished between several types of probability and non-probability web surveys (cf. Manfreda & Vehovar, 2008). For this study, the online survey is classified as an *unrestricted self-selected non-probability survey*. Given the type of sampling employed in this study, it is hence important to comment that the solicitation approach, i.e. the methods of contacting and inviting the respondents to participate is distinguished as *non-list based* or *web surveys with general invitations*. Contrary to the *list-based web surveys* where individual invitations to units from a list are used, the non-list web surveys involve no list of potential participants prior to the survey. A general request for participation is published, either on the internet or in other media (Manfreda & Vehovar, 2008). No generalization can therefore be made beyond the sample that participated in the study. Manfred and Vehovar likened this type of survey to polls where questionnaires are printed in newspapers/magazines and readers are asked to return the completed forms. Appraisers of online surveys also warn, however, that the use of general invitations in non-list based surveys (i.e. invitations on websites or in printed media) often have little success (Manfreda & Vehovar, 2008).

Table 3.3.1 **Types of probability in web-surveys**  
(Manfreda & Vehovar, 2008)

<b>A. Probability Web Surveys</b>	<b>Rationale/Where implemented</b>
List-based surveys of high coverage populations	Samples of students, members of organisations or associations, employees, clients, which all can access the Internet or other technology
Surveys on probability pre-recruited lists or panels of Internet users	Internet users that were pre-recruited with another probability sampling method (e. g. telephone survey)
Surveys on probability panels of the general population	Samples from panels of the general population that are not only pre-recruited with a probability sampling method, but are also given hardware and software equipment.
Mixed-mode survey designs	Respondents can be given the opportunity to choose a web questionnaire among the available survey modes; intended to reduce respondents' burden, decrease survey costs or overcome the problem of non-coverage.
Intercept surveys	Systematic sampling is used to intercept visitors (target population) of a particular website;
<b>B. Non-probability Web Surveys</b>	<b>Rationale/Where implemented</b>
Web surveys using volunteer opt-in (access) panels	Commonly used in market research; Controlled selection of units from lists (obtained through participants' self-inclusion (opt-in) of panel participants is used for particular survey project; non-representative of any population
Web surveys using purchased lists (lists of email addresses purchased by a commercial provider)	Similar to volunteer opt-in panels
Unrestricted self-selected web surveys	Use open invitations on different websites, but also in online discussion groups and traditional media; usually have neither access restrictions nor control over multiple completions; non-representative of any population
Online polls	Also self-selection and non-representative of respondents

The online survey was launched in September 2010 and carried on until the end of February 2011. The criteria for the target respondents were outlined at the outset of the survey:

- Must be at least 18 years old;
- Must have had a spa experience while on a domestic/international trip in any South East Asian country in the last 18 months; and,
- Must know that:
  - The survey is completely voluntary;
  - The survey takes approximately 20 minutes to complete;
  - He/she may withdraw from the study at any time before submission of responses, as they are automatically processed upon submission; and,



- Any information the respondent provides will be recorded anonymously and will be kept confidential.

Although many of the respondents took more than 20 minutes to complete the survey, the average completion time was 16 minutes.

Given that the survey was aimed at a virtually global population, it was deemed that a snowball sampling effect would be advantageous. Hence, the survey link was posted on different sites such as spa businesses who were asked to add the link to their own websites. Additionally, the researcher's social networking sites (i.e. Facebook and Twitter) were used. Print advertising was considered as a medium for inviting potential respondents, and fliers (sample in Appendix C) were printed and sent out to spa businesses in Thailand and the Philippines. The fliers, which served as an invitation to the survey, contained the researcher's contact details and the survey link. As an incentive, the opportunity to win a spa treatment package of their choice (with applicable terms and conditions) was highlighted. The treatment incentive was used to lure the spa-goer to get a flier, while a raffle with a small prize was conducted to reward individuals who completed the survey. The invitation to join the non-compulsory raffle was presented at the end of the survey itself.

A total of 12 batches of fliers (1 batch = 100 fliers) were sent to the following:

- Philippines: 4 spa businesses, 3 freelance masseuses/masseurs
- Thailand: 2 spa businesses, 2 freelance masseuse/masseurs
- India: 1 Ayurveda centre

Each batch was marked with a special key code that respondents had to enter in the raffle field. The key code which corresponded to the source of the flier served as a monitoring scheme. It was helpful in identifying how many respondents used the flier as a source of the survey link. This information was deemed useful to document the distribution of fliers by any third party. Although about 14 per cent were identified to have used the fliers, it is hypothesised that a slightly higher percentage was also likely because the key code field was not a compulsory item. This means that it was likely for some flier-users to deliberately or subconsciously not enter the key code. The research was granted approval by the Human Ethics Committee at James Cook University.

### 3.3.3 The respondents

A total of 167 responses were collected, but only 137 (87%) were usable. As Table 3.2.2 shows, the sample was dominated by females (69.6%) which was expected among a spa-going population. It has been documented in several spa and wellness related studies that women comprise the majority of the spa-going population (GSS Report, 2008; 2010b; ISPA, 2008b; McNeil & Ragins, 2005; Monteson & Singer, 2004). In the sample, spa-going activity is most popular among those aged 20-40 years old, with 37.9 per cent of respondents in their 20's, and about 40 per cent of those in their 30's. About a quarter of the sample comprised individuals who were in professional or technical employment (25.8%). It is also notable in Fig. 3.2.1 that about 42% of the respondents live in the Philippines. Personal Facebook and Twitter links of the researcher may have been influential in stimulating responses from this location.

**Table 3.3.2 Demographic profiles of on-site survey respondents**

		<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Gender	Female	87	69.6
	Male	38	30.4
<b>Age Group</b>			
Age Group	18-20	6	4.5
	21-30	50	37.9
	31-40	53	40.1
	41-50	17	12.8
	51-60	5	3.8
	60+	1	0.8
<b>Occupation</b>			
Occupation	Homemaker	6	5
	Professional/technical	31	25.8
	Executive/administrator	15	12.5
	Labourer	1	0.8
	Middle management	23	19.2
	Sales/marketing	8	6.7
	Self-employed/ Business owner	11	9.2
	Clerical or service	1	0.8
	Retired	2	1.7
	Student	12	10
	Others	10	8.3

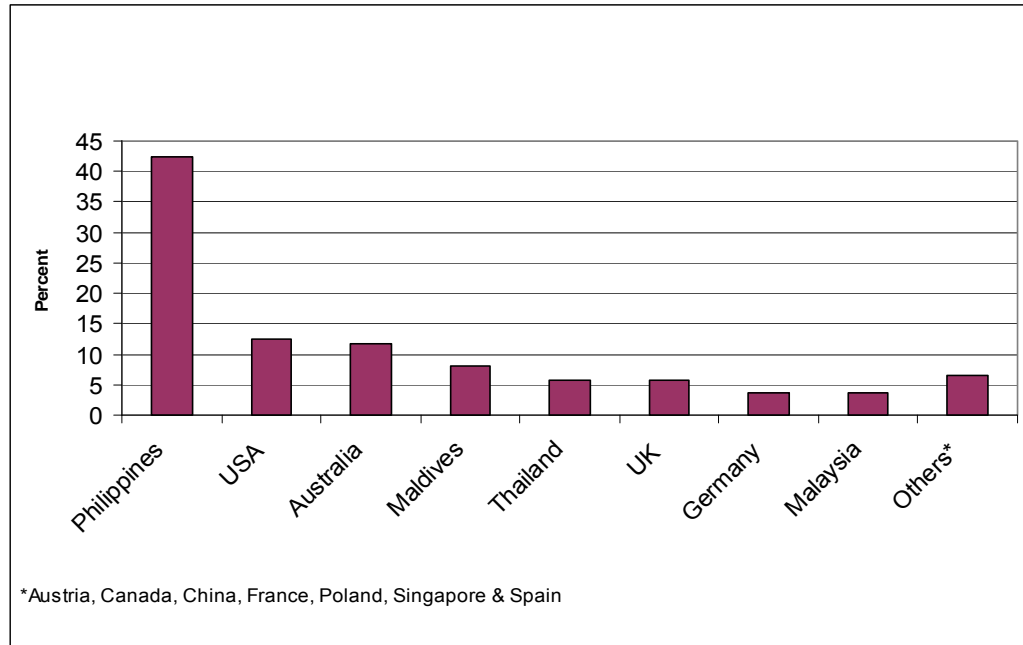


Figure 3.3.1 Online survey respondents' usual country of residence

### 3.3.4 The spa treatments

The most popular were non-water-based treatments, which constitute almost 79 per cent of cases, include massages, body scrubs and wraps (Table 3.2.3). This result was not surprising because the massage was also the most popular treatment as suggested by the results of the on-site survey. About 64 per cent of the respondents reported to have had about 1-2 treatments during their last Asian spa experience which was an average of 2-6 months ago (55.4%) at the time of survey. The rest had used about 3-5 spa treatments during a single visit. Interestingly, 66.4 per cent of the respondents reported that they received at least one traditional/indigenous treatment. Of this portion of the sample, about 63 per cent and about a quarter were satisfied and very satisfied respectively.

Table 3.3.3 **Spa treatments received by respondents**

Treatments	Responses		% of Cases
	N	%	
Facial treatments	47	17.3	34.3
Non-water-based body treatments (e.g. massage, body scrubs and wraps, )	108	39.7	78.8
Hand and feet treatments (e.g. hand/foot massage, hand/foot scrubs, manicure/pedicure, )	59	21.7	43.1
Heat and water therapies (e.g. balneotherapy, hydrotherapy, steam baths/sauna)	30	11.0	21.9
Ayurveda treatments (traditional)	20	7.4	14.6
Chinese medicinal treatments (traditional)	4	1.5	2.9
Other	4	1.5	2.9
Total	272	100.0	198.5

### 3.3.5 *The Spa-Going Plans*

One of the main parts of the online survey was focused on spa-going plans while the tourists were in the planning stages of their travel. This section relates to the respondents' spa-plans made during the pre-travel stage and documents how much of a priority the spa-going activity was for their travel. This section also reports tourists' satisfaction of the spa treatments which they have received. Further, the relationships between spa-going plans and the respondents' gender, age group and spa destination were tested. The influence of gender and choice of destination will be discussed in the latter part of this section.

#### 3.3.5.1 **Pre-travel Stage**

More than half of the sample had actually planned to visit spas even before travelling to the destination (54%). They were further asked to rate how much of a priority the spa-going activity was using a scale of 1 (very low) to 5 (very high). The spa-going activity was of medium (52.1%) to high (27.4%) priority. About 30 per cent of the respondents did not make plans, while the rest could not remember whether or not they had included spa-going activity during the pre-travel stage.

### 3.3.5.2 Factors influencing spa planning

Having noted that about half of the respondents have included spa-going activities before their travel is important. This planning variable was explored in relation to the respondents' gender, age and destination. ANOVA was performed to explore the relationship between spa-going plans and gender, age-group and destination. The results indicate a significant difference in responses between males and females ( $F = 11.17, p < .05$ ). Similarly, the variation between the respondents' choice of destination was also significant ( $F = 3.297, p < .05$ ). There were no significant differences among the age groups.

**Table 3.3.4 ANOVA: Gender, age group, destination and their relationship with spa-going plans**

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Gender	Between Groups (Combined)	5.990	1	5.990	11.165	.001
	Within Groups	65.453	122	.537		
	Total	71.444	123			
Destination	Between Groups (Combined)	15.832	10	1.583	3.297	.001
	Within Groups	60.040	125	.480		
	Total	75.875	135			
Age group	Between Groups (Combined)	7.033	8	.879	1.605	.130
	Within Groups	66.814	122	.548		
	Total	73.847	130			

In the next section of the chapter, travel motives as well as spa-going motives will be discussed. The initial segments provide a brief overview about how the TCP was modified in the online study and how the levels of travel experience was expanded. Further, in the discussion about spa-going motives, parallels will be drawn between the results of the study and a model developed by Smith and Kelly (2006b) and the Global Spa Summit of 2010.

### 3.3.6 The modified TCP: Travel motives of spa-going tourists

Because this study also aims to test the TCP theory, it has adopted all the 69 motivational statements from Pearce and Lee's (2005) work. As in Study 1, a 15<sup>th</sup>

dimension was added to the model. In this study, however, it does not only contain the element of health, but also of beauty and wellness. As mentioned earlier, the results of the initial statistical analysis of the data from the on-site survey helped framed the questions for the online survey. It was discovered that about 10 per cent of the sample in Study 1 used facial services at spas. Although it was only a modest percentage, curiosity as to whether tourist spa-goers also seek to enhance their physical beauty from spa visits prompted the use of additional items. The approach is consistent with the growing number of weight-loss and fitness programs that are included in spa services (ISPA, 2008c). Inspiration from the work of Mak and colleagues (2009) was also relevant. Their study of more than 300 Hong Kong-based spa-goers revealed that health and beauty was the fourth most important motive factor for the respondents. Relaxation and relief, escape, self-reward/indulgence were the top three spa-going factors in their study; friendship and kinship was the least. In the current study, the seven statements which make up the *beauty, health and wellness* factor include:

1. Seeking treatment for a medical condition;
2. Restoring my youth and vitality;
3. Enhancing my physical appearance;
4. Losing weight;
5. Seeking relief from some body pain;
6. Maintaining my overall health condition; and,
7. Improving my overall health condition.

The respondents were asked to rate the importance of all motive statements –the 69 items and the additional seven statements – on two dimensions. One is the trip or travel in general and the other is the spa-going activity. Exactly the same set of motives statements were provided for both sets of ratings. Hence, the statements related to beauty, health and wellness were also included in the section measuring travel motives. The results in the first section of the chapter (travel motives) are therefore subtly different from the findings in the next section (spa motives).

### **3.3.6.1 Parallels drawn between the TCP and the current study**

The results in this study closely mirror that of the original TCP study by Pearce and Lee (2005). In the original study, *novelty*, *escape/relax* and *strengthening relationship*

motivations were the most important motive factors in forming travel motivation. In this context, and as used in by Pearce and Lee, securing and strengthening relationships were two different factors. More specifically, *strengthening relationships* was about doing and enjoying things with companions and contacting family/friends who live elsewhere. On the other hand, *securing relationships* was about feeling personally safe and secure, being with respectful and considerate people and meeting people with similar interests. It also involved the feelings of belongingness.

Table 3.3.5 **Travel motive factors and their mean scores**

Trip Motive Factor	Level of importance	Cases (n)	Mean
Escape/Relax	Very important (Core)	137	4.47
Novelty		137	4.37
Strengthening Relationships		137	4.11
Nature	Moderately important (Middle layer)	137	4.08
Autonomy		134	3.90
Isolation		134	3.86
Stimulation		136	3.85
Self-Development (host-site involvement)		136	3.82
Personal Development		136	3.71
Self-Actualization		132	3.67
Securing Relationships		137	3.55
Nostalgia		132	3.42
Recognition	Less important (Outer layer)	132	3.19
Romance		132	3.08
Beauty, Health & Wellness		137	2.92

The least important factors in both current and original studies were recognition, romance and nostalgia. Beauty, health and wellness, the additional index in the model, was a less important motive in terms of overall travel. This result was unsurprising considering the different factors that may have influenced the overall travel such as gender, age group, travel party and then prime push and pull motives of the tourist. Unless the tourist is travelling chiefly for health or beauty reasons, the beauty-health-wellness factor appears not to be very important. Potentially an older citizen, although not travelling solely for health reasons, may consider this motivation factor more important than some others. In the current study, however, few respondents were over 50 years of age and constituted only five per cent of the sample. For younger age groups who were well-respected in the sample, seeking medical treatment, restoring youth and vitality and improving physical appearance do not emerge as priorities.

### 3.3.6.2 Travel motives and travel experience

In identifying the travel experience score of each respondent, the literature on index construction in social studies was explored. An index is defined by Miller and Salkind (2002) as one of a set of measures, with each composite index formed by combining simple indexes. Pearce's (2005) assumption that international travel (i.e. travel "outside" the usual country of residence) is arguably twice as important to experience levels as domestic travel (i.e. travel "within" the usual country of residence) is maintained in this study. The treatment of international travel as twice as important is an expedient heuristic. Therefore, the method that was performed in obtaining the TES in Study 1 was adopted for the current study. Each respondent's domestic and international travel experiences were combined and a standardized variable was created. To be able to draw parallels from these results and that from the on-site survey, the three-level travel experience scheme was chosen over a two or four-level experience approach. Again, the 9-point scale was created, and travel experience scores of 0-3 were *low* (n = 47, 35.61%); scores of 4-6 were *moderate* (n = 62, 49.97%); and, scores of 7-9 were *high* (n = 23, 17.42%) (Fig. 3.2.1)



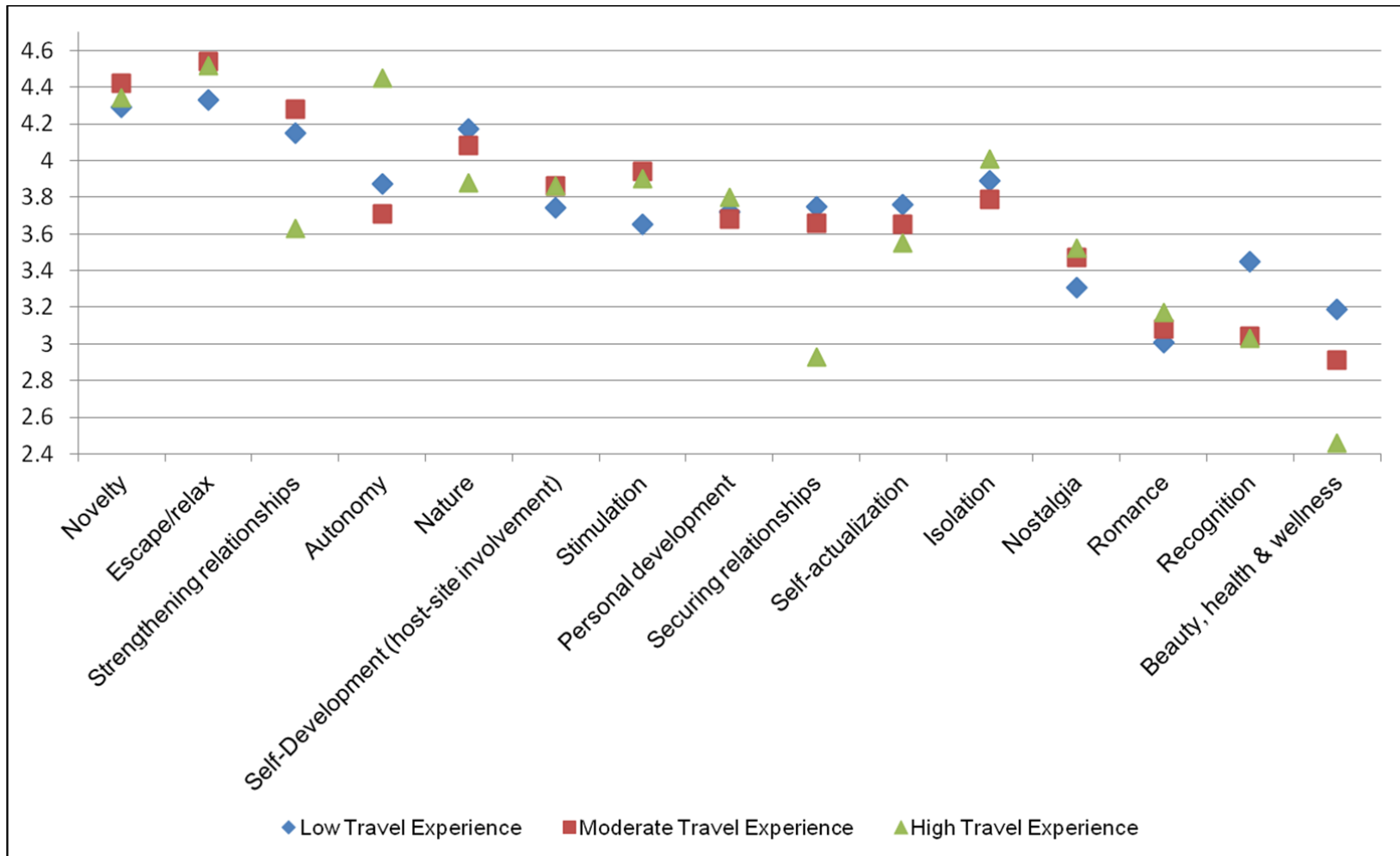


Figure 3.3.2 Levels of travel experience (online survey)

Although it has been argued that travel motivations are not a fixed part of a person's psychological profile and they change with one's travel experience, social context and life span (Pearce, 2005), the search for novelty and escape/relaxation remain dominant for nearly all respondents as the most important travel motives. The results in Fig. 3.2.2 suggest that these outcomes prevail regardless of one's travel experience. This observation can be linked to several seminal theories in tourist motivation. One link that can be established is to Dann's (1977) sociological contribution to tourist motivation, Dann's theory was based on two concepts: *anomie* and *ego-enhancement*. Anomie, he writes, is a push factor that "lies in the desire to transcend the feeling of isolation obtained in everyday life, where the tourist simply wishes 'get away from it all'" (p. 187). Even though notions of alienation or isolation can be easily attached to anomie, one can also derive the sense of a need to escape from the demands of one's daily life. Another connection that can be formed is that with Iso-Ahola's (1982, 1983, 1989) optimal arousal theory which posits that individuals seek different levels of stimulation but all fall between avoiding either boredom or over-stimulation.

Given these linkages, it is strongly maintained in this thesis that while travel motives may change over time, the need to search for novelty, to escape and to relax will endure as the core motives for travel. This contention is seen to be associated with the perspective that tourists travel to satisfy not a single but multiple motives. An underpinning force here is the inevitable mix of push and pull motives that influence one's travel decisions. The multi-motive approach in this context effectively emphasises that the TCP model does not just consider a person's single need, but recognises that travellers do seek to satisfy several needs at once.

### **3.3.7 Spa-going motives**

As stated in the earlier section, the motive items assessed for both general travel and spa-going were exactly the same. Although the same set of the motive statements were used, the analysis of these two strings of items was done separately. The set of results were treated independently, and in this section, only the spa-going motives will be discussed.

Table 3.3.6 Spa-going motive factors and their mean scores

Spa Motive Factor	Level of importance	Cases (n)	Mean
Escape/relax	Very important (Core)	137	4.27
Novelty		137	3.99
Isolation		134	3.80
Nature	Moderately important	137	3.52
Strengthening relationships		137	3.50
Beauty, health & wellness		137	3.42
Autonomy		134	3.32
Stimulation		136	3.26
Self-actualization		132	3.22
Securing relationships		137	3.12
Self-development (host-site involvement)		136	3.10
Personal development		136	3.06
Nostalgia	Less important (Outer layer)	132	3.04
Recognition		132	2.76
Romance		132	2.54

As expected, to *escape/relax* was a very important motive among spa going tourists. To be more specific, the statements “*resting and relaxing*” (4.53), “*giving my mind a rest*” (4.41) and “*getting away from every psychological stress/pressure*” (4.35) were the top three most important raw motives.

### 3.3.8 Previous Spa Experience

An important element in the TCP model is travel experience. In testing the theory, the adoption of a parallel approach was necessary to re-create the model in a more specific and much narrower context of the spa-going activity. In terms of their travel experience “within” and “out of” their usual country of residence in the past 12 months and five years, the respondents also reported their previous spa experiences. The participants were asked to report the frequency of any spa visit they had while they were travelling domestically and internationally.

A standardized variable which combines the respondents’ domestic and international spa experience was created. It is termed the *spa experience score* (SES) in this research. The total SES was computed, and resulted in a range of scores from 0 to 8. Scores of 0-2 were low (43.7%); scores of 3-5 were moderate (39.3%); and, scores of 6-8 were high

(17%) level of spa experience. In relation to the spa motives, the highest mean observed was *escape/relaxation* among: 1) *moderate-experience spa-goers* (m = 4.35); and, 2) *low-experience spa-goers* (m = 4.22). It was also noted that *novelty* was most important among the *moderately experienced* (m = 4.02) cohort than the others. *Beauty, health and wellness*, the new addition to the model, was important to *low-experience* (m = 3.81) and *moderately experienced spa goers* (m = 3.39).

Additionally, a spectrum based on the Global Spa Summit Report (2010b) and Smith and Kelly's (2006b) analysis of tourists' health and wellness segments was created as a template to provide a context and frame for the results of the current study (Table 3.2.x). This model can be applied to the above observations. Smith and Kelly (2006a, 2006b) suggested that health and wellness tourists can be defined by the amount of knowledge, the length of experience, the type of holiday users take and how the wellness experience influence their lifestyle upon returning home. They used the colour purple to depict the segmentation, hence using a spectrum from lilac (experimenters) to a deeper shade of purple (purists). To represent moderately-experienced spa-goers in this model, the researcher labelled the cohort "intermittent users" and they are represented by the colour lavender. The inspiration drawn from Smith and Kelly's work provided an additional framework to explore tourists' spa-going motivations interfaced with their spa experience. Table 3.2.7 provides core information for this initial classification of tourists and their spa experience in South East Asia.

Table 3.3.7 Health and wellness segments: Tourist spa goers

Based on the Global Spa Summit Report (2010b) and Smith and Kelly (2006b)

Table 1. Health & Wellness Segments: Tourist Spa-goers Based on the Global Spa Summit Report (2010) and Smith and Kelly (2006b)			
	<b>LOW SPA EXPERIENCE</b> Lilac (very light pinkish purple) <i>(Experimenters)</i>	<b>MODERATE SPA EXPERIENCE</b> <b>Lavender</b> (light purple) <i>(Intermittent User)</i>	<b>HIGH SPA EXPERIENCE</b> <b>Deep Purple</b> <i>(Purists)</i>
Tourists/ Spa-goers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Little prior knowledge/ practice</li> <li>• New experience</li> <li>• Self-contained/ one-off holiday</li> <li>• Unlikely/ may lead to integrative 'better living' upon return home</li> <li>• Seeks comfortable surroundings, guided instruction, scheduled programme</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sporadic/ occasional practitioner</li> <li>• Renewed/ lapsed/ motivational experience</li> <li>• May become regular holiday type</li> <li>• Likely to renew better living upon return home</li> <li>• Seeks a range of surroundings/ accommodation type</li> <li>• Requires some guidance and a choice of activity programming</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular practitioner</li> <li>• Continued/ relocated experience</li> <li>• Typical holiday choice</li> <li>• Reinforces and consolidates home-based lifestyle/ behaviour</li> <li>• Surroundings becomes less relevant than the quality of activity</li> <li>• Requires advanced instruction and space for self-directed practice</li> </ul>
Sex (Total)	43%	39.7%	17.4%
Female	67.3%	66.7%	76.2%
Male	32.7%	33.3%	23.8%
Age group			
18-25	15.8%	22.9%	18.2%
26-35	45.6%	58.3%	54.6%
36-45	24.5%	6.3%	13.6%
46-55	14.1%	10.5%	13.6%
56-60+	--	2%	--
Spa Experience Score	0-2 = 43.7%	3-5 = 39.3%	6-8 = 17%
<b>Motives</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Mean</b>
Novelty	3.96	3.81	4.29
Escape/ relax	4.26	4.13	4.65
Strengthening relationships	3.60	3.44	3.47
Autonomy	3.05	3.24	4.26
Nature	3.63	3.23	3.84
Self-development (host-site involvement)	2.84	3.15	3.65
Stimulation	3.05	3.25	3.65
Personal development	2.79	3.02	3.86
Securing relationships	3.17	2.96	3.39
Self-actualization	2.93	3.28	3.80
Isolation	3.48	3.90	4.32
Nostalgia	2.76	3.21	3.33
Romance	2.42	2.52	2.83
Recognition	2.64	2.63	3.29
Beauty, health and wellness	3.42	3.25	3.91

Overall, the results revealed that escape/relaxation is a very important motive among tourist spa-goers regardless of their experience. *Beauty, health and wellness* was a moderately important motive, but slightly more important among the highly experienced cohort. It was discovered in assessing the pattern of motives among spa-goers, even experienced ones, that core motives such as novelty still played a strong role in their motivational profile. Additionally for the most experienced spa goers, autonomy and isolation were substantial motivational considerations. For the less experienced spa-goers, strengthening relationships was a comparatively more important item in their motivational pattern than was the case for the experienced cohort. The findings in the analysis of tourists' spa going motives and previous spa experiences identified some motivational patterns which closely parallel the original TCP studies.

### ***3.3.9 The Spa-Going Career Pattern (SGCP): A new development***

The purpose of the TCP is to assess travel motivation while the SGCP developed here seeks to explore motives for spa-going. The current study has revealed new patterns in the motivational landscape. These findings can be developed in terms of a tourists' spa-going career pattern model. An extension of the TCP, it is proposed through the SGCP that spa-going tourists will show changing motivational patterns over their life stages, but most importantly with increasing travel and/or spa experience.

The original version of the TCP, that is the travel career ladder (TCL), was driven by two fundamental ideas. One concept was Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory and the other was Hughes' concept of career in leisure or tourism (Pearce, 1988; Pearce & Lee, 2005). In the context of the SGCP, the concept of a career in leisure is important in shaping this idea. In the light of the spectrum of tourist spa-goers presented in Table 3.2.7, it can be said that spa-going is indeed a career. Stebbin's conception of a career in leisure is a fundamental link in this discussion.

Stebbin (cf. 1982, 1992; 1997) has written about one's involvement in leisure, and classified it as serious or casual leisure. He defined serious leisure as "...the systematic pursuit of an amateur, hobbyist or volunteer activity that participants find so substantial

and interesting that, in the typical case, they launch themselves on a career centred on acquiring and expressing its special skills, knowledge and experience” (Stebbins, 1992). He identified serious leisure as having six main characteristics: career, perseverance, effort, unique ethos, identity and durable benefits including self-enrichment, self-expression, recreation, accomplishment, self-image, social interaction, belonging and self-actualization. By way of contrast, he describes casual leisure as “...immediately, intrinsically rewarding, relatively short-lived pleasurable activity requiring little or no special training to enjoy it” (Stebbins, 1997). More recently, he has added project leisure, which he considers to be the pursuit of a definable goal built around a time period to achieve a set of desired outcome. For example, building a garden fence is project leisure rather than being classified as serious or casual leisure (Stebbins, 2008).

Although one may argue that the “careers” of spa-going specialists or enthusiasts may be a little different because spa-going may be episodic and limited to occasional experiences spread over time, the concept of career can still be solidly attached to SGCP. It is more appropriate to argue that the spa-going activity is more of a casual than serious or project leisure, considering that it is very immediate, short-lived, pleasurable and does not require training. The distinct types of casual leisure, according to Stebbins (1997), include play, relaxation, passive entertainment, active entertainment, sociable conversation and sensory stimulation. Of these types, relaxation and sensory stimulation can be easily ascribed to spa-going activities. As discussed earlier, relaxation is a very important motive among tourist spa-goers. Sensory stimulation is a prime component of spa-treatments with the involvement of touch, different aromas and soothing ambience.

### 3.4 CHAPTER CONCLUSION

The travel motivation concept, particularly the TCP was the central theme in this two-part chapter. In the first study, travel motives were explored among tourists in India, Thailand and the Philippines by measuring the importance of push and pull motive factors. In analysing the latter, it was found that safety and security is the most important characteristic of a destination that tourists consider when planning to visit these countries. Other destination attributes such as affordability, and local culture were also important. Significant differences were also found between each of these factors and the country where the survey was conducted. The push factors, on the other hand, were explored using the TCP.

Two health-related statements were integrated in the TCP (about *improving* and *maintaining one's current health*). Health as a motive factor and the original 14 factors were rated by importance, and it was found that similar to the original work (Lee & Pearce, 2002, 2003; Pearce & Lee, 2005), escape, relaxation and novelty are the most important travel motives for the respondents. The less important motives include nostalgia, romance and recognition. The pursuit of health, which was the third most important compound motive as considered in this study in terms of mean scores, was found to be a moderately important motive. An achievement of the study was not only to integrate health in the TCP model, but also to assess the role of expanded levels of travel experience modifying the importance of health as a travel motive. It was discovered that pursuing health as a motive is not as important to experienced travellers as they are to less experienced travellers, hence the importance of health as a motive factor diminishes as one gains more travel experience.

In the second study which involved an online survey, not only were the travel motives measured by importance but also the spa-going motives. Similar to the first study, a motivational dimension constituting seven statements relating to *beauty, health and wellness* was incorporated to the TCP. For both travel and spa-going sets of motives, escape, relaxation and novelty were the most important motives. Unlike the health motive in the previous study, *beauty, health and wellness* factor was the least important travel motive for the respondents, but was a moderately important as a motive for spa-



goers. A visual representation of the mean scores of the three sets of motives from both studies is shown on Fig. 3.2.3.

Interesting patterns can be identified from the graph. One is the almost-homogenous pattern which indicates that the perceived importance given to the motives by the on-site survey respondents was higher than that by the online study participants, except for nature, securing relationships and self-actualization. Another pattern that is almost uniform is that of the spa-going motives which were rated lower than the travel motives in both studies. The escape/relaxation and isolation motives, however, were perceived to be more important as spa-going motives than as travel motives. Similarly, nature was a less important travel motive than a spa-going motive for the online survey respondents. A motive that has a distinct pattern is that of isolation, which was perceived to be a moderately important factor by the respondents in both studies, as shown by the closely-clustered responses by all participants.

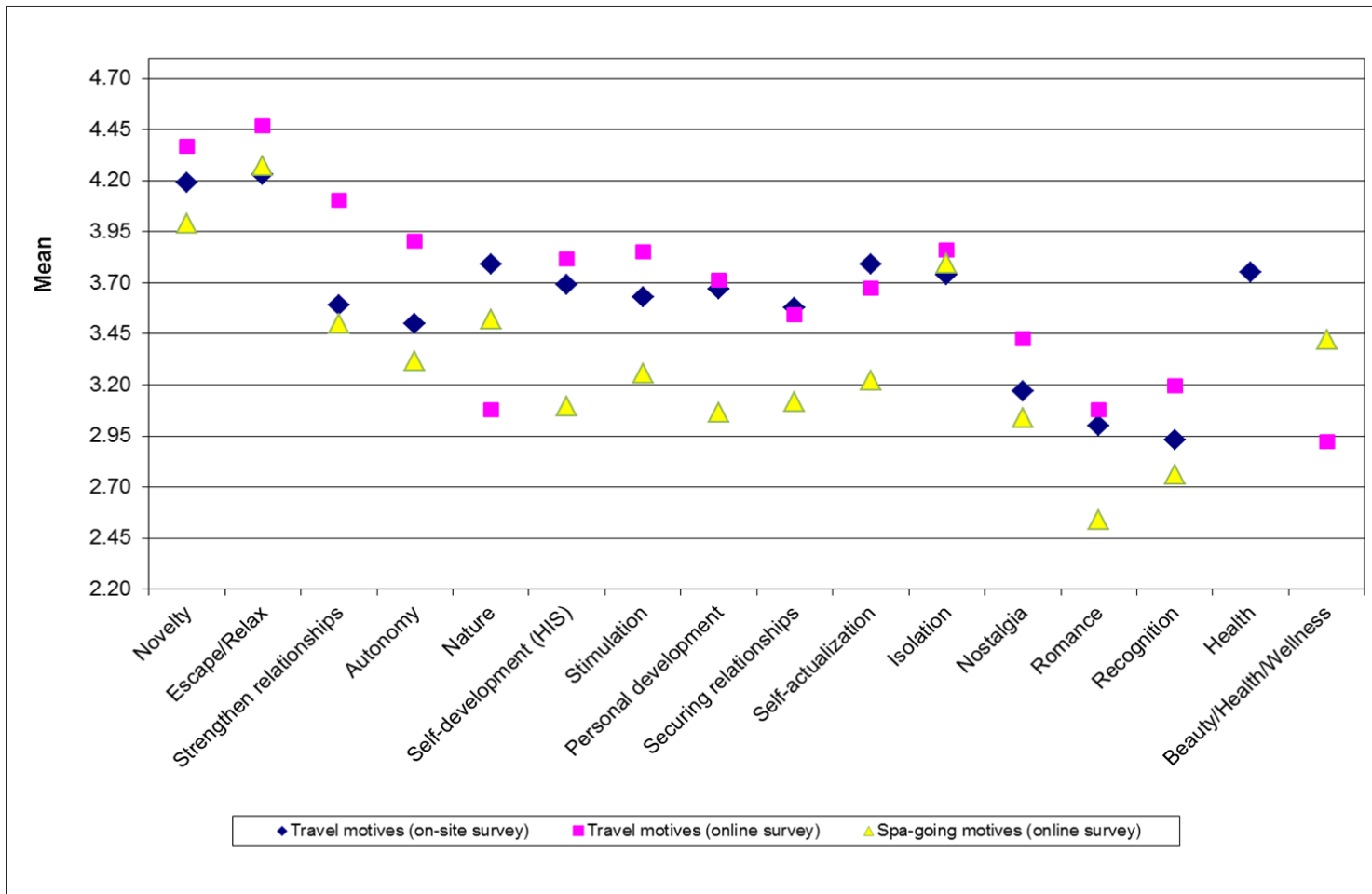


Figure 3.3.3 Comparison of travel and spa-going motives from the on-site and online surveys

### ***3.4.1 Requirements of a good tourist motivation theory***

The use of the TCP model as a framework for this research was an opportunity to challenge its dynamism and flexibility as a tourist motivation theory. Pearce and Lee (2005), the developers of this model, recognise a number of difficulties in the study of motivation including a very diverse human need and wants, cross-cultural differences and methodological difficulties (Bowen & Clarke, 2009, p. 96). Pearce (2005, p. 50) acknowledges the effort that other researchers and scholars make to meet the need to develop tourist motivation theories, but some approaches partially meet all the elements of a sound theory (Pearce, 1993, 2005). Table 3.2.8 shows these elements and how they were applied to this research.

Table 3.3.8 The key elements for a good tourist motivation theory and their application to the thesis

Element	Explanation	How it was used in the current research
The role of the theory	Must be able to integrate existing tourist needs, reorganize the needs and provide a new orientation for future research	Integrated “health” and “health, beauty and wellness” in the on-site and online surveys respectively.
The ownership and appeal of the theory	Must appeal to specialist researchers, be useful in tourism industry settings and credible to marketers and consumers	Spa/wellness tourism is very narrow form of tourism (special interest tourism) and the study was limited to the South East Asian spa context.
Ease of communication	Must be relatively easy to explain to potential users and be universal (not country specific) in its application	It has been used in South East Asia, which is a geographical location different from the previous studies (South Korea and Australia)
Ability to measure travel motivation	Must be amenable to empirical study. The ideas can be translated into questions and responses for assessment purposes	Use of a similar scale to measure travel and spa motivation
A multi-motive vs. single-trait approach	Must consider the view that travellers may seek to satisfy several needs at once. Must be able to model the pattern of traveller needs, not just consider one need	Integration of a new set of motive factor to the TCP in each study
A dynamic vs. snapshot approach	Must recognise that both individuals and societies change over time. Must be able to consider or model the changes that are taking place continuously in tourism.	Integration of new set of motive factor to measure travel and spa-going motives in South East Asia
The roles of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation	Must be able to consider that travellers are variously motivated by intrinsic, self-satisfying goals and at other times motivated by extrinsic, socially controlled rewards (e.g. others’ opinions)	It is recognised that destination-based pull factors including the marketing of spa businesses contribute to the formation of tourists’ push factors (e.g. in Fig. 3.2.3 where nature and beauty, health and wellness motives were perceived to be more important as spa motives than travel motives.

### ***3.4.2 The SGCP and its future***

The spa-going career pattern is thought of as a unique product resulting from the use of a modified version of the TCP and applied in the Asian spa tourism context. As discussed in the second part of this chapter, Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory and Hughes' idea of career in leisure and tourism were the driving forces in the development of the TCP as a conceptual scheme. In the context of the SGCP, the Hughes' concept of career is a vital influence, considering that spa-goers can indeed be classified by their experience, as if they are spa-going careers. Arguably, the spa-going enthusiasts experience or "careers" may be slightly dissimilar because spa-going may be limited to occasional experiences spread over time. It is therefore suggested that spa-going activities are more of a casual leisure due to their very immediate, short-lived and pleasurable nature that requires no training.

The use of the SGCP as a potential tool for measuring spa-going motives in future research can be considered in other geographical locations. Similarly, it can be modified further for better applicability and analysis. The statements related to beauty, health and wellness may be worded differently to suit the context of the study being undertaken. Further, additional statements may also be added to ensure that the more dimensions of this motive cluster is captured for exploration.

# CHAPTER 4

## Flow in spa experiences

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*“If our lives are dominated by a search of happiness, then perhaps few activities reveal as much about the dynamics of this quest – in all its ardour and paradoxes – than our travels. They express, however inarticulately, an understanding of what life might be about, outside of the constraints of work and of the struggle for survival.”*

**Alain De Botton**  
*Art of Travel (2002, p. 9)*

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### Chapter Structure

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- 4.1 INTRODUCTION
  - 4.2 A REVIEW OF THE FLOW MODEL AND THE FLOW STATE SCALES
  - 4.3 MEASURING FLOW IN TOURIST EXPERIENCES
  - 4.4 THE FSS-2 AND SPA EXPERIENCES
  - 4.5 RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES, AIMS AND METHODOLOGY
    - 4.5.1 The survey: a review of aims, method and tools
    - 4.5.2 The respondent profile
  - 4.6 THE FLOW DIMENSIONS AND SPA EXPERIENCES
    - 4.6.1 The dimensions of flow from spa experiences
    - 4.6.2 Flow and spa treatments
    - 4.6.3 Gender, usual place of residence and the dimensions of flow
  - 4.7 FLOW SCALES IN A NON-ACTIVE VS. ACTIVE PHYSICAL SETTING
    - 4.7.1 Overall flow
    - 4.7.2 Challenge-skill balance
    - 4.7.3 Action-awareness merging
    - 4.7.4 Clear goals and unambiguous feedback
    - 4.7.5 Concentration and control
    - 4.7.6 Loss of self-consciousness
    - 4.7.7 Time transformation
    - 4.7.8 Autotelic experience
  - 4.8 REVIEW OF AIMS AND RELATED CHALLENGES
    - 4.8.1 Spa experience and survey time interval
    - 4.8.2 Length and “repetition of questions”
    - 4.8.3 Language barriers
  - 4.9 CHAPTER CONCLUSION
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### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

As has been emphasised in the first two chapters, the linkage between tourism and positive psychology is central to this research. In this chapter, the concept of flow will be explored. The use of this concept in tourist-related experience such as spa-going

activity bridges some gaps in the literature in terms of the meshing of tourism and positive psychology as interrelated fields of study.

The findings presented in this chapter were extracted from the on-site survey (Study 1) conducted between December 2008 and May 2009 in India, Thailand and the Philippines. A detailed discussion of the study's rationale and methods has been presented in Chapter 3 (Part One). The section on flow was the first part of the questionnaire.

In brief, this chapter presents a review of the flow model and provides a further introduction to the flow state scales. The broad parameters of this link were established in the literature review in Chapter 2. A discussion about the applicability of the flow construct in tourist experiences will also be offered. The discussion incorporates Cohen's (1972, 1979) modes of experience and links these classifications to the spa-going activity. In this study, the Flow State Scale-2 (FSS-2) was used to measure flow among spa-going tourists. A brief rationale concerning the use of the FSS-2 in the study will be discussed. Further, the study objectives arising from observed gaps in the literature in relation to the flow scale are identified. A brief discussion on how well the FSS-2 applies to tourist-related activity is presented.

More specifically, the study examines how tourist spa-goers in India, Thailand and the Philippines have experienced flow in the context of their spa experiences. The mean scores of the dimensions of flow and of overall flow yielded in this study will be compared with the flow mean scores of activities in active settings generated from previous research. Finally, the conclusion section highlights the findings and offers a discussion of the challenges that the researcher has encountered by using the FSS-2 in the research.

## **4.2 A REVIEW OF THE FLOW MODEL AND THE FLOW STATE SCALES**

Flow, as an optimal psychological state, denotes special times when things seem to come together for the individual in a particular setting; it is often associated with high levels of performance and a very positive experience (Jackson & Eklund, 2004). The

concept of *flow* was introduced by Csikszentmihalyi (1975) who defined it as “an optimal experience that stems from people’s perceptions of challenges and skills in given situations” (Ellis, et al., 1994). Flow occurs when the individual is completely engrossed in a challenging activity that does not necessarily provoke too much stress. The experience per se is highly rewarding, hence flow is a satisfying state (Filep, 2008).

As discussed in Chapter 2, the concept of flow is an optimal physical state which is connected with high achievement and positive experiences. There are nine elements of enjoyment (Mihalyi Csikszentmihalyi, 1990) or dimensions of flow (Jackson & Marsh, 1996), which embody the state of flow. One dimension refers to one’s perceived ability to balance skills and challenge, and another refers to one’s deep immersion in the activity that leads to spontaneity of actions. In these circumstances, it is suggested that action and awareness of one’s actions are seamless. Clear goals and unambiguous feedback are about: a) well-defined expectations of an individual, and b) clear-cut and rapid feedback about individual performance. Total concentration and a sense of control on the activity or task also characterise flow. The elimination of self-consciousness while being completely engrossed in the activity and not worrying about how others think of one’s actions are also seen as contributing to enjoyment. In temporal terms, it has been suggested in the literature that a person who experiences flow is likely to have a distorted perception of time, that is either hours seem to pass like minutes, or a minute seems to last like infinity. Finally, the experience is defined as *autotelic*, a state characterised by the individual perceiving the activity as intrinsically rewarding and seeking to repeat the behaviour or experience even if he/she does not have to.

These dimensions of flow are often measured using different scales, as discussed in Chapter 2. The Dispositional Flow Scale (DFS-2) and the Flow State Scale-2 (FSS-2), also named *Activity Experience Scale* and *Event Experience Scale* respectively, are self-report instruments developed by Jackson and Eklund (Jackson & Eklund, 2004), who suggested that such names reflect what is being assessed in general without biasing respondents according to their understanding of the term flow (Jackson & Eklund, 2004). In this study, the FSS-2 was used to measure flow in spa experiences. In the following sections, the application of the concept of flow in spa settings and the rationale for using the FSS-2 in this research will be discussed.



### 4.3 MEASURING FLOW IN TOURIST EXPERIENCES

The flow construct has been successfully applied to some kinds of tourist experiences (Filep, 2008). The basis for this application lies in the relevance of flow to both cultural and physical activities. In discussing Bredasley's (1982) notion of aesthetic experience in Chapter 2, it was noted that an individual's concentration, time transformation and loss of self-consciousness characterise flow. Tourism activities include many aesthetic experiences and observing flow for these kinds of interactions seems to be appropriate. Importantly and additionally, active discovery (challenge-skills balance and sense of control) and wholeness (the clear goals and unambiguous feedback) typify flow (Filep, 2008). Again, the applicability of flow to tourism experiences is warranted.

Another concept that can be retraced back to Chapter 2 is Cohen's (1996) phenomenology of tourist experience, which posits that tourist experience ranges from the quest for simple pleasures to the pursuit of a spiritual self (Cohen, 1996). Although described as separate categories, the five modes of tourist can potentially be seen along a virtual continuum from a recreational (hedonic) to an existential mode (eudaimonic). The studies of wellness tourism implicitly or explicitly discuss these modes of tourist experience. Devereaux and Carnegie (2006), Lehto and colleagues (2006), Pernecky and Johnston (2006), Smith and Kelly (2006a, 2006b) and Steiner and Reisinger (2006), for example, all agree that studies related to wellness tourism focus on the existential mode of tourist experience.

Cohen suggests that the *recreational mode* is characterised by enjoyment because the activity provides tourists with a general sense of well-being as well as a sense of idle pleasure. In the *diversionary mode*, tourists also thrive on pseudo-events, but the experience is not seen as transformative for their overall life. The *experiential* and *experimental modes*, however, involves the search for authenticity and for an alternative spiritual centre respectively. In the realms of experience enhancing period, change may be possible. In the experimental mode, the tourist is unsure of his real desires and needs, thus the quest may potentially become a way of life. Finally, the *existential mode* is where the tourists could be realistic idealists, starry-eyed idealists or critical realists. Realistic idealists are those who accept the social and cultural shortcomings even in the most ideal place, while starry-eyed idealists are those who see perfection in anything at

the elective centre but deny the realities of life. Finally, critical idealists are individuals who are attached to the ideal, but reject the reality found at it.

It is possible to link Cohen's modes of experiences with the flow concept and the present interest in spa and wellness tourism. It can be suggested that flow may be optimised when tourists are predominantly in the recreational and diversionary modes, that is, when pleasure and pressure, not conflict, and challenging assessments of their life philosophies predominate. These concepts of flow and experience modes help inform the present study by linking tourism research, spa-going and positive psychology.

#### **4.4 THE FSS-2 AND SPA EXPERIENCES**

Literature in positive psychology uniformly suggests that the flow concept is an optimal physical state which is connected with high achievement and positive experiences. For this study, the *Event Experience Scale* (also known as the Flow State Scale or *FSS-2*) was used. The *FSS-2* was designed to assess flow in physical activity settings. Jackson and Eklund (2004) emphasise that the term *physical activity* is used as an inclusive term. That is, the model is appropriate to use in a variety of physical activity settings. Such settings, they argue, were kept in mind when devising the items and instructions for answering the questionnaire. A qualitative database of athletes' descriptions of being in flow, for example, was used when developing the original items for the scales (Jackson & Eklund, 2004). Research has been conducted with the *FSS-2* in sports and exercise contexts. Its developers, however, noted a considerable interest in understanding flow across various settings (e.g. business, gifted education endeavours, music and yoga) and in relation to a range of psychological constructs (e.g. personality type, intrinsic motivation, self-esteem and anxiety). Parallels can be drawn from such interest with Csikszentmihalyi's (1975) seminal works on flow, which included data from different settings such as music, dance, sports and surgery. This suggests that the use of flow scales for assessing experience across various settings including spa and wellness studies is appropriate.

The rationale behind the employment of the *FSS-2* in this study lies in the ways in which it can be used to assess flow. One of the uses of the scale is as an immediate post-

event assessment of flow. As an immediate post-event flow assessment, the Event Experience Scale's instructions and the lead-in statement, i.e. "During the event..." prompt the respondents to focus on the completed activity. The questionnaire uses the response mode of a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strong disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The participants are asked to indicate their extent of agreement with each of the flow items in relation to the completed spa experience. One of the requirements in administering this questionnaire is to conduct it as closely as possible to the completion of the activity being assessed. Such temporal proximity arguably promotes clear recall. More specifically, its developers have recommended that responses be collected within one hour of completion of the activity. By doing so, there is an increased likelihood of obtaining a more accurate assessment of the state of flow while minimizing delayed intrusion on the participants' subsequent activities.

The other use is to measure a person's particular peak experience. As a measurement tool for such experiences, the participants are asked to think of a particular experience and answer the questions in relation to the event. A high level flow experience linked to peak experiences will engender powerful memories for the recipient (Wagenaar, 1986). In separate studies, Jackson (1996) and Eklund (1994) have conducted qualitative work that underpins Wagenaar's claims. They studied athletes' peak experiences and the highlights of their sporting careers. In the early stages of the development of the flow scales, Jackson and Marsh (1996) used the recalled optimal experiences of respondents. The developers also suggested that there are other ways to use the scale. They recommend measuring "best-ever experiences" of respondents where these episodes belong to the past rather than involving recently completed events. This openness in the usage of this flow scale is therefore seen as providing an opportunity to measure spa experiences during the respondents' current holiday.

The FSS-2 was used in this study in its original form for two main reasons. The first reason lies in the close linkages between spa experiences and flow experiences. The use of this scale is therefore aimed at measuring and understanding the applicability of the flow model in spa experiences, and to identify the extent of flow that tourists experience in relation to their spa experiences. The other reason why the FSS-2 was used lies in fulfilling one of the many directions for understanding optimal experiences, as implicitly predicted by the developers of the flow scales. Because the scales were

originally designed for activities in a physical setting, measuring flow in passive activity setting wherein the experience receiver (i.e. the tourist) rather than the provider (i.e. the spa therapist) of the spa treatment is examined was deemed to provide a different perspective. This also gives the opportunity to compare FSS-2-related data (from an active physical setting) with the current study conducted in a passive (non-active) physical setting.

#### **4.5 RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES, AIMS AND METHODOLOGY**

In Chapter 2, it was noted that two research directions have been identified from observations and the literature review in the context of the use of flow scales in tourist experiences, specifically in spa experiences. The first gap or direction lies in the lack of research identifying the linkages between spa experiences and flow scales. The second research direction relates to the use of the FSS-2 in a novel setting. That is, the FSS-2 can be applied to a passive rather than an active physical setting. From these considerations, four research aims relating to flow had been formulated. The first and second aims relate to the first gap, while the third and last aims are associated with the second gap. These are:

5. To measure and understand the applicability of the *flow* model in spa experiences;
6. To identify the extent of flow that tourists experience in relation to their spa experiences;
7. To use the FSS-2 in a passive setting rather than an active physical setting; and,
8. To compare previous FSS-2-related data with the current study that used the scale in a passive (non-active) setting, i.e. spa-going activity.

The overarching aim in this study is to test the applicability of the flow model to tourists' spa experiences in South East Asia using the FSS-2 in its original form. By focusing on meeting this objective, this study addresses a conceptual gap in the literature through providing a novel understanding of the link between flow and spa experiences. The approach of testing the existing FSS-2 in an entirely different setting was based on George and Bennett's (2004) notion that theory testing may benefit from identifying the scope conditions of a theory, that is, the conditions under which these ideas are most and least likely to apply.

#### ***4.5.1 The survey: a review of aims, method and tools***

The use of the concept of flow in tourist-related experience such as spa-going activity bridges some gaps in the literature in terms of the meshing of tourism and positive psychology as interrelated fields of study. The findings presented in this section of the work were extracted from an on-site survey of tourist spa goers between December 2008 and May 2009 in India (Mumbai, Goa and Kerala), Thailand (Bangkok and Phuket) and the Philippines (Manila, Baguio and Bohol).

As discussed in Chapter 3, the study was aimed at profiling spa-going tourists in South East Asia, specifically in the abovementioned countries. The survey was designed to collect information on the tourists' travel and spa-going motivations as well as previous travel and spa experience. Demographic information was also collected to profile spa-going tourists in South East Asia, most specifically in India, Thailand and the Philippines. The motive-related aims included measuring pre-determined pull factors that may have affected tourists' decision making processes during the pre-travel phase. Another objective was to measure and identify chief travel motives of spa-going tourists to India, Thailand and the Philippines. At the outset of the 6-page questionnaire, however, the respondents were asked about their thoughts and feelings regarding the spa treatment that they just received; this section of the survey was the FSS-2 component.

As noted in Chapter 3, the original target samples of the study were domestic and international tourists who were specifically on a health/spa holiday. The incident in Mumbai in November 2008, known as the Mumbai Terror Attacks, however, compelled the researcher to make changes to the method of approaching tourists. The survey was therefore conducted mostly on tourist beaches, accessible areas of airports, shopping malls and outside spa businesses in the three countries.

#### ***4.5.2 The respondent profile***

A total of 336 questionnaires were collected, with 319 (92.6 per cent) classified as usable. The details have been summarised in Chapter 3 and are succinctly presented here again for convenience. The sample consisted of a slightly greater number of

females (59.4 per cent) than males (40.6 per cent). Respondents in their twenties and thirties constituted about 66 per cent of the sample, with those in the age range of 21-30 making up nearly 43 per cent. In terms of occupation, about a quarter of the sample consisted of individuals who were in professional or technical employment. More than half of the sample comprised international tourists (54.9 per cent) to India, Thailand or the Philippines. Over 80 per cent of the respondents received a massage during their spa visit. Of this cohort, almost 14 per cent combined the treatment with a facial, a sauna or a foot spa/foot scrub.

#### **4.6 THE FLOW DIMENSIONS AND SPA EXPERIENCES**

One of the aims of the study was to understand the applicability of the flow model in spa experiences. More specifically, the study sought to identify the extent of the flow and the assessment of each dimension of flow in relation to tourists' spa experiences. In presenting the results from the flow scores, the mean scores recorded for the flow dimensions will be used extensively to help characterise the details in the data. The scores are uniformly assessed as 1 (strongly disagree) and 5 (strongly agree). The mean scores for each dimension ranged between 4.08 (*autotelic experience*) and 3.3 (*concentration*), while the mean score for the *overall flow state* was 3.45. Some variation across the scores for each of the nine flow dimensions was observed, which is interpreted as indicating the relative importance of the various dimensions to the spa experience. Overall, the moderate mean scores obtained for each dimension suggests some degree of endorsement of the spa activity as flow experience. Some ambiguity regarding the relevance of select items for the person's spa experience do exist, but it is maintained that the scores yielded in this study indicate that tourist spa-goers are somewhat linked to the experience of flow.

**Table 4.1 The flow dimensions from spa experiences**

Dimension		Flow statement and item number	N	Mean	Mode	SD	Min	Max
Challenge-skill balance — $\bar{X}$ =3.38 SD = .59	Q1	I was challenged, but I believe my skills would allow me to meet the challenge.	318	3.27	3	1.081	1	5
	Q10	My abilities matched the high challenge of the situation.	319	3.22	4	1.322	1	5
	Q19	I felt I was competent enough to meet the high demands of the situation.	319	3.17	4	1.287	1	5
	Q28	The challenge and my skills were at an equally high level.	319	3.21	3	1.286	1	5
Action-awareness merging — $\bar{X}$ =3.42 SD = .69	Q2	I made the correct movements without thinking about trying to do so.	319	3.38	4	1.143	1	5
	Q11	Things just seemed to be happening automatically.	319	3.38	4	1.261	1	5
	Q20	I performed automatically, without thinking too much.	319	3.25	4	1.234	1	5
	Q29	I did things spontaneously and automatically without having to think.	319	3.18	4	1.283	1	5
Clear goals — $\bar{X}$ =3.64 SD = .75	Q3	I knew clearly what I wanted to do.	319	3.67	5	1.267	1	5
	Q12	I had a strong sense of what I wanted to do.	319	3.51	3	1.231	1	5
	Q21	I knew what I wanted to achieve.	319	3.59	4	1.217	1	5
	Q30	My goals were clearly defined.	319	3.39	4	1.366	1	5
Unambiguous feedback — $\bar{X}$ =3.34 SD = .72	Q4	It was really clear to me how my performance was doing.	319	3.28	3	1.289	1	5
	Q13	I was aware of how well I was performing.	319	3.11	4	1.343	1	5
	Q22	I had a good idea while I was performing about how well I was doing.	319	3.22	4	1.312	1	5
	Q31	I could tell by the way I was performing how well I was doing.	319	3.20	4	1.209	1	5
Concentration on task — $\bar{X}$ =3.0 SD = .81	Q5	My attention was focused entirely on what I was doing.	319	3.31	4	1.311	1	5
	Q14	It was no effort to keep my mind on what was happening.	319	3.06	4	1.408	1	5
	Q23	I had total concentration.	319	3.34	3	1.178	1	5
	Q32	I was completely focused on the task at hand.	319	3.19	4	1.310	1	5
Sense of control — $\bar{X}$ =3.36 SD = .82	Q6	I had a sense of control over what I was doing.	319	3.29	4	1.420	1	5
	Q15	I felt like I could control what I was doing.	319	3.18	3	1.355	1	5
	Q24	I had a feeling of total control.	319	3.21	4	1.250	1	5
	Q33	I felt in control of my body.	319	3.33	4	1.370	1	5
Loss of self-consciousness — $\bar{X}$ =3.53 SD = .87	Q7	I was not concerned with what others may have been thinking of me.	319	3.55	4	1.359	1	5
	Q16	I was not concerned with how others may have been evaluating me.	319	3.33	4	1.494	1	5
	Q25	I was not concerned with how I was presenting myself.	319	3.30	5	1.384	1	5
	Q34	I was not worried about what others may have been thinking of me.	319	3.44	3	1.435	1	5
Time transformation — $\bar{X}$ =3.51 SD = .77	Q8	Time seemed to alter (either slowed down or speeded up).	319	3.56	3	1.304	1	5
	Q17	The way time passed seemed to be different from normal.	319	3.44	4	1.370	1	5
	Q26	It felt like time went by quickly.	319	3.44	3	1.270	1	5
	Q35	I lost my normal awareness of time.	319	3.33	3	1.335	1	5
Autotelic experience — $\bar{X}$ =4.08 SD = .73	Q9	I really enjoyed the experience.	319	4.31	4	.951	1	5
	Q18	I loved the feeling of the performance and want to capture it again.	319	3.77	4	1.179	1	5
	Q27	The experience left me feeling great.	319	4.09	4	1.284	1	5
	Q36	I found the experience extremely rewarding.	319	3.99	4	1.240	1	5

#### **4.6.1 The dimensions of flow from spa experiences**

##### **4.6.1.1 Challenge-skill balance**

Challenge-skill balance in sports refers to a set of desired outcome and the necessary level of physical skills that are required to meet this outcome. A sense of balance between these two elements is important in experiencing flow. The resulting effect of disequilibrium in this dimension is either boredom or anxiety. In a more concrete sense, if two individuals with the same set of skills were faced with different challenges, that is, one person is given tasks that do not require all the skills, and the other faced with tasks that requires more than existing skills, it can be predicted that the first individual may be bored. On the contrary, the other individual may feel anxious and incompetent. In both cases, the experience will not turn out to be positive and rewarding.

The terms “*challenge*” and “*skills*” were slightly problematic for both the respondent and the researcher. A spa treatment is for relaxation and rejuvenation, and usually perceived as a non-challenging activity that does not require training or a set of skills. There were many cases where the researcher was asked to define these terms, which was politely declined because it is believed that the expressions in the survey are open to the respondents’ own understanding and interpretation and that any definition that the researcher may offer could affect the participants’ response.

In relation to the use of these terms, it has been observed that the statement that did not contain “*challenge*” and “*skills*”, that is “*I felt I was competent enough to meet the high demands of the situation*” ( $\bar{x}=3.17$ ), had a relatively lower mean score compared to the other statements in this dimension. It is argued that this can be attributed to expressions related to competency and demands, which may not have appeared to be applicable for an individual who is merely receiving a spa treatment. The statements “*I was challenged, but I believe my skills would allow me to meet the challenge*” and “*my abilities matched the high challenge of the situation*” had mean scores of 3.27 and 3.22 respectively. The perceived equality between abilities or skills and tasks/challenges is indeed a contributory factor in potentially reaching a flow state.

##### **4.6.1.2 Action-awareness merging**



As is the case for challenge-skill balance, the *action* and *awareness* elements should be present for a merging to occur. The lack or dominance of one element indeed causes an imbalance. The passive feature of the spa experience that is, receiving a spa treatment (e.g. a massage) does not require much action or voluntary active movement compared to giving a spa treatment. Similarly, awareness during the activity is relatively diminished during the spa experience. This is closely linked to the promotion of a higher degree of rest and relaxation during a spa treatment where the spa-goers are encouraged to free their minds of worries and stress.

In the results, both statements “*I made the correct movements without trying to do so*” and “*things just seemed to be happening automatically*” both had a mean score of 3.38. The other statements, “*I performed automatically, without thinking too much*” and “*I did things spontaneously and automatically without having to think*” had mean scores of 3.25 and 3.18 respectively. The statements in this dimension of flow involved elements of movement, automaticity and spontaneity –all of which are usually not expected of an individual receiving a spa treatment. As in most of the flow dimensions, the relatively higher mean scores of these items can be related to the participants’ interpretation of these statements. Expressions like “*correct movements*” and “*performed automatically*”, for example, could have been interpreted by respondents as simple movements such as lying on one side, shifting positions exactly when asked or flexing joints.

#### **4.6.1.3 Clear goals**

Goals refers to what anything that a person wants to do or achieve. It is a common everyday term which can be seen as synonymous with motives. As discussed in both parts of Chapter 3, relaxation, escape and novelty are the most common motives of individuals who visit spas. Tourists who visit spas do aim to achieve certain clear goals, particularly relaxation. The first three statements: “*I knew clearly what I wanted to do*”, “*I had a strong sense of what I wanted to do*”, and “*I knew what I wanted to achieve*” had mean scores of 3.67, 3.51 and 3.59 respectively. Nonetheless, although the goals can be considerably clear, it is beyond the control of the spa-goer to influence the treatment. In the Global Spa Summit report of 2010, relaxation, effectiveness of the treatment, rejuvenation and stress reduction characterized positive spa experiences. On

the contrary, pain and a lack of relaxation were some of the feelings that were gathered from poor spa experiences.

The statement “*my goals were clearly defined*” which received a relatively lower mean score ( $\bar{x}=3.39$ ) can be presumably ascribed to the lack of clarity about whether the goals were self-directed or were provided by the staff. Indeed, not every treatment will go as planned. Similarly, not every spa therapist is the right match. If the assumption that some goals were directed by therapists is valid, it can be argued that communication plays a role in this dimension. In the context of good and poor spa experiences, being able to tell the spa-goer what to expect and what is expected of him/her even before the treatment begins, will be beneficial. While this issue of communication is applicable to experimenters in spas, it is also a good customer practice to inform guests of goals and expectations regardless of their previous spa experience.

#### **4.6.1.4 Unambiguous feedback**

Unambiguous feedback among athletes refers to the tacit self-reassurance that each body part is moving in an ideal way. In the context of spa experiences, the use of the term feedback can be slightly problematic. A person who is receiving a spa treatment is in the best position to give feedback, instead of receiving such information. Also, feedback which refers to the thoughts and/or feelings is given by the recipient of the treatment during and/or after the spa experience. Referring back to the previous item on goals, reports of relaxation/pain or the lack of it are forms of feedback.

The expression “*performance*” which was present in all the feedback-related items was another term that needed definition. Again, it remains unclear how the respondents define performance in this context. The interpretation of the term performance may be related to the way they were lying or sitting down during the spa treatment. It may also be associated with the way they were following instructions while receiving the treatment. The item with the highest mean score in this dimension was “*it was really clear to me how my performance was doing*” ( $\bar{x}=3.28$ ). The perceived clarity of performance in this context may be linked with the straightforwardness of the tasks

given to spa-goers (e.g. lying down, sitting up). Similarly, the items “*I had a good idea while I was performing about how well I was doing*” and “*I could tell by the way I was performing how well I was doing*” were closely rated at 3.22 and 3.20 respectively.

The item “*I was aware of how well I was performing*” received a relatively lower mean score ( $\bar{x}= 3.11$ ). This result can be related to the idea that under normal circumstances, spa therapists are discouraged to talk to customers to uphold the feeling of serenity, tranquillity and calmness. It is however recognised that there are exemptions such as when the customer initiates the conversation with the therapist.

#### **4.6.1.5 Concentration on task**

Total concentration from flow means focus on the particular task. Having “*total concentration*” had the highest mean score in this dimension ( $\bar{x}= 3.34$ ), while the statement “*my attention was focused entirely on what I was doing*” was rated 3.31. In the context of receiving a spa experience, there is a sense of ambiguity in the expression “*...what I was doing*” because it is it cannot be specified whether the act refers to just a movement as part of the spa treatment, or the spa treatment itself. Similarly, the statement “*it was no effort to keep my mind on what was happening*” ( $\bar{x}=3.06$ ) was also vague because the phrase “*...what was happening*” was not a very specific expression. The relatively lower mean score of this statement can be due to the notion that some respondents, especially the spa experimenters, tend to be more self-conscious during spa treatments particularly during massages. Some may have been too ticklish to be able to concentrate or relax more deeply during the treatment. Cutler (2006) argues that when receiving a massage, ticklish individuals will not be able to relax thus preventing them from gaining the full benefit of a massage.

Concentration has been delivered as “the ability to direct one’s thinking in whatever direction one would intend” (University of Cambridge Counselling Service, 2011). Researchers have also identified commitment, enthusiasm for the task, skill at doing at the task, the environment and one’s emotional, physical and psychological state as factors influencing concentration. The task-oriented nature of this flow dimension also makes concentration during a spa treatment something of a contradiction. Tasks during

a spa treatment are generally passive positions such as sitting, lying down as well as very simple movements such as bending and stretching, depending on the treatment. In most cases, these “tasks” or movements do not require focus or concentration. Relaxation is the goal during and after the spa treatment, hence anything that would overstimulate the brain or the muscles is generally avoided. The statement “*I was completely focused on the task at hand*” had a mean score of 3.19.

#### **4.6.1.6 Sense of control**

In sports, the sense of control is often described as a sense of infallibility when performing in flow. In this study, the sense of control dimension received an overall mean score of 3.36. Of the four statements, “*I felt in control of my body*” and “*I had a sense of control over what I was doing*” had mean scores of 3.33 and 3.29 respectively. At the outset, these results were surprising because being in control of one’s own body while receiving a spa treatment such as a massage seems to be a contradiction. Linkages of a sense of control to the feelings of ticklishness can be noted.

Cutler (2006) defines ticklishness as a sensation and subsequent response separate from pain, itch or pressure. She has also identified some factors that can come into play in relation to a ticklish response during a massage. She reports that nervousness or discomfort with touch, anxiety or vulnerability with wearing minimal or no clothing and tension held in particular areas of the body take place when one feels ticklish. Further, uneasiness with unknown or unpredictable touch and muscle tension in the area being treated may also occur. In the case of this study, it can be assumed that the sense of control being manifested by tourist spa-goers may be linked to the ability to control these factors while receiving the treatment.

The other two statements, “*I had a feeling of total control*” and “*I felt like I could control what I was doing*” had mean scores of 3.21 and 3.18 respectively. Sense of control, just like challenge-skill balance and action-awareness merging, is a dimension that may be less relevant in more passive activities such as receiving a spa treatment.

#### **4.6.1.7 Loss of self-consciousness**

Loss of self-consciousness is about being “free of the voices within our head that question whether we are living up to the standards that we perceive are important to be met” (Jackson & Eklund, 2004, p. 11). In simple terms, this dimension can be thought of as not worrying about how others perceive our actions. The statements “*I was not concerned with what others may have been thinking about me*” and “*I was not worried about what others may have been thinking of me*” had mean scores of 3.55 and 3.44 respectively. These mean scores can be attributed to spa-goer’s self-confidence as well as the comfort that the spa therapist provides before and during the spa experience. The idea of letting one’s self go with the pattern and sequence of the treatment does not entail worrying about how one looks. The statement “*I was not concerned with how I was presenting myself*” ( $\bar{x}=3.30$ ) is also an indicator of loss of self-consciousness.

Aside from self-confidence and comfort, these results can be related to the common practices in spas as well as to the respondents’ culture. In most spa treatments, especially those that involve parts of the body such as massages, wraps and scrubs, the customer is required to remove most, if not all pieces of clothing. In some cases, the body must only be covered by a towel or a similar sheet for proper treatment. That is, only the part of the body being massaged is exposed. While some tourists are already accustomed to such situations, there are many who find this practice uncomfortable and often times embarrassing. In these cases, one’s culture may have contributed to this result. It should be noted that most of respondents live in South East Asian societies, which is often considered to be more culturally conservative about exposing one’s body than is the case in many western societies.

#### **4.6.1.8 Time transformation**

Time disorientation or the loss of time awareness refers to the perception that time either slows or passes more quickly than expected. In this study, losing track of time was a dimension that the respondents were able to relate with in terms of their spa experience ( $\bar{x}=3.51$ ). The realization that “*time seemed to alter (either slowed down or speeded up)*” ( $\bar{x}=3.56$ ) and that “*the way time passed seemed to be different from normal*” ( $\bar{x}=3.44$ ) were clear indications of time transformation during the spa

experience even though it is ambiguous as to whether time is slowed down or goes by more quickly than normal during a spa treatment.

The third item in the time transformation, that is, “*time felt like it went by quickly*” ( $\bar{x}=3.44$ ) was a non-ambiguous statement. The mean score reflects that among the tourist spa-goers in the sample, time passed more quickly during their spa treatment. Overall, the loss of normal awareness of time ( $\bar{x}=3.33$ ) among spa-goers clearly suggests that the spa-going activity generally fosters time transformation.

#### **4.6.1.9 Autotelic experience**

Out of all the flow dimensions discussed, autotelic experience is perhaps the element that the respondents relate to the most ( $\bar{x}=4.08$ ). The term autotelic, which refers to doing something for its own sake, is derived from the Greek words *auto* which means “self”, and *telos* meaning “goal” (Jackson & Eklund, 2004). Autotelic or an intrinsically rewarding experience is considered a result of the other flow dimensions, and thus not a cognitive but an affective element of immediate satisfaction.

The statement “*I really enjoyed the experience*” has the highest mean score of all the dimensions of flow, suggesting that the feeling of enjoyment during the spa treatment provided a ‘*feel good*’ factor. In relation to the sense of enjoyment, the participants reported that “*the experience left them feeling great*” ( $\bar{x}=4.09$ ) and that they “*found the experience extremely rewarding*” suggests that the spa experience provided a high degree of satisfaction. Indeed, the spa experience that the tourists purchased was overall a good and positive experience. The survey which was conducted at various times and places influenced the recency of the experience. At airports, for example, the respondents may have had the spa experience a few days prior to the survey. In this case, and in most instances in the survey, the respondents were prompted to recall their experience.

The item “*feeling of the performance*” ( $\bar{x}=3.77$ ) was also reported to be distinctly higher than any other flow statement in the other dimensions. The term “*performance*”, however, remains ambiguous. While this expression refers to the respondents’ own

thoughts and feelings, the word may have been interpreted as the person providing the spa treatment because of the involvement of the individual in the activity. In this case, the masseuse/masseur is “active”, while the tourist is in an “inactive passive” mode.

The standard deviations in this study range between 0.59 (challenge-skill balance) and 0.87 (loss of consciousness) and can be attributed to language. Language is one of the key challenges that was faced in using the FSS-2 in this study, and it will be outlined further in section 4.8 of this chapter. At the outset, however, it is possible to suggest that language has affected the standard deviation scores of the flow dimensions. Because the FSS-2 has been used in its unaltered form, many of the words and expressions in the survey did not appear to be exactly applicable to spa-going activity, specifically to an individual who is receiving a spa treatment. As a result, many of the expressions used in the statements in each flow dimension were open to various meanings and interpretations by the respondents. It is important to be reminded that the FSS-2 was originally used for active physical settings such as sport, dance and music among others. Hence, the ideas of performance, movement and the sense of being observed or watched are inherent elements of the FSS-2.

The perceived irrelevance of many words and expressions in the survey is assumed to have led to varied interpretations by the participants of the study. That is, even though the words/expressions were thought to be irrelevant to the spa experience, the respondents applied their own meaning or interpretation of the statement while completing the survey. It is not clear how the expressions were defined or interpreted and the researcher had to rely on the trends and close observations of the responses. Of all the 36 statements, the standard deviations ranged between .95 (“*I really enjoyed the experience*”) and 1.49 (“*I was not concerned with how others may have been evaluating me*”), with a median of 1.29.

#### **4.6.2 Flow and spa treatments**

In exploring other factors that may have contributed to the spa-goers’ propensity to experience flow, it was found out that the spa treatments were influential in the results of the study. Although the relationships were only significant for select dimensions of

flow, a discussion of these relationships will provide an understanding of what influences flow experiences among tourist spa-goers.

As mentioned in Chapter 3, about 67 per cent of the sample received a full body massage and did not combine it with any other spa service. In Table 4.2, it can be noted that these respondents rated the autotelic experience the highest among the dimensions of flow ( $\bar{x} = 4.07$ ), with an overall flow mean score of 3.45. Notably, this is the case with all the treatment combinations except for the footspa/footscrub, where loss of self-consciousness was significantly higher than the rest of the dimensions. Submitting one's feet to a detailed examination and treatments may be linked to confronting and conquering embarrassment about a part of the body that is sometimes seen as unattractive or unclean. Where massage was combined with sauna/steam bath a relatively higher degree of flow is achieved through clear goals ( $\bar{x} = 4.18$ ). In this instance, it may be clearer to respondents what is required and in what order they should participant in the experience.



Table 4.2 Means compared: Flow dimensions and spa treatments

Spa treatment(s)		Challenge-skill balance	Action-awareness merging	Clear goals	Feedback	Concentration	Control	Loss of self-consciousness	Time transformation	Autotelic experience	Overall flow
Massage only	Mean	3.35	3.43	3.60	3.25	3.25	3.26	3.62	3.51	4.07	3.45
	N	203	207	208	205	210	206	205	209	212	213
	Std. Dev.	.60	.64	.76	.70	.80	.79	.85	.81	.77	.55
Massage + sauna/steam bath	Mean	3.41	3.55	4.18	3.67	3.79	3.77	3.62	3.80	4.28	3.75
	N	14	15	14	15	14	15	15	15	15	15
	Std. Dev.	.48	.69	.53	.89	.55	.89	.96	.56	.52	.58
Massage + footspa/footscrub	Mean	3.17	3.25	3.47	3.19	3.25	3.31	3.56	3.19	4.00	3.38
	N	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9
	Std. Dev.	.52	.63	.70	.60	.86	.62	.51	.76	.52	.36
Massage + facial	Mean	3.36	3.38	3.66	3.53	3.48	3.55	3.29	3.65	4.03	3.55
	N	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20
	Std. Dev.	.51	.48	.74	.72	.74	.63	.79	.53	.63	.41
Facial only	Mean	3.43	3.32	3.64	3.50	3.43	3.32	3.61	3.27	3.75	3.47
	N	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11	11
	Std. Dev.	.70	.90	.91	.94	.89	1.04	.90	.76	.92	.70
More than 2 treatments (including but not limited to the above treatments)	Mean	3.48	3.40	3.61	3.47	3.11	3.35	3.01	3.53	4.20	3.45
	N	28	28	29	29	29	30	30	30	30	30
	Std. Dev.	.76	1.07	.82	.64	.92	.96	1.05	.94	.83	.50
Footspa/footscrub only	Mean	3.31	3.94	3.81	3.06	3.31	3.94	4.69	4.00	4.19	3.81
	N	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
	Std. Dev.	.38	.69	.38	.69	.94	.47	.38	.20	.24	.35
Total	Mean	3.38	3.42	3.64	3.34	3.30	3.36	3.53	3.52	4.08	3.48
	N	289	294	295	293	297	295	294	298	301	302
	Std. Dev.	.60	.70	.75	.73	.80	.82	.89	.79	.74	.53

The reported high autotelic experience in most spa treatments can be related to the experience of “feeling good” during the spa treatment. As it was discussed in the earlier section, the autotelic experience is the result of other dimensions. Csikszentmihalyi (1990) suggested that flow, once experienced, becomes a very desirable state and is an enjoyable experience that one is motivated to repeat.

Generally, spa experiences provide a feeling of relaxation. Many studies have claimed positive after-effects of massage as well as those which occur during the course of the therapy. In nursing and occupational therapy studies, for example, it is a widely accepted that massage has positive effects on infants, children and adults. Increased circulation, relief from anxiety, promotion of comfort and reduction or alleviation of pain are just some of the identified benefits of massage (Snyder & Wieland, 2003; Watson & Watson, 1987 ). In sports, it has been claimed that massage can increase peripheral blood flow in localised areas and the mechanical warming and stretching of soft tissues provides temporary flexibility gains (Calder, 1990). Apart from physiological effects, Calder also claims neural and psychological evidence for the positive effects of massage. She argues that improved mood states and feelings of well-being have been recorded (cf. Calder, 1990).

These findings can also be linked to current spa-related studies. It was reported in the Global Spa Summit that relaxation is the top indicator of best spa experiences (GSS, 2010a). It was also reported that effective treatment, feelings of rejuvenation and reduced stress were the benefits from positive spa experiences. Nevertheless, not all experiences were positive. In the same report, poor spa experiences were characterised by feeling of pain, a lack of relaxation and pampering, and a sense that the treatment was ineffective. The lack of feeling rejuvenated and allergic reactions were also identified.

The one dimension of flow that received a comparatively lower score in terms of all the treatments was concentration. There are two considerations related to these findings. One linkage is the notion of ticklishness, especially among spa experimenters. The other one lies in the associations between concentration and tasks, which also relate to the concept of relaxation during a spa experience.

In the previous section, it was suggested that the concentration dimension can be linked to the notion of ticklishness, especially among spa experimenters who tend to be more self-conscious during spa treatments. The idea of not knowing what to expect from a spa treatment may also have contributed to the results. This is especially the case if the spa therapist has not briefed the spa-goer about the process prior to the treatment. In this case, “guessing” what to expect next may have restrained the spa-goer from relaxing.

Another explanation for this result lies in the associations between concentration and tasks. Doing most tasks requires effort and attention. In relaxation, however, one is expected to exert minimal effort. Instead of concentrating on tasks, the spa-goer is therefore expected to let his/her mind wander during the spa treatment as a way of relaxing. As McKim (1974) wrote, “relaxation involves loosening up, letting go and finally...going to sleep. Attention involves focusing energy, finding excitement in discovery... and being very much awake” (p. 265)

In exploring the influence of spa treatments’ influence for one’s propensity to experience flow, the means were compared between the spa treatments received by the tourists and the different dimensions of flow (Table 4.3). In these results, it was found out that the most significant relationship was between spa treatments and the loss of self-consciousness dimension. At 95 per cent level of confidence, feedback and control dimensions were also found to be significant.

Table 4.3 ANOVA –Flow dimensions and spa treatments

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Challenge-skill balance * Spa treatment(s)	Between Groups(Combined)	2.28	7	.33	.900	.506
	Within Groups	106.96	296	.36		
	Total	109.23	303			
Merging of action and awareness * Spa treatment(s)	Between Groups(Combined)	2.75	7	.39	.806	.582
	Within Groups	146.42	301	.49		
	Total	149.17	308			
Clear goals * Spa treatment(s)	Between Groups(Combined)	5.32	7	.76	1.355	.224
	Within Groups	169.28	302	.56		
	Total	174.60	309			
Unambiguous feedback * Spa treatment(s)	Between Groups(Combined)	8.45	7	1.21	2.353*	.024
	Within Groups	153.83	300	.51		
	Total	162.28	307			
Concentration on the task at hand * Spa treatment(s)	Between Groups(Combined)	8.33	7	1.19	1.878	.073
	Within Groups	192.58	304	.63		
	Total	200.91	311			
Control * Spa treatment(s)	Between Groups(Combined)	11.97	7	1.71	2.649*	.011
	Within Groups	195.00	302	.65		
	Total	206.98	309			
Loss of self-consciousness * Spa treatment(s)	Between Groups(Combined)	18.10	7	2.59	3.487**	.001
	Within Groups	223.20	301	.74		
	Total	241.30	308			
Time transformation * Spa treatment(s)	Between Groups(Combined)	4.91	7	.70	1.136	.340
	Within Groups	188.33	305	.62		
	Total	193.24	312			
Autotelic experience * Spa treatment(s)	Between Groups(Combined)	2.54	7	.36	.656	.709
	Within Groups	170.46	308	.55		
	Total	173.01	315			
Flow * Spa treatment(s)	Between Groups(Combined)	2.37	7	.34	1.200	.303
	Within Groups	87.06	309	.28		
	Total	89.43	316			

\* significant at  $p=0.05$ , critical value of  $F$ -distribution = 2.04

#### 4.6.2.1 Loss of self-consciousness and spa treatments

The spa treatments had a significant relationship with the loss of self-consciousness dimension ( $F_{7, 308} = 2.35, p < .05$ ). Because spa-goers are encouraged to relax, they are likely to forget their problems or normal-life situations but they are also likely to temporarily lose their awareness of self. It was also discussed earlier that loss of self-

consciousness is about not worrying about how others perceive actions. It can also be argued that spa practices, confidence, comfort and to some extent, culture are contributory factors to the mean scores. These elements can also be considered to be influential in determining the significant relationship between spa treatments and one's propensity to lose self-consciousness.

Common spa practices include an exposure of the area being treated. During a massage where oil is used, for instance, the spa-goer's skin is required to be bare for the application of oil and of localised pressure. The aim for this practice is proper treatment. While some individuals are accustomed to these practices, there are also those who are uncomfortable with this system, specifically the spa experimenters. Here, an increased familiarity with spa practices builds the participant's confidence. Hence, someone who is more experienced in spa-going is likely to lose self-consciousness during the spa treatment. Finally, there is the issue of conservatism in a cultural sense. Individuals from Western societies who are perceived to be more comfortable with minimal clothing may find some spa practices less embarrassing than many individuals from Asian cultures who may find some spa practices awkward and disconcerting.

#### **4.6.2.2 Unambiguous feedback and spa treatments**

The spa treatments were also significantly related to the feedback dimension ( $F_{7, 307} = 2.35, p < .05$ ). The factor that may have contributed to the significant relationship between the feedback dimension and the spa treatments is the *ambiguity* of the terms/expressions used in the statements. As mentioned earlier, the use of the term feedback can be slightly problematic in the context of spa experiences, because a person receiving a spa treatment is the best feedback-provider, and not the spa therapist. It is also not in the best interest of both spa-goers and spa businesses if the therapists provided feedback to the customer during a treatment. Feedback which refers to the thoughts or feelings by the spa-goer during a treatment can however be represented by reports of positive experiences such as feeling good, appreciation of aromas, application of the right pressure among others. Negative feedbacks may include reports of pain and of discomfort during or after the treatment.

#### **4.6.2.3 Sense of control and spa treatments**

The other dimension where spa treatments were significantly related with flow dimensions was for sense of control ( $F_{7, 309} = 2.35, p < .05$ ). In the previous section, the connections between sense of control and feelings of ticklishness were established. In spa experiences, the conjecture that spa-goers' sense of control refers to their ability to control factors such as nervousness with touch, anxiety with wearing or no minimal clothing and/or uneasiness with unpredictable touch relating to feelings of ticklishness and muscle control.

#### **4.6.3 Gender, usual place of residence and the dimensions of flow**

In this section, independent *t*-tests and one-way ANOVA were undertaken to explore the relationships between the dimensions of flow and the respondents' usual place of residence and gender. Before these results are further discussed, however, it is important to re-emphasise that the demarcation of the domestic and international cohorts in this study only refers to the respondents' usual country of residence and not their original or birth country. For example, a Korean man who has been living in the Philippines for over 12 months at the time of the survey would have indicated the Philippines as his usual country of residence and not Korea. This demarcation may be thought of as consistent with UNWTO's definition of a tourist as someone who "travels to and stays in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes" (1995).

Table 4.4 Group statistics: Usual place of residence and flow dimensions

Flow Dimension / Usual Place of Residence		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Challenge-skill balance	Domestic	136	3.49	0.60	0.05
	International	157	3.28	0.56	0.04
Action-awareness merging	Domestic	135	3.43	0.69	0.06
	International	163	3.42	0.69	0.05
Clear goals	Domestic	136	3.78	0.71	0.06
	International	163	3.52	0.77	0.06
Unambiguous feedback	Domestic	137	3.49	0.73	0.06
	International	160	3.19	0.68	0.05
Concentration on the task	Domestic	137	3.48	0.78	0.07
	International	164	3.14	0.80	0.06
Control	Domestic	137	3.50	0.77	0.07
	International	162	3.22	0.85	0.07
Loss of self-consciousness	Domestic	136	3.49	0.89	0.08
	International	162	3.60	0.86	0.07
Time transformation	Domestic	137	3.53	0.75	0.06
	International	165	3.52	0.80	0.06
Autotelic experience	Domestic	137	4.12	0.70	0.06
	International	168	4.08	0.76	0.06
Flow	Domestic	137	3.59	0.50	0.04
	International	169	3.39	0.53	0.04

Levene's test for equality of variances was used to see whether variances were different between domestic and international tourist in terms of each flow dimension. Levene's test is similar to a *t*-test in that it tests the hypothesis that the variances in the two groups are equal (Field, 2009). Field further suggests that if Levene's test is significant at  $p \leq .05$ , confidence in the hypothesis can be gained that the variances are significantly different and that the assumption of homogeneity of variances has been violated. Otherwise, if Levene's test is non-significant (that is,  $p > .05$ ) then there is no sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis that the differences between the variances is zero and hence the assumption that the variances are roughly equal is rational. In Table 4.5, the results of the Levene's test show that there are no significant differences between domestic and international tourists in experiencing the flow dimensions and overall flow since the variances are approximately equal.

Independent sample *t*-tests were then used to compare the mean scores of the respondents' usual place of origin that is, whether they were domestic or international

tourists and each of the flow dimensions. These *t*-tests were built on the approach of assuming equality of variances as already noted. In the tests, the independent variable was the respondents' usual place of residence, and the dependent variables were the flow dimensions (Table 4.4). The results revealed that domestic tourists ( $\bar{x} = 3.59$ ) travelling within India, Thailand and the Philippines experienced a relatively greater tendency to experience overall flow during the spa treatments than tourists travelling from overseas ( $\bar{x} = 3.39$ ). Table 4.4 presents data showing that domestic tourists rated each flow dimension relatively higher than the international tourists, except for loss of self-consciousness. International tourists rated loss of consciousness 3.60, while their domestic counterparts gave it a mean score of 3.49. Further, it was observed that in terms of standard deviation, this particular flow dimension received the highest scores from both cohorts (0.89 and 0.86).



Table 4.5 Independent sample test: Flow dimensions and usual place of residence

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Challenge-skill balance	Equal variances assumed	1.882	.171	3.114	291	.002	.212	.068	.078	.345
Action-awareness merging	Equal variances assumed	.294	.588	.128	296	.899	.010	.081	-.148	.169
Clear goals	Equal variances assumed	1.899	.169	3.027	297	.003	.260	.086	.091	.429
Unambiguous feedback	Equal variances assumed	1.749	.187	3.664	295	.000	.300	.082	.139	.461
Concentration on the task	Equal variances assumed	.113	.737	3.804	299	.000	.348	.091	.168	.528
Control	Equal variances assumed	1.007	.316	2.972	297	.003	.280	.094	.095	.465
Loss of self-consciousness	Equal variances assumed	.093	.760	-1.026	296	.306	-.105	.102	-.305	.096
Time transformation	Equal variances assumed	.615	.433	.109	300	.913	.010	.090	-.167	.187
Autotelic experience	Equal variances assumed	1.014	.315	.465	303	.642	.039	.085	-.127	.206
Overall flow	Equal variances assumed	.071	.790	3.230	304	.001	.193	.060	.075	.310

Gender was another variable considered in the comparison of means. The results in Table 4.6 suggests that both males and females rated the autotelic experience the highest among the elements of flow ( $\bar{x}$ = 4.02 and 4.14 respectively). In a simple descriptive sense, the results also revealed that in general, females tend to experience overall flow more than males ( $\bar{x}$ = 3.50 compared to  $\bar{x}$ = 3.45). More specifically, Table 4.6 shows that the females rated most of the flow dimensions higher than the males did. Action-awareness merging, clear goals, feedback were correspondingly rated 3.44, 3.68 and 3.37 by females in contrast to 3.42, 3.58 and 3.27 by males. Concentration ( $\bar{x}$ = 3.34 vs. 3.24) and time transformation ( $\bar{x}$ = 3.56 vs. 3.49) were also rated highly by females than by males.

**Table 4.6 Group statistics: Gender and flow dimensions**

Flow Dimensions	Gender						Total		
	Female			Male			Mean	N	Std. Dev.
	Mean	N	Std. Dev.	Mean	N	Std. Dev.			
Challenge-skill balance	3.37	173	.59	3.38	120	.60	3.38	293	.59
Action-awareness merging	3.44	177	.70	3.42	121	.69	3.43	298	.69
Clear goals	3.68	177	.69	3.58	122	.82	3.64	299	.75
Feedback	3.37	175	.69	3.27	122	.75	3.33	297	.72
Concentration	3.34	177	.80	3.24	124	.81	3.30	301	.81
Control	3.39	176	.79	3.30	123	.87	3.36	299	.82
Loss of self-consciousness	3.55	176	.90	3.56	122	.83	3.56	298	.87
Time transformation	3.56	178	.77	3.49	124	.77	3.53	302	.77
Autotelic experience	4.14	180	.75	4.02	125	.71	4.09	305	.73
Overall flow	3.50	181	.53	3.45	125	.52	3.48	306	.53

Independent *t*-tests were used to test whether there were significant differences between males and females for each flow dimension. In the Levene's test for equality of variances, the *p*-value of all the flow dimensions ranged between .143 and .923 and were all greater than *p* = .05. The Levene's test results suggested that there are no significant differences between the cohorts and the assumption for equality of variance was met. Having considered these assumptions, the *t*-values and degrees of freedom, the *p*-values (2-tailed) indicated *no significant differences between males and females* in any flow dimension where the *p*-values ranged between .161 (autotelic experience) and .947 (loss of self-consciousness).

Gender was also used to disaggregate the data exploring the significant differences between flow dimensions and the type of tourists by usual place of residence. The disaggregation of gender was undertaken to aid in understanding how males and females in each usual-place-of-origin cohort, that is domestic and international tourists, rated the different dimensions of flow. Table 4.7 shows that generally, female domestic tourists have greater tendency to experience all the dimensions of flow, except for autotelic experience which received a higher mean score from female international tourists ( $\bar{x} = 4.14$ ). On the other hand, a different pattern was observed among the males. Male tourists who live outside India, Thailand and the Philippines rated action-awareness merging ( $\bar{x} = 3.42$ ), loss of self-consciousness ( $\bar{x} = 3.71$ ) and time transformation ( $\bar{x} = 3.53$ ) comparatively higher than their domestic cohorts.

Table 4.7 Disaggregated by gender: Usual place of residence and flow dimensions

Gender/Usual place of residence		Challenge-skill balance	Action-awareness merging	Clear goals	Feedback	Concentration	Control	Loss of self-consciousness	Time transformation	Autotelic experience	Overall flow	
Female	Domestic	Mean	3.49 (.58)	3.45 (.69)	3.78 (.68)	3.56 (.69)	3.52 (.73)	3.52 (.74)	3.59 (.87)	3.59 (.76)	4.13 (.71)	3.63 (.49)
		N	93	92	93	93	93	93	92	93	93	93
	International	Mean	3.23 (.57)	3.42 (.71)	3.56 (.69)	3.15 (.63)	3.14 (.84)	3.25 (.83)	3.51 (.94)	3.53 (.80)	4.14 (.79)	3.37 (.55)
		N	80	85	84	82	84	83	84	85	87	88
	Total	Mean	3.37 (.59)	3.44 (.70)	3.68 (.69)	3.37 (.69)	3.34 (.80)	3.39 (.79)	3.55 (.90)	3.56 (.77)	4.14 (.75)	3.50 (.53)
		N	173	177	177	175	177	176	176	178	180	181
Male	Domestic	Mean	3.48 (.66)	3.36 (.70)	3.77 (.77)	3.35 (.79)	3.41 (.88)	3.48 (.83)	3.25 (.88)	3.38 (.73)	4.06 (.69)	3.50 (.53)
		N	42	42	42	43	43	43	43	43	43	43
	International	Mean	3.31 (.54)	3.42 (.68)	3.47 (.83)	3.21 (.72)	3.13 (.77)	3.20 (.88)	3.71 (.75)	3.53 (.79)	4.00 (.73)	3.42 (.51)
		N	76	77	78	77	79	78	77	79	80	80
	Total	Mean	3.37 (.59)	3.40 (.68)	3.57 (.82)	3.26 (.75)	3.23 (.82)	3.30 (.87)	3.55 (.83)	3.48 (.77)	4.02 (.71)	3.44 (.52)
		N	118	119	120	120	122	121	120	122	123	123
Total	Domestic	Mean	3.49 (.60)	3.43 (.69)	3.78 (.71)	3.49 (.73)	3.49 (.78)	3.51 (.77)	3.48 (.89)	3.52 (.75)	4.11 (.70)	3.58 (.50)
		N	135	134	135	136	136	136	135	136	136	136
	International	Mean	3.27 (.55)	3.42 (.69)	3.51 (.76)	3.18 (.67)	3.14 (.80)	3.22 (.85)	3.61 (.86)	3.53 (.79)	4.07 (.76)	3.39 (.53)
		N	156	162	162	159	163	161	161	164	167	168
	Total	Mean	3.37 (.59)	3.42 (.69)	3.63 (.75)	3.32 (.72)	3.30 (.81)	3.35 (.82)	3.55 (.87)	3.53 (.77)	4.09 (.72)	3.48 (.53)
		N	291	296	297	295	299	297	296	300	303	304
F-values		9.70	0.02	9.16	13.42	14.47	8.83	1.05	0.01	0.22	10.44	

To further understand the relationships between gender, residence and flow, factorial analysis of variance was undertaken. More specifically, this statistical tool was chosen to explore potential interaction effects of gender and residence as independent variables and the dimensions of flow as the dependent variables. Factorial ANOVA, according to Field (2009), is used in a situation where two or more independent variables are involved extending the one-way ANOVA model to the factorial case. In this study, two sets of factorial ANOVAs were undertaken. The first one involved the entire data set, and the second set involved selected cases, that is, only the ones where massage were chosen. The rationale behind the second set of factorial ANOVA lies in the general assumption that the massage treatments are contributing factors to one's propensity to experience flow. This assumption is supported by the finding that the respondents who received a full body massage and did not combine it with any other treatment (total n = 214, 67%) rated the autotelic experience – the dimension that refers to enjoyable and an intrinsically rewarding experience – very highly ( $\bar{x} = 4.07$ ) (see section 4.7.2).

In both tests, it was found that there were no significant effects for gender. This effect means that overall, the gender of the spa-goers does not affect their tendency to experience flow. Similarly, no interaction between gender and residence variables was revealed. The main effects, however, were consistent for some flow dimensions for the respondents' residence. There were significant effects on *challenge-skill balance*, *clear goals* and *unambiguous feedback*. Substantial effects were also prominent in *concentration*, *control*, and *overall flow*. In all these dimensions, especially in the factorial ANOVA of the filtered cases, domestic tourists rated all the above-mentioned dimensions more highly than the international tourists.

#### **4.7 FLOW SCALES IN A NON-ACTIVE VS. ACTIVE PHYSICAL SETTING**

As mentioned earlier, one of the opportunities that was identified from the existing literature and observations was that the FSS-2 might be applicable beyond activities in a physical setting. The aims that shape this part of the study are two-fold. One is testing the usefulness of FSS-2 in a passive activity such as receiving a spa treatment rather than participating in a physical activity. The other aim considers previous FSS-2 related data and compares that material to results from the current work.

The mean scores obtained in this study were therefore compared with participants' results from active physical settings such as individual sporting activities, dance, yoga, exercise (focus on health/fitness), and team sport (cf. Jackson & Eklund, 2002, 2004). These authors noted that individual activities identified in their studies were predominantly sporting in nature, but also included exercise and creative and performing arts (e.g. dance and music) activities. The exercise activity studied referred to a non-competitive physical activity where the primary goal generally focused on health and/or fitness. The comparative data are summarised in Table 4.8 and Fig. 4.1.

Table 4.8 Aggregate descriptive statistics: Spa activity vs. other physical activities

	Activity													
	Spa experience		Individual activity*		Dance		Yoga		Exercise activity**		Sport activity#		Team sport activity	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
<b>Flow</b>	3.45	0.53	3.78	0.50	3.58	0.53	3.81	0.76	3.78	0.53	3.78	0.50	3.72	0.56
<b>Challenge-Skill Balance</b>	3.38	0.60	3.67	0.70	3.53	0.68	3.58	0.74	3.64	0.71	3.71	0.70	3.75	0.70
<b>Merging of action and awareness</b>	3.42	0.70	3.57	0.80	3.12	0.89	3.28	0.84	3.35	0.88	3.66	0.75	3.67	0.77
<b>Clear goals</b>	3.64	0.75	4.08	0.65	3.88	0.65	3.97	0.62	3.94	0.65	4.09	0.65	3.98	0.65
<b>Unambiguous feedback</b>	3.34	0.73	3.87	0.68	3.79	0.60	3.85	0.78	3.90	0.71	3.88	0.65	3.91	0.57
<b>Concentration</b>	3.30	0.80	3.70	0.80	3.84	0.80	3.54	0.99	3.62	0.89	3.73	0.78	3.75	0.84
<b>Control</b>	3.36	0.82	3.74	0.77	3.55	0.77	3.72	0.80	3.81	0.73	3.72	0.76	3.66	0.73
<b>Loss of self-consciousness</b>	3.53	0.89	4.02	0.87	3.15	1.10	4.17	0.72	4.08	0.79	3.92	0.89	3.59	0.83
<b>Time transformation</b>	3.51	0.79	3.38	0.79	3.52	0.80	3.88	0.71	3.56	0.76	3.36	0.81	3.46	0.82
<b>Autotelic experience</b>	4.08	0.74	4.02	0.75	3.85	0.87	4.27	0.62	4.11	0.71	3.95	0.84	3.73	1.03

\*Some individual activities are sporting in nature, but many individual activities also include exercise and creative and performing arts (including dance and music) activities.

\*\*Activities labelled as exercise if a non-competitive physical activity were the primary goal generally centres on health and/or fitness.

#Involved in a diverse number of activities typically regarded as sport activities.

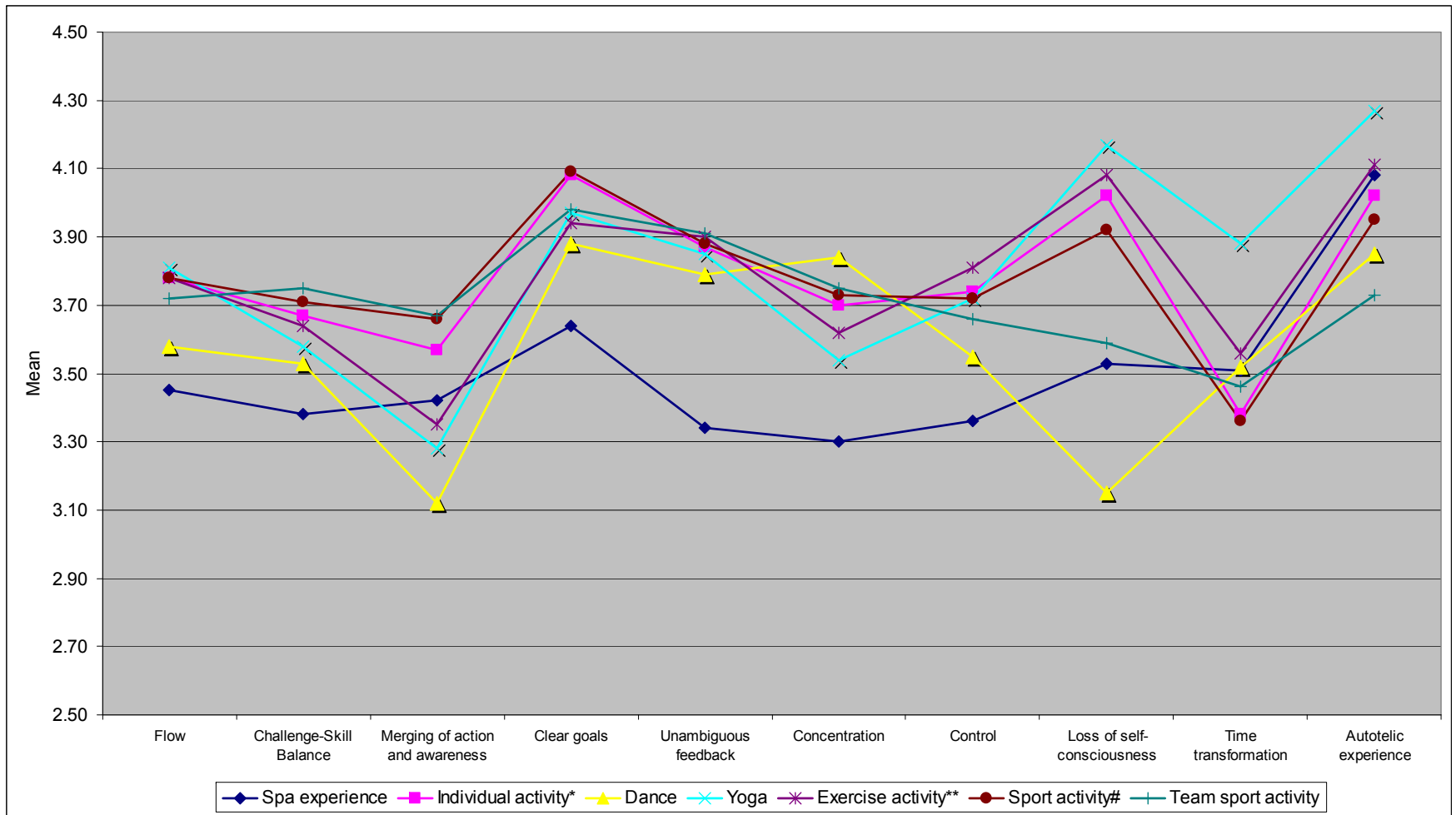


Figure 4.1 The flow experience: Spa activity vs. other physical activities



#### **4.7.1 Overall flow**

Csikszentmihalyi (1988) observed, “in flow the self is fully functioning, but not aware of itself doing it...” (p. 33). In the comparison of mean scores between spa activity and the other activities in previous studies, it was discovered that the spa activity was the lowest on the overall flow score. Among the host of activities in Table 4.8 and Fig. 4.1, yoga practitioners have the greatest propensity to experience flow. Yoga can be seen as reinforcing one’s ability to concentrate, to control memory and to limit awareness to specific goals (Mihalyi Csikszentmihalyi & Csikszentmihalyi, 1988). This activity received the highest mean score of 3.81, and differs from that of the spa experiences by 0.36 or over one third of a scale point. Participants in exercise, sport and individual activities reported a mean score of 3.78, while participants in dance reported a relatively lower mean score ( $\bar{x} = 3.58$ ). The lowest of all the activities was receiving a spa treatment ( $\bar{x} = 3.45$ ).

#### **4.7.2 Challenge-skill balance**

The activity with the highest mean scores was the team sport activities ( $\bar{x} = 3.75$ ). Individual and exercise activities had mean scores of 3.67 and 3.64 respectively. The ability to balance challenge and skill is something that can be developed. In sports activities, athletes are trained at different conditions and levels of difficulty to develop skills. The propensity to experience flow through this dimension can therefore be developed as well. This is reinforced by Csikszentmihalyi’s perspective when he argued that one’s ability to experience flow may be due to individual differences that could be in part inborn, but can also be learned (Mihalyi Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; Mihalyi Csikszentmihalyi & Csikszentmihalyi, 1988). It is therefore not surprising that in team and individual sports as well as dancing where training is necessary and where an individual can develop skills, learning how to experience flow may also flourish.

#### **4.7.3 Action-awareness merging**

The mean score for spa activity ( $\bar{x} = 3.42$ ) was notably higher than dancing ( $\bar{x} = 3.12$ ). The passive feature of the spa experience such as receiving a massage, for example,

does not require much action or voluntary active movement compared to dancing or the other activities in this study. The required movements in spa treatments as noted previously are minimal and may only involve lying on one's back or stomach, sitting upright or extending and bending the arms, legs or torso. Similarly, awareness which refers to the attention that one gives to the activity needs to be present for the "merging" of the elements to ensue. For an individual who is involved in physical activities such as dancing and sports, total awareness which is also related to concentration is important. For a person receiving a spa treatment such as a massage, they may even opt to sleep during the therapy. Clearly this leaves no room for attention or awareness. Overall, it can therefore be argued that the lack of action generates low scores on this dimension.

#### ***4.7.4 Clear goals and unambiguous feedback***

The spa activity was comparatively lower for mean score in the goals and feedback dimensions compared to the other activities. For these dimensions, the sports and individual activities, as well as in team sports, have the highest mean scores. The most common thread among these active undertakings is the existence of rules (of a game). The propensity for experiencing flow requires clear goals as well as prompt and unambiguous feedback. Indeed, it can be challenging to experience flow in an activity in which no one knows the rules, there are no expectations and there are no ways of assessing how well one is doing. This feedback dimension seems to be less applicable to spa-going activities. Spa-going received the lowest mean score of 3.64 in clarity of goals and of 3.34 in the unambiguity of feedback.

In this study, the goals broadly represent the motives which the tourists aim to satisfy from a spa experience. Unlike sports, there are no definite rules to which spa-goers are bound, except for the usual housekeeping rules or spa etiquette such as switching off mobile phones and speaking softly while in treatment rooms. If there are concrete expectations of the spa-goers, they are minimal and low-key. Also, there are no external yardsticks in measuring "how well" one is receiving a spa treatment.

In sports, feedback can almost be instantaneous. A basketball player, for example, would know that he is performing well by the number of successful 1-point, 2-point and 3-point shots he makes. Similarly, a cricket batsman's performance is measured by the

runs he makes, while a bowler's feats are gauged by the number of wickets he takes or the maiden overs he bowls. In the spa settings, however, feedback can only be represented by the thoughts and/or feelings that the spa-goers have during or after the treatment.

#### ***4.7.5 Concentration and control***

The predisposition of an individual to experience flow through concentration ( $\bar{x} = 3.30$ ) and control ( $\bar{x} = 3.36$ ) are lower while receiving spa treatments than when doing "active" activities in a physical setting. Compared to sports, the expectations from a spa-goer to concentrate and control their own body movements are much lower compared to athletes or dancers who are performing. In most cases, concentration and control are implicitly discouraged as spa-goers are likely to exert effort in movement processes. Instead, deep relaxation is encouraged in spa settings. Sleeping during treatments, where neither concentration nor control is necessary, is also seen as a relaxation technique during treatments.

#### ***4.7.6 Loss of self-consciousness***

While spa activity ( $\bar{x} = 3.53$ ) has conspicuously lower mean scores for the lowering of self-consciousness dimension than other individual activities, yoga and exercise activity (4.02, 4.17 and 4.08 respectively), it is also observed to be notably higher than dancing ( $\bar{x} = 3.15$ ). Because of the deep concentration of participants in the comparative activities, the energy is diverted to what needs to be done. Self-consciousness which refers to the anxiety or apprehension that one may have about his/her appearance disappears during a flow experience. In a spa experience, irrelevant thoughts, worries, distractions are highly discouraged; complete relaxation is therefore promoted. There is, for example, little performance anxiety in the spa context particularly as spa sessions provide limited ways in which the individual is forced to think about their image or behaviour.

#### ***4.7.7 Time transformation***

The distortion of a sense of time in spa activity almost equals that of most of the other activities in this study ( $\bar{x} = 3.51$ ). It is notably higher than individual activity ( $\bar{x} = 3.38$ ), sport activity ( $\bar{x} = 3.36$ ) and team sports activities ( $\bar{x} = 3.46$ ). The perceived transformation of time in a spa setting can either be faster or slower than usual. In section 4.6.1.8, however, it was mentioned that the statement “*time felt like it went by quickly*” ( $\bar{x} = 3.44$ ) reflects that tourist spa-goers generally perceived time to pass more quickly during the spa treatment.

#### ***4.7.8 Autotelic experience***

When all the elements of flow are present, one’s tendency to experience flow is greater making the experience itself *autotelic*, or intrinsically rewarding. In the comparison of means, it was found out that yoga was highest in the autotelic experience dimension ( $\bar{x} = 4.27$ )

### **4.8 REVIEW OF AIMS AND RELATED CHALLENGES**

The aims of the study were linked to the lack of studies that measure flow in spa experiences using the flow scales. The applicability of the FSS-2 was considerably challenging to use in this study. The challenges involved were specifically related to the interval between the spa experience and the time of completion of the survey, its length, the repetition of similar questions and most importantly, language.

#### ***4.8.1 Spa experience and survey time interval***

One of the challenges of using the FSS-2 in this study is the problem of identifying the interval between the spa experience and the time of participation in the survey. The respondent had to access memories when answering the questionnaire. It should be noted that participants were accessed in different settings; some have completed the survey immediately after a spa treatment, others less promptly. Some participants completed the questionnaire in the departure areas of airports, which means that the spa

experience that they were accessing in their memory was at least a few hours or days, possibly even weeks old. The time since having the spa experiences also varied widely among respondents who participated in the survey at resorts and public beaches. The non-traceability of the recency of the spa experience, that is, the interval between the treatment and the point of completion of the FSS-2, was a challenge in this context. In further work exact details about when the spa experience occurred could be used in interpreting the recall of the total flow experience.

#### ***4.8.2 Length and “repetition of questions”***

The six-page questionnaire employed the flow scale at the outset. That is, the flow scale consisted of the first set of questions that the respondents encountered. Importantly, the questionnaire was undeniably longer than most surveys that target tourists. The length in this context, however, only refers to the FSS-2. The perceived lengthiness of the survey is directly related to a common observation by many respondents that similar questions were being asked in the questionnaire.

This stems from the design of the questionnaire which consists of 36 items; each belongs to one of the nine dimensions of flow. There are four items for each dimension and all are stated in the past tense. The 36 items are designed to tap into the flow dimensions and in the formulation of the items, the definition of each flow dimension was related to the work of Csikszentmihalyi (Jackson & Eklund, 2004). Questions 1, 10, 19 and 28, for example, were about the challenge-skill balance. For action-awareness merging, the statements were Q 2, 11, 20 and 29. This pattern goes on for the rest of the survey. In effect, in any grouping of nine items there are similar statements. The more observant respondents noted this feature with some complaints about lengthiness and repetition.

#### ***4.8.3 Language barriers***

Because the *Event Experience Scale* was used unaltered, language-related issues were faced. The language issues discussed here affect both native and non-native English speakers alike. The use of the term language is linked with two contexts. The first one is linked with traditional language, that is, a country’s own language (e.g. Hindi in India,

Filipino or Tagalog in the Philippines). The other language issue refers to the ways respondents understood a word or an expression.

Rewording, re-phrasing expressions and translating the questionnaire were initially considered as a convenient way of dealing with some of these language barriers. The perceived need to reword or re-phrase expressions in the questionnaire stemmed from the idea that the FSS-2 was not designed for spa users and therefore did not seem entirely appropriate for the activity. India, Thailand and the Philippines are traditionally non-native English speaking countries. Although it was intended to obtain a good mix of domestic and international tourists, it was also anticipated that majority of the participants in the study would be international tourists. It was also acknowledged that many local citizens in these countries, especially the educated and affluent individuals, may participate in the research. In Thailand, however, English is not as widely used and spoken as in India and the Philippines. This was recognised as a potential constraint during the planning stages of the research, and a solution might have been to translate the entire questionnaire into Thai. This task was considered only for Thailand, and Hindi and Filipino were not considered, because in India and the Philippines, the English language is primarily used in politics and business and is widely used as a medium of instruction in most educational institutions.

Changing any part of the FSS-2 would defeat the purpose of testing the scales. Importantly, changing the expressions, words or phrases may alter the idea or meaning the FSS-2's developers had, let alone translating the survey multiple times. The potential danger in translating not only lies in changing the meaning of the questions, but also the meaning of the participants' responses especially in open-ended questions. Even though this may not be applicable in the FSS-2 because a Likert-scale was used, it was seen as necessary for the rest of the survey.

In summary, the FSS-2 was not translated in any language nor was it altered in any way because of practical reasons. It was thought that it was best to keep the survey in English. During the data collection, a number of international tourists refused to participate because of their lack of proficiency in the English language. This was very common among Russian tourists in India and Scandinavian visitors to Thailand. Such

responses were also received from several Korean, Chinese, Japanese and Taiwanese tourists in the Philippines.

In relation to actual word use, certain expressions in the questionnaire required construction and/or de-construction. For example, the first statement “*I was challenged, but I believed my skills would allow me to meet the challenge*”, the words “challenge” and “skills” needed to be defined. The researcher encountered several respondents (both native and non-native English speakers) who enquired about the meaning of the terms. Similarly, the statements “*It was really clear to me how my performance was going*”, “*I was aware of how well I was performing*” and “*my goals were clearly defined*” raised flags of confusion among many respondents. There were several participants in the study who asked for definitions from the researcher. None were offered because it was deemed that the researcher’s biases may affect subsequent responses. In essence, the respondents were told that the expressions were open to their own interpretation.

There were also other statements in the FSS-2 that many respondents associated with sensual and sexual concepts. The terms “*performance*”, “*control*”, and “*body*” are some examples where respondents sought clarification. All those who inquired about these expressions were males. The stimulation of the senses through aromas, the ambience of the place, the exposure of one’s whole or part of the body to the (often attractive) spa therapist/professional, the treatment (massage in most cases) and other spa-related experience that the respondent had may have contributed to these associations. Opportunities to explore the sexual undertones of massage and the explicitly linked sexual services which occur in some Asian spa businesses were outside the scope of this study due to both ethical considerations in research and the “position” of the researcher as a female Filipino student. Nevertheless, it is acknowledged that for some men there is an important sexual dimension to their spa experience which can link to the well-researched field of sex tourism (Opperman, 1996; Hall & Harrison, 1992).

#### **4.9 CHAPTER CONCLUSION**

The meshing of positive psychology and tourism has been made explicit through the application of the flow construct in spa experiences among tourists in South East Asia. It was the purpose of this chapter to measure and understand the applicability of the

flow model in spa experiences, and to identify the amount of flow that tourists experienced in relation to their spa experience. The use of the FSS-2 in measuring flow in spa experiences was a concerted attempt to apply the construct to tourist experiences. In this study of 319 spa-going tourists in India, Thailand and the Philippines, it was revealed that tourists' propensity to experience overall flow was moderately high ( $\bar{x}=3.48$ ), thus suggesting that spa treatments indeed provide generally positive experiences to tourists.

The nine dimensions of flow were also given above-average mean scores, which ranged between 3.30 (concentration) and 4.08 (autotelic experience). The statements with the lowest mean scores were "*it was no effort to keep my mind on what was happening*" ( $\bar{x}=3.06$ ), and "*I was aware of how well I was performing*" ( $\bar{x}=3.11$ ). These statements belong to the concentration and feedback dimensions respectively. These relatively lower mean scores can be linked to a certain degree of anxiety among the respondents, especially among spa experimenters (lower spa experience) and intermittent spa users (moderate spa experience) who make up about 43 per cent and 40 per cent of the total sample respectively. A familiarity with the spa practices and knowing what is expected during the spa treatment as well as what is expected of the spa-goers contributes to a sense of confidence and comfort during treatments. Further, clear and immediate feedback is also an important dimension of flow. In a spa setting, however, there are no rules, regulations or means of measuring how well a person receiving a treatment is doing. In this sense, linking the term "performance" with the spa experience is indeed challenging.

From a more positive perspective, the two statements with the highest mean scores were autotelic experiences: "*I really enjoyed the experience*" ( $\bar{x}=4.31$ ), and "*the experience left me feeling great*" ( $\bar{x}=4.09$ ). These statements signify that in general, tourist spa-goers are likely to experience intrinsic rewards from spa treatments. The autotelic experience refers to the view that the individuals involved in the activity are predisposed to repeat the activity even if they did not have to. Such results also suggest that undertaking a spa treatment is something that tourists are likely to purchase in their future holidays.



The ambiguity of terms and expressions used in the survey were perceived, at times, to be confusing. It was noted that certain flow dimensions did not seem applicable to the spa experience, and thus posed some challenges both to the respondent and the researcher. In the discussion of each dimension and in the review of difficulties related to the use of the FSS-2 in this study, it was noted that there were language-related issues with the use of the unaltered version of the FSS-2. The scale was used without being reworded or re-phrased to match the spa-related activity. It was also not translated to any other language. Certain words and expressions in the FSS-2 such as “*challenge*”, “*skill*”, “*performance*” and “*abilities*”, for example, did not seem to accord with the nature of the spa experience. Clarification was not provided to the participants; hence these expressions were open to the respondents’ own interpretations.

In exploring the significant factors that may have contributed to tourist spa-goers’ propensity to experience flow, it was found out that there was a very significant difference between spa treatments and a lowering of self-awareness. This result was linked to the promotion of relaxation in spa settings where spa-goers are encouraged to be worry-free to achieve relaxation, at least during the spa treatment. Similarly, the relationship was also associated with the familiarity of spa settings and procedures among tourist spa-goers, which promote a degree of confidence and comfort as already suggested.

Significant differences were also noted between the spa treatments and unambiguous feedback and a sense of control. As discussed earlier, it is challenging to measure how well one is doing during a spa treatment. Feedback can only be represented by expressed thoughts and/or feelings during a treatment, and is best conveyed by the spa-goer rather than the spa therapist. Accordingly, clear and immediate feedback is very minimal in the spa setting. In terms of control, the associations were made between Cutler’s (2006) notion of one’s ability to control factors such as feelings of ticklishness (and the uneasiness with unknown or unpredictable touch) and anxiety with wearing minimal or no clothing during spa treatments such as massage.

Gender and usual place of residence, that is, whether the tourists were travelling domestically or internationally, were used as independent variables in identifying significant differences within each flow dimension. While no significant differences

were found between males and females, mean scores indicated that domestic and international tourists varied significantly across five flow dimensions, namely unambiguous feedback, concentration, challenge-skill balance, clear goals, and sense of control. Overall, the results showed that females and domestic tourists had the greater propensity in experiencing overall flow during the spa experiences. More specifically, female domestic spa-going tourists reported the highest overall flow mean scores during spa treatments.

In an attempt to explore the significance of potential interaction effects between gender and residence, factorial ANOVA was carried out. Due to issues of sample size for the research design, the analysis considered only those respondents who reported a massage experience (n = 214, 67%). The results indicated that while no interaction between these variables existed, there were consistent effects for residence, particularly on the five flow dimensions: challenge-skill balance, clear goals, feedback, concentration and control. Effects for the residence variable were also noted in the respondents' overall flow scores. Overall, domestic tourists reported consistently higher flow benefits from the spa activities.

The overall mean scores of each flow dimension in the spa activity were also compared with the mean scores of other activities (in a physical setting) that were previously studied by the developers of the FSS-2. The results of the comparison revealed that action-awareness merging and loss of self-consciousness were lower in spa settings than the other activities. Spa activity had the highest mean score on the concentration dimension compared to the other activities.

The results in this chapter extend to conceptual and practical implications. The conceptual implication of the use of the FSS-2 in this study suggests that despite the limitations and challenges faced in using the scales, this evaluation of the relationship between positive psychology and tourism through tourist spa experiences is a solid stepping stone to further the explorations of this area. In future investigations and the further use of the FSS-2 and other similar instruments, it should be noted that language is a major consideration. The applicability of words and expressions in the scales was found to be very important. The openness of the words/terms/expressions to the respondents' own meanings and interpretations (which were believed to vary widely) is

thought to have been influential in the results of the study. Ways to provide definitions congruent with the original intentions of the FSS-2 designers would add to the flexibility of use of the scale.

Another implication of the results presented here is that while no effects were found for gender, five characteristics of flow did vary for the respondents' place of residence (domestic vs. international tourists). Further, it is suggested that spa experiences are indeed positive experiences from which tourists can benefit. In the next chapter, the perceived benefits of spa experiences while travelling will be discussed.

# CHAPTER 5

## Reflections: The Benefits of Spa Experiences

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*“A dominant impulse on encountering beauty is to wish to hold on to it, to possess it and give it weight in one’s life. There is an urge to say, ‘I was here, I saw this and it mattered to me”*

**Alain de Botton**  
*The Art of Travel (2002, p. 214)*

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### Chapter Structure

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#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

##### CHAPTER 5 (Part 1)

*“What do I get from it?”*: Spa benefits and contributions to travel experience

#### 5.2 STUDY 2 – ONLINE SURVEY: RESEARCH AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

- 5.2.1 Respondent Profile
- 5.2.2 The Asian spa experience
- 5.2.3 Benefits Sought
- 5.2.4 Contributions of the Spa Experience
- 5.2.5 Spa Experiences, Wellness & Temporal Patterns
- 5.2.6 Synthesis
- 5.2.7 Implications arising from the methodology

##### CHAPTER 5 (Part 2)

Plucked from the Blogosphere: Of travellers’ spa experiences

#### 5.3 STUDY 3 –BLOG ANALYSIS

- 5.3.1 Literature Review
- 5.3.2 Aims of the study
- 5.3.3 Methodology
- 5.3.4 Results & Discussion
- 5.3.5 Overview of Findings

#### 5.4 CHAPTER CONCLUSION

- 5.4.1 Highlights of findings
  - 5.4.2 Methodological synthesis
- 

### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

The results presented in this thesis are framed by Clawson and Knetsch’s (1966) phases of tourist behaviour. As mentioned in the earlier chapters, the main phases of travel that guide this work are the pre-purchase stage (Chapter 3 – motivation) and the on-site

experience stage (Chapter 4 – flow experiences from on-site spa activities). The reflection stage is covered in this chapter. In Chapter 5, the researcher considers the post-spa experiences of tourists. More specifically, benefits from spa experiences and the time scale for the extension of the benefits into the lives of the tourists are explored. This chapter has two parts that both discuss the benefits of spa experiences as reported by spa-going tourists. The first half of the chapter reports the benefits section of the on-site survey. The other parts of that study were presented and discussed in Chapter 3 on travel and spa-going motivations. The second half of the chapter is an independent study which involved filtering and analysing travel blogs from three different travel blog sites namely Travel Blog, Travel Pod and the Lonely Planet Blogs. Both parts should be seen as methodologically independent yet conceptually related components of the reflection stage of spa experiences.

Chapter 5 (Part 1) presents the research aims relating to the benefits of spa experiences in South East Asia, and briefly re-states the methodology used in the study. A sample profile is also presented as a vital piece of information, which contains the previous travel and spa experience measures as important profiling variables. As a review, the section identifies the different types of spa-goers by experience as outlined in the works of Smith and Kelly (2006a, 2006b) and in the Global Spa Summit Report of 2010. A review of the benefits sought as well as a brief overview of some results will be presented and linked to the concerns of the current chapter. The contributions of spa experiences based on the TCP theory will be analysed and cross-examined with gender and residence that is, whether the spa-goers are domestic or international tourists. Similarly, the benefits from spa experiences will also be presented. An assessment of how long the benefits lingered with the tourists after the spa experience will be discussed. The case of 58 respondents was further analysed to explore the relationships. The first half of the chapter will conclude with implications of the study.

Subsequently, the second part of the chapter presents a different angle to this work by studying travel blogs to identify benefits achieved from spa experiences (during and post-treatment). The research aims are presented and the methodology will be discussed by documenting each stage of the blog filtering process and subsequent analysis. A section outlining how the data were analysed is presented.

The results and discussion section presents a profile of the bloggers whose stories were included in the study in terms of gender and travel party. Secondly, the discussion identifies from the blogs the benefits from spa experience during and after the treatments. The benefits that were identified from the blogs were classified into different dimensions and will be discussed in detail. In this study, excerpts from the blogs are included. Nonetheless, the names of the blog authors have been changed to protect their identity and privacy. Chapter 5 (Part 2) concludes with a brief discussion of the implications of the study. The chapter concludes by highlighting the findings in both studies and linking the two sections of the research.

## **CHAPTER 5 (Part 1)**

### ***“What do I get from it?”: Spa benefits and contributions to travel experience***

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#### **5.2 STUDY 2 – ONLINE SURVEY: RESEARCH AIMS AND METHODOLOGY**

The tourists' perceived benefits from spa experiences were considered through the following aims:

1. To identify what literature-derived benefits from spa experiences (as tested from the literature) contributed to spa-going tourists' well-being and travel experience in South East Asia;
2. To understand the temporal dimension of the perceived benefits of spa activities using the multidimensional concept of wellness; and,
3. To explore how gender and residence (that is, whether the tourists were travelling domestically or internationally) relate to the benefits of spa experiences.

The research method and respondent profile have been presented in Chapter 3. They are reiterated in brief in this chapter as a reminder of the characteristics of the sample and how the data were gathered. The brief repetition of this information facilitates the reading of this study as a stand-alone activity without referring back to previously provided material. The data collection tool was an online survey that was carried out between September 2010 and February 2011. The questionnaire was divided into six parts: 1) pre-travel spa plans; 2) most recent spa experience in the South East Asian region; 3) travel and spa-going motivation; 4) post-spa experience; 5) previous spa and travel experience; and 6) demographic information. In this chapter, parts 4, 5 and 6 will be presented and the relationships between variables will be discussed.

The geographical scope for online surveys is virtually global; hence snowball sampling was thought to be the most expedient. The survey link was posted in different spa sites as well as in the researcher's own networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter. The advantages of print advertising were also considered; fliers were printed and sent out to spa businesses in Thailand and the Philippines. The fliers served as an invitation to participate in the study, and contained the survey link as well as the researcher's contact

details. A total of 1,200 fliers were sent out to spa businesses and freelance masseuses/masseurs in India, Thailand and the Philippines. Special key codes were marked on the fliers to identify its source. These codes were entered by the respondents in the last part of the survey where they were invited to join the prize draw as an incentive in participating in the study. The target respondents were individuals who were at least 18 years old at the time of survey, and must have had a spa experience while on a domestic/international holiday in any Asian country in the last 18 months prior to the survey. On average, the survey completion time took 16 minutes to complete. Participation in the survey was completely voluntary.

### ***5.2.1 Respondent Profile***

#### **5.2.1.1 The demographics**

One hundred and thirty-seven (87%) out of the 167 surveys collected were usable. The sample consisted of 70 per cent females, and individuals in their 20s (38%) and 30s (40%). About a quarter of them had professional/technical nature of work. Interestingly, almost 63 per cent of the sample were international tourists. Notably, 42 per cent of the respondents were based in the Philippines, which can be linked to the researcher's personal contacts and network. Forty-five of the 58 Philippine residents (32.9% of the total sample) were domestic tourists. The other domestic tourists were based in Thailand.

#### **5.2.1.2 Previous travel and spa experience**

Travel experience is a significant variable in understanding travel motives as discussed in the previous chapters. Similarly, in modelling the spa-going career pattern, previous spa experience was shown to be a salient variable. The respondents' previous travel and spa experience have been previously presented in Chapter 3 (Part 2). It is, however, important to emphasise these variables once again in this section. The international and domestic travel experience as well as the previous spa experience will be presented in more detail. This information serves as a framework for further discussion in later in the chapter.



Table 5.2.1 Previous domestic & international travel experience (past five years)

Frequency of travel	Domestic N = 132 (%)	International N = 132 (%)
Never	--	15 (10.9)
1-4 times	51 (38.6)	76 (57.6)
5-10 times	35 (26.5)	25 (18.9)
More than 10 times	46 (33.6)	16 (12.1)

Table 5.2.1 reveals that travel experience varied across the sample. Although none of the participants was totally inexperienced in domestic travel, almost 11 per cent of them had never travelled out of their country of residence. Further investigation of this information revealed that 14 out of the 15 individuals who have never travelled overseas were Filipinos. In relation to their previous travel experience, the respondents were asked if they have visited a spa while they were travelling. Because the travel experience in question was in the last five years, it was thought requesting information about the last 12 months of their previous spa experience would also facilitate a more recall of their experience.

The respondents reported that in the 12 months prior to participating in the survey, more than 30 per cent have never visited a spa while travelling domestically. One of the simple inferences that can be derived from Table 5.2.2 is the participants in the study were more likely to visit a spa as international tourists in South East Asia, given the lower percentage of non-spa visitors in the past 12 months. Interestingly for the past five years, however, the same percentage (19.7%) of non-spa visitors is apparent from the respondents' domestic and international travel experience. Again, this was further investigated and it was discovered that over 42 per cent (n = 11) of the cases have not at all visited a spa while travelling within or outside their usual country of residence in the past five years. Similar to the context of previous travel experience, a spectrum of non-experienced and experienced spa-goers participated in this study.

Table 5.2.2 Spa experience during previous travels (5 years and 12 months)

Frequency of spa visit	Domestic spa visit		International spa visit	
	Last 12 months	Last 5 years	Last 12 months	Last 5 years
	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)
Never	44 (33.6)	26 (19.7)	27 (23.1)	26 (19.7)
Just once	36 (27.5)	42 (31.8)	40 (34.2)	28 (23.9)
2-5 times	36 (27.5)	29 (22)	43 (36.8)	38 (32.5)
6-10 times	6 (4.6)	19 (14.4)	4 (3.4)	15 (10.9)
More than 10 times	9 (6.9)	16 (12.1)	3 (2.6)	13 (13.5)

To explore the concepts of previous travel and spa experiences more fully, they have been stratified into different levels. For both kinds of experiences, a standardized variable which combines the domestic and international experiences was created based on Tables 5.2.1 and 5.2.2. While the principle that international travel is arguably twice as important to experience levels as domestic travel was applied to travel and spa experience, other variations were employed which resulted in different score scaling. The frequency of travel had corresponding scores (0 = *never*; 1 = *1-4 times*; 2 = *5-10 times*; and, 3 = *more than 10 times*). The travel experience score was calculated as the sum of domestic travel activity score added to twice the international activity score; the scores therefore ranged between zero and nine which were divided into three segments signifying the travel experience. Scores of 0-3 were *low* (35.6%), scores of 4-6 were *moderate* (47%), and scores of 7-9 were *high* (17.4%).

A similar approach to treating the respondents' previous spa experience was employed. Although information about their previous spa visits included the 12-month and 5-year time frames, only the latter was considered for this analysis to maintain consistency with the travel experience. The frequency of spa visit were assigned values (0 = *never*; 1 = *just once*; 2 = *2-5 times*; 3 = *6-10 times*; and, 4 = *more than 10 times*). Scores ranged between zero and eight, and was equally divided into three segments: scores of 0-2 were *low* (44.7%), scores of 3-5 were *moderate* (37.9%) and scores of 6-8 were *high* (17.4%).

When the levels of spa experience was compared between the two time frames, it was observed that although the distribution of respondents across the three levels was uneven, a similar pattern—where there were more inexperienced spa-goers and marginal highly experienced spa-goers—is evident (Fig. 5.1). While drawing inferences from the graph can be attempted, it was thought that they may be simplistic and that some factors may potentially be underestimated. The length of time, that is, 12 months as opposed to 60 months are not comparable and it can be concluded that one is more likely to have more spa visits while travelling in a span of five years than in one calendar year.

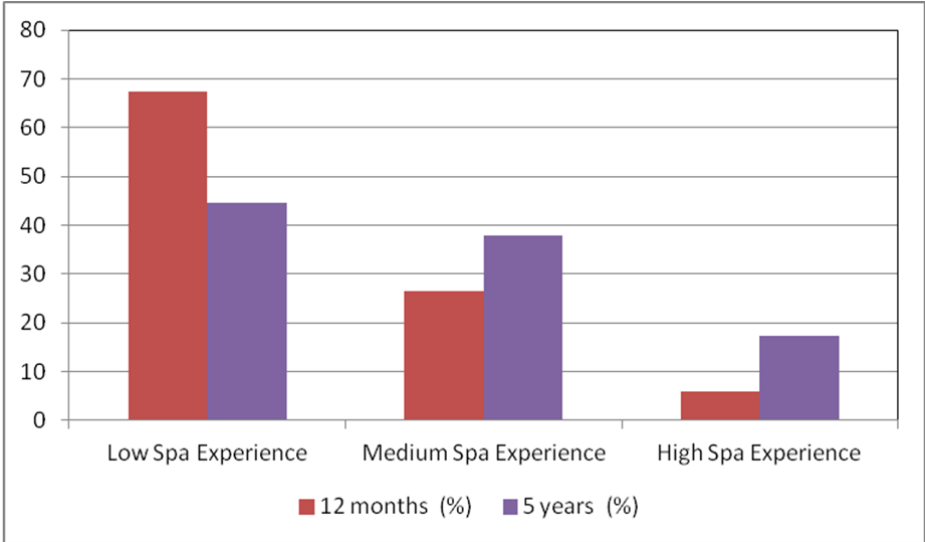


Figure 5.1 Difference in levels of spa experience (12 months vs. 5 years)

**5.2.1.3 Type of spa-goer (by experience)**

The different levels of spa experience in the previous section can be linked to the existing literature. As discussed in Chapter 3, inspiration was drawn from Smith and Kelly’s (2006b) and the Global Spa Summit’s (2010b) notion of tourists’ wellness segments, which was used in this research as a framework for these results. Smith and Kelly used the colour purple to depict the segmentation. They suggested that the less-experienced spa-goers (*experimenters*) can be depicted by the faint purple (lilac), and that as they increase in spa experience, they can be depicted by a darker shade of purple. The highly experienced spa-goers (*purists*) can therefore be represented by very deep

purple. The moderately-experienced spa goers are labelled the *intermittent users* of spas.

Smith and Kelly suggested several dimensions that make each cohort distinct from each other. Prior knowledge and practice, perception of the experience, type of holiday, perception of the surroundings during the holiday and the amount of instruction characterize each spa-going segment. Experimenters have very little knowledge compared to their occasional and regular spa practitioners. While experimenters find novelty in the spa experience, the intermittent users are somewhat motivated by the destination pull factor of spa offerings. For the more experienced individuals, spa-going is a continued or relocated experience and they are more likely go on spa holidays than the other cohorts. Whereas highly experienced spa-goers find the surroundings less relevant, the less experienced counterparts look for comfort. Because the intermittent spa-goers occupy a mid-range on the spectrum, they tend to look for a range of surroundings and activities. In terms of instruction, the experimenters require more focused attention while the purists need more advanced instruction and space for self-directed practice.

#### **5.2.1.4 Types of spa**

It is consistent across many spa-related studies that day spas are the most popular type (GSS Report, 2008; 2010a, 2010b; ISPA, 2008b; 2008d, 2010; Mak, et al., 2009). Day spas are described by ISPA as businesses that provide spa services that may include cosmetic-related treatments such as facials on a day-use basis. They are usually independent businesses; that is they are not located within or associated with accommodation such as a hotel or a resort. In 2007, it was reported in the Global Spa Summit (2008) that out of the estimated 71,762 spas operating around the world, more than 45,000 of them were day/club/salon spas (62.9%) and almost 11,500 were hotel/resort spas (16%). These properties had global estimated revenue of US\$ 21 billion and US\$ 12.6 billion respectively (2008, p. 16).

Among the respondents, day-spa goers make up more than half of the participants who travelled internationally and domestically in the past 12 months (55.5%) and five years (51.1%). Table 5.2.3 shows that hotel and resort spas are also a popular choice for tourist

spa goers, with 36.5 per cent of respondents reported to have visited this spa type in the past year at the time of participation in the survey. About half of the sample said they have used spa services in hotels and resorts in the last five years. Again, this was an unsurprising result. Hotels and resorts that house a spa are expected to actively promote the spa business to staying guests. Travelling individuals, especially those who are tired, sleep-deprived or restless are potentially drawn to the promise of relaxation and/or rejuvenation that spas profess.

Table 5.2.3. **Types of spas and percentage use in this study**  
(According to ISPA, 2008d)

Types of Spa	Domestic & international travel in the:	
	Last 12 months N (%)	Last 5 years N (%)
<b>Day spa</b> <i>(spa services may include cosmetic spa services such as facials, peels, waxing, . on a day-use basis; it is usually an independent spa which is not located within a hotel/resort)</i>	76 (55.5)	70 (51.1)
<b>Hotel/resort spa</b> <i>(owned and/or operated by and located within a hotel/resort)</i>	50 (36.5)	68 (49.6)
<b>Destination spa</b> <i>(usually offers lifestyle-changing programs that include spa services, fitness activities, healthy cuisine, ; visits are usually 3-7 days or longer)</i>	23 (16.8)	39 (28.5)
<b>Mineral spring spa</b> <i>(offers an on-site source of natural mineral, thermal or seawater used in hydrotherapy treatments)</i>	15 (10.9)	25 (18.2)
<b>Club spa</b> <i>(its main purpose is fitness, but offers different spa services on a day-use basis)</i>	18 (13.1)	27 (19.7)
<b>Cruise ship spa</b> <i>(a spa on a cruise ship)</i>	7 (5.1)	17 (12.4)
<b>Medical spa</b> <i>(operates under the fulltime supervision of a licensed health care professional and offers medical care, aesthetic/cosmetic and wellness procedures wherein spa services and other complementary and alternative therapies and treatment)</i>	19 (13.9)	25 (18.2)

### ***5.2.2 The Asian spa experience***

Almost 79 per cent of the respondents had their spa experience in the Philippines (n = 62, 45.3%), Thailand (n = 35, 25.5%) and India (n = 11, 8%). The rest of the sample identified Cambodia, China/Hong Kong/Macau, Laos, Malaysia, the Maldives and Singapore as their source of an Asian spa experience. It was not surprising that the majority of the respondents were from the first three countries mentioned. It is thought that the manner in which the respondents were recruited was a key factor in this context. Firstly, the fliers/invitations to participate in the study were disseminated in these countries. As mentioned in Chapter 3, about 14 per cent of the sample was identified as having used the fliers. It is also assumed that some participants who used the flier have deliberately not entered the key code. In short, there were flier-users that were undetected. The second recruitment-related factor was the researcher's use of her personal networking sites, which is believed to have stimulated the responses from India, Thailand and the Philippines. A brief discussion about sampling will be presented in the latter part of this Chapter.

The respondents were also asked to identify the treatments that they used. The massage was the most popular spa-related treatment. About 79 per cent of the cases (n = 108) reported that they used non-water-based treatments such as massages, body scrubs and wraps. Hand and feet treatments, that is, those that involve massage, scrubs, manicure/pedicure (n = 59, 43.1%) and facial treatments (n = 47, 34.3%) were also found to be a preference by tourist spa-goers. Traditional/indigenous treatments were also used; more than 66 per cent of the respondents reported to have received at least one traditional/indigenous treatment during their spa visit. Ayurveda treatments, for example, were used by almost 15 per cent of the total sample. These results can be linked to the availability and accessibility of traditional treatments in South East Asia. Such treatments are strongly promoted in these areas.

### ***5.2.3 Benefits Sought***

As briefly discussed in Chapter 2, the concept of benefits sought is closely linked with the motivation construct. In essence, the benefits that an individual aims to attain from undertaking an activity are based on their motives. In Chapter 3, motivation as a conceptual scheme in the context of spa-going activities in South East Asia was studied.

The discussions on travel and spa-going motives identified relaxation and escape as the most important motives for travelling and spa-going.

#### **5.2.3.1 A review of spa-going motives (from Chapter 3)**

Motives are indeed intertwined with benefits sought. In understanding the benefits identified in this study, it is important to make the linkages between motives and benefits sought clear. In the context of this study, it is assumed that tourist spa-goers are motivated to visit spas to achieve certain benefits. The spa-going career pattern has been devised to present the results of why tourists visit spas while traveling in India, Thailand and the Philippines. In this sub-section of the motivation study, it was discovered that escape and relaxation are the very important motives among tourist spa-goers regardless whether they were inexperienced, moderately or highly experienced. It was also discovered that the spa experience provided a sense of novelty to their trip notwithstanding their previous spa experience.

#### **5.2.4 Contributions of the Spa Experience**

##### **5.2.4.1 The effects of spa experiences on tourists and travel**

The post-spa experience in this study refers to the feelings and thoughts that the respondent was prompted to recall while completing the questionnaire. The timing of the experience, that is the length of time between the tourists' most current Asian spa experience and the completion of the survey, varied from one day to 18 months. It was therefore recognised that the questionnaire must be focused on the positive experiences. While it was thought to be potentially helpful for further analysis, a segment on the possible negative spa experiences was seen as confusing the respondent in terms of the main aim of assessing the benefits of the spa experience while consciously accessing the memory. Also, instead of an open-ended question about the perceived benefits of the spa experience, a list of benefit-related statements was presented. The discussions in this section are based on the results from descriptive statistics as well as from other statistical tools such as one-way and factorial ANOVA.

In identifying how the spa-going tourists felt after the spa experience, a set of 12 constructed benefit-related statements were presented. The respondents were asked to rate their agreement using a Likert scale with a minimum of 1 (*strongly disagree*) and a

maximum of 7 (*strongly agree*). The descriptive table (Table 5.2.4) shows that the mean scores ranged between 5.15 (*gaining a sense of belongingness*) and 6.27 (*more relaxed*). The result that the respondents were mostly relaxed after the spa experience ( $\bar{x} = 6.27$ ) was perhaps predictable. In reference to Chapter 3, it has been discussed that the most important spa-going motives were to escape/relax. Hence, by connecting the benefits-sought and motivation constructs, a consistent linkage is evident that indeed, benefits are linked to motives. Reports of better sleep ( $\bar{x} = 5.86$ ) and feelings of youthfulness and being energized ( $\bar{x} = 5.69$ ) were also noted. Arguably, the ability to sleep better as a benefit of the spa experience may appear too simplistic considering that there may also be other factors that contribute to one's notion of a "better sleep" such as sleep-inducing medications. The presentation of the question, however, was very specific and was clearly about the spa-experience only. In the questionnaire, the respondents were asked to rate their agreement to the statements which started with "*After the spa experience...*"

Table 5.2.4 **Benefits after the spa experience**

<b>After the spa experience:</b>	N	Mean	Mode	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
I was more relaxed	132	6.27	7	1.16	1	7
My physical appearance has improved	132	5.31	6	1.89	1	8
I felt better about myself than before	132	5.45	6	1.67	1	8
I felt more youthful and energized	132	5.69	7	1.51	1	8
My overall physical health has improved	132	5.43	7	1.76	1	8
I slept better	132	5.86	7	1.36	1	8
I gained a sense of belongingness	132	5.15	7	2.29	1	8
I gained self-confidence	132	5.38	6	2.18	1	8
I gained a sense of independence	132	5.30	6	2.26	1	8
I became more peaceful and calmer	132	5.63	7	1.65	1	8
I learned to love and appreciate myself even more	132	5.55	7	2.11	1	8
I became a better person	132	5.39	8	2.28	1	8

The comparatively higher standard deviation scores for the statements about gaining a *sense of belongingness*, *self-confidence*, *a sense of independence* as well as *learning to love and appreciate one's self* and *becoming a better person* can be attributed to the ambiguity of the statements. In a spa setting where treatments lasts for as little as 20 minutes and as long as five to six hours, it is certainly a challenge to measure



belongingness (SD = 2.29) and self-independence (SD = 2.26). Further, it is also difficult to measure one's value as a person from a single spa visit. Although the statement is open to individual interpretations, it can be argued that even multiple treatments from a spa are unlikely to affect one's personality simply because the focus of spa treatments are on the physical being and only to a minor extent on the psychological well-being of a person. Personality, as defined by Allport (1961), is the "dynamic organisation within the individual of those psychophysical systems that determine his unique adjustments to the environment". The dynamism involved in this construct suggests that "becoming a better person" (SD = 2.28) is a very broad and vague statement to be measured after a single visit to a spa.

*Gaining self-confidence* (SD = 2.18) and *loving and appreciating one's self* (SD = 2.11) are thought to be closely linked. The association between these two statements is based on the premise that one's capacity to love and appreciate his/her own self is a manifestation of self-confidence. Although the mean scores for these items were high, the standard deviation scores may also suggest that these statements were imprecise and the lack of a uniform interpretation may have caused a degree of confusion among respondents. It was later realized that some respondents may not even have thought of the concepts of self-confidence and/or self-acceptance in terms of their spa experience.

In relation to travel, the respondents were queried about how the spa experience contributed to their trip (Table 5.2.5). Again, they were asked to rate their agreement to 12 benefit-related statements. Unlike the material in the preceding section, this set of statements was based on the key motives in the TCP model. Each statement depicts the motives from the TCP. The statements "*the spa experience gave me the chance to be pampered, which I do not get so often at home*" and "*the spa experience was a unique part of the trip*", for example, indicate novelty. Interestingly, the item which states "*the spa experience was an opportunity to try new and different experience while travelling*" may also connote a sense of novelty, stimulation and personal development at the same time. The derivation of these statements from the TCP also aims to test the notion that benefits-sought and motives are closely intertwined.

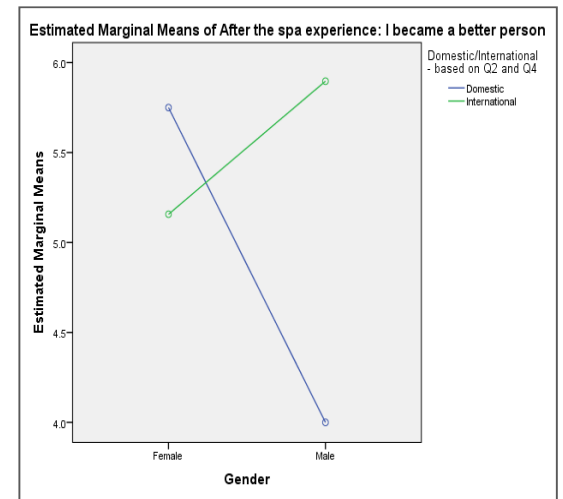
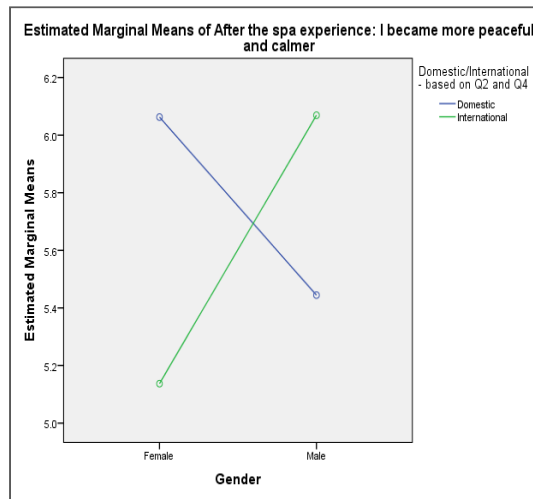
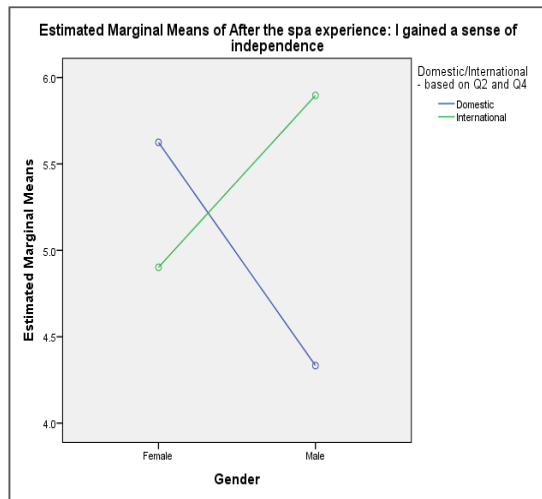
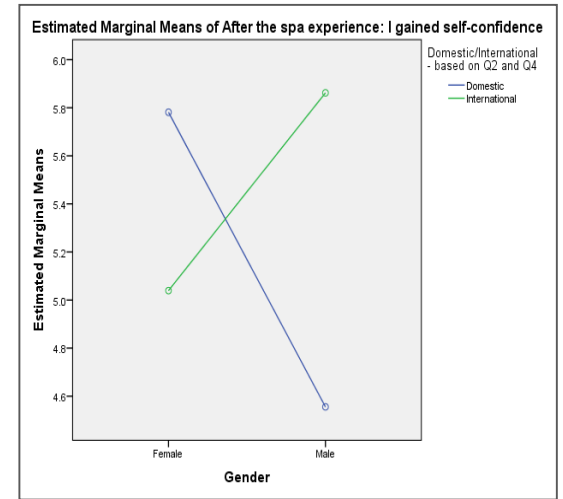
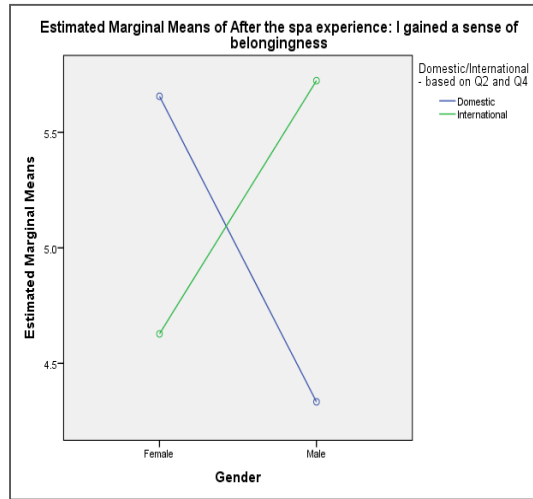
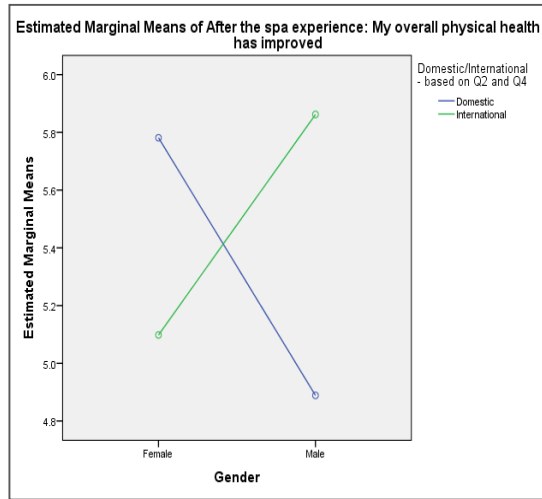
The connection between benefits-sought and motives in the context of spa-going and how spa experiences contribute to the trip was supported by the participants' responses. The statements "*the spa experience was a relaxing way to unwind and get away from*

*the usual stress and demands of travelling*” ( $\bar{x}=6.16$ ) and *“the spa experience gave me the chance to be pampered, which I do not get so often at home”* ( $\bar{x}=6.11$ ), which were based on relaxation/escape and novelty respectively, were rated very highly by the respondents. The tourist spa-goers were also convinced that the spa experience was an opportunity for them to *“try a new and different experience while travelling”* ( $\bar{x}=5.94$ ) and that it *“made the trip more enjoyable”* ( $\bar{x}=5.84$ ). These statements signify novelty, stimulation and to some extent, relaxation.

Table 5.2.5 Respondents reported spa experience's benefit

The spa experience:	N	Mean	Mode	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
was a relaxing way to unwind and get away from the usual stress and demands of travelling ( <i>escape/relaxation</i> )	131	6.16	7	1.175	2	7
gave me the chance to be pampered, which I do not get so often at home( <i>novelty</i> )	131	6.11	7	1.236	2	7
made me feel important ( <i>recognition, belongingness</i> )	131	5.63	7	1.689	2	8
made me appreciate nature ( <i>nature</i> )	131	5.11	6	1.774	1	8
made me appreciate my relationship with my partner/spouse/family/ friends ( <i>strengthening/securing relationships</i> )	131	5.64	7	1.781	1	8
strengthened my ties with my partner/spouse/family/ friends ( <i>strengthening/securing relationships</i> )	131	5.50	7	1.927	1	8
was an opportunity to learn more about the place, the local people and their culture ( <i>novelty, stimulation, personal/self-development</i> )	131	5.49	7	1.816	1	8
was an opportunity to try a new and different experience while travelling( <i>novelty, stimulation</i> )	132	5.94	7	1.471	2	8
contributed to my achievements as a traveller ( <i>recognition, self-actualization as a traveller</i> )	132	5.37	6	1.696	1	8
was a unique part of the trip ( <i>novelty</i> )	132	5.16	6	1.897	1	8
made the trip a memorable one ( <i>stimulation, nostalgia</i> )	132	5.40	7	1.720	1	8
made the trip more enjoyable ( <i>stimulation, relaxation</i> )	132	5.84	7	1.507	1	8

Gender and residence (that is, whether the respondents are domestic or international tourists) are seen as very important variables in understanding how tourist spa-goers perceive the benefits that they get from spa experiences. As in Chapter 4, gender and residence were used as independent variables. To further explore latent interaction effects between these two variables, factorial ANOVA was performed. The results indicated no significant effect for both gender and residence specifically as main effects in the post-spa experience benefits. An interaction between these variables was however noted on six of the statements (Table 5.2.7). There were interactions between gender and residence on becoming “...a better person”,  $F(1,116) = 6.18, p < .05$  and “...more peaceful and calmer”,  $F(1,116) = 4.68, p < .05$  after the spa experience. An interaction was also observed on the respondents gaining “a sense of belongingness”,  $F(1,116) = 5.86, p < .05$ , “self-confidence”,  $F(1,116) = 4.57, p < .05$  and “a sense of independence”,  $F(1,116) = 5.24, p < .05$ . Finally, there was interaction between the variables on an improved “overall physical health...”,  $F(1,116) = 4.69, p < .05$ . Fig. 5.2 shows the graphed interaction between gender, residence and the benefits of spa experience. The visual representations of the interactions indicate that female domestic tourists and male international tourists felt the benefits more than their counterparts of the opposite sex.



**Figure 5.2 Factorial ANOVA: Interactions between gender, residence and perceived benefits of spa experiences**

In terms of the perceived contributions of the spa experience to the respondents' trip as a whole, it was observed in the factorial ANOVA results that the only effect for residence was the perceived "*opportunity to try a new and different experience while travelling*" ( $p = .028$ ,  $F = 4.93$ ). This means that there are differences in the level of agreement on the above statement between domestic and international tourists. By linking this result to the previous discussion that most of the respondents in this study were less experienced spa-goers (experimenters), it can be inferred that the spa-going activity in South East Asia is a novel experience for tourists. The indigenous/traditional treatments were hypothesized to have contributed to the novelty of spa experiences in Asia. To test this hypothesis, one-way ANOVA was carried out. Nevertheless, the results indicated that there were no significant differences between the benefit-related statements and the indigenous/traditional treatments.

Table 5.2.6 Tests of Between-Subjects Effects: Gender, residence and benefits to the trip

Source		Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
	The spa experience:						
Residence	was an opportunity to try a new and different experience while travelling	10.25	1	10.25	4.925	.028	.041
	The spa experience:						
Gender	was a relaxing way to unwind and get away from the usual stress and demands of travelling	5.31	1	5.31	4.095	.045	.034
	The spa experience:						
Residence * Gender	made me appreciate nature	28.41	1	28.41	10.176	.002	.081
	made me appreciate my relationship with my partner/spouse/family/ friends	14.00	1	14.00	4.804	.030	.040
	was a unique part of the trip	16.33	1	16.33	4.820	.030	.040
	After the spa experience:						
Residence * Gender	My overall physical health has improved	13.97	1	13.97	4.691	.032	.039
	I gained a sense of belongingness	29.80	1	29.80	5.861	.017	.048
	I gained self-confidence	21.36	1	21.36	4.569	.035	.038
	I gained a sense of independence	26.61	1	26.61	5.235	.024	.043
	I became more peaceful and calmer	12.23	1	12.23	4.675	.033	.038
	I became a better person	31.55	1	31.55	6.179	.014	.050

The factorial ANOVA results also indicated of an effect for gender on the statement “*the spa experience was a relaxing way to unwind and get away from the usual stress and demands of traveling*”,  $F(1,116) = 4.10, p < .05$ . This means that there are significant differences in the responses of males and females on this statement. The descriptive statistics revealed that the females agreed to this statement more strongly than the males ( $\bar{x}=6.33$  vs.  $\bar{x}=5.82$ ). It was also discovered that the female sample agreed to all of the statements more strongly than the males, except for the statement “*the spa experience made the trip more enjoyable*” ( $\bar{x}=5.79$  vs.  $\bar{x}=5.99$ ). These results suggest that female tourists who visit spas find the relaxation/escape element of spa experiences more beneficial to their overall travel experience than male spa-going tourists.

In the exploration of the relationships between gender, residence and the perceived contributions of spa experiences to travel, interactions between the independent variables were revealed. The main interactions were on three statements which revolved around the concept of appreciation as a theme:

1. appreciation of nature (“*the spa experience made me appreciate nature*”),  $F(1,116)=5.86, p < .05$ ;
2. appreciation of relationships (“*the spa experience made me appreciate my relationship with my partner/spouse/family/friends*”),  $F(1,116)=4.8, p < .05$ ; and,
3. appreciation of the uniqueness of the experience (“*the spa experience was a unique part of the trip*”),  $F(1,116)=4.82, p < .05$ .

Fig. 5.3.3 suggests that overall, female domestic tourists and male international tourists feel that the spa experience made them appreciate nature and their relationships during the trip more than their opposite gender counterparts. The results also indicate that the spa-going activity is a positive experience during the trip for these cohorts.



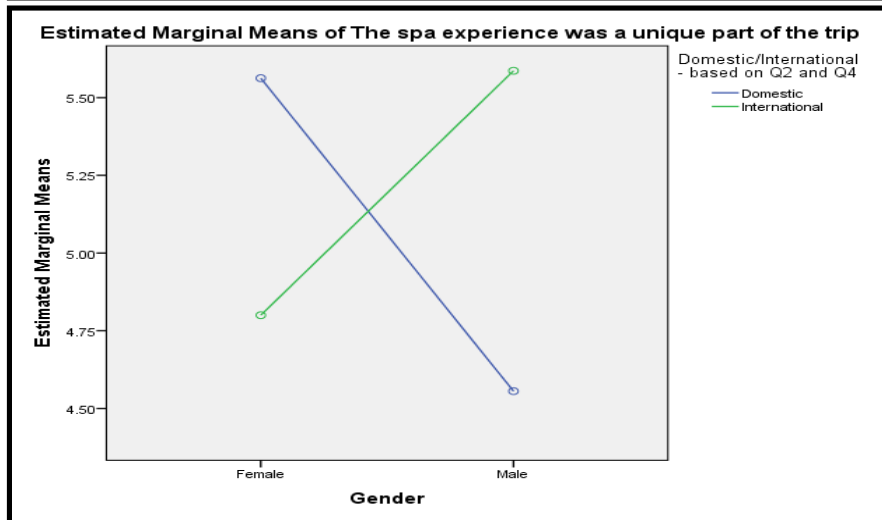
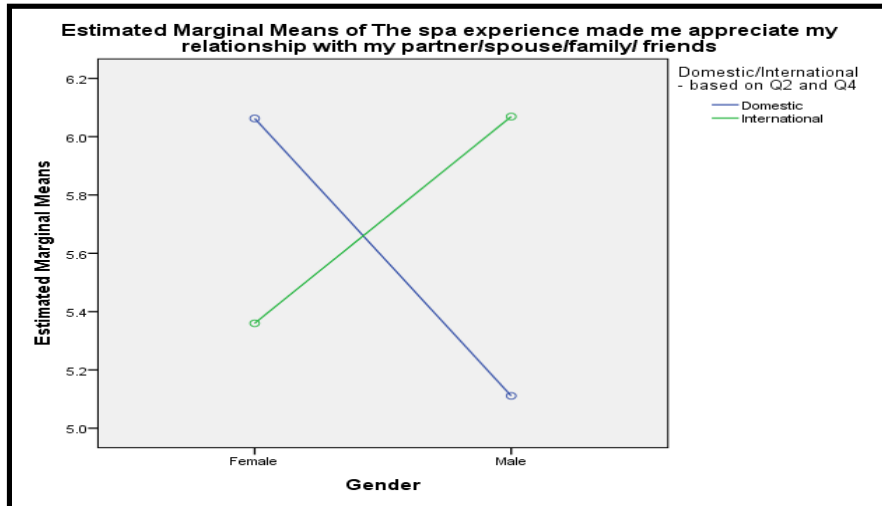
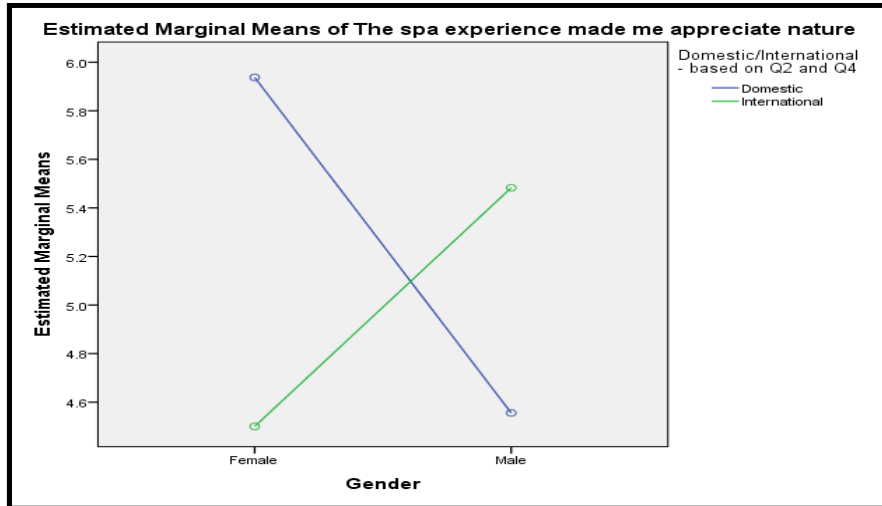


Figure 5.3 Factorial ANOVA: Interaction between gender, residence and perceived benefits of spa experiences to the trip

### 5.2.5 Spa Experiences, Wellness & Temporal Patterns

An additional section of the questionnaire focused on the possible contributions of the spa experience to the tourists' well-being. For this section, the multidimensionality of wellness was used as a charter in framing the key root or base question. As discussed in Chapter 1, the holistic nature of wellness has been prominent in the literature. As a holistic and multidimensional concept, wellness is an integration of physical, psychological (emotional and intellectual), spiritual, social, environmental and even financial dimensions. In the survey, the question “*If you think your spa experience during the trip contributed to your well-being, approximately how long did the benefits last in terms of your: (dimensions enumerated)*” was asked. The aim of this section of the survey was to assess the persistence of the different dimensions of wellness for tourist spa-goers benefited from their spa experience in South East Asia.

Of the six wellness dimensions given, the respondents reported that they benefited for the longest time in the social dimension ( $\bar{x} = 4.04$ ), where about 21 per cent ( $n = 28$ ) of the respondents claimed that they felt the benefit on this dimension for up to 6-12 months. This result can be tied to the descriptive analysis of the statements. Table 5.2.5 in the previous section revealed that the statements that imply strengthening and securing relationships, that is, “*the spa made me appreciate my relationship with my partner/spouse/family/friends*” ( $\bar{x} = 5.64$ ) and “*strengthened my ties with my partner/spouse/family/ friends*” ( $\bar{x} = 5.50$ ) were important benefits to the trip, albeit not as significant as the others. This linkage suggests that although these statements referred to how the spa experience contributed to the overall holiday/trip, the respondents themselves directly benefited as individuals. This suggests that the spa experience, the memories and the outcomes of the trip have become part of the individual's life and travel story, which extend his/her social sphere.

In an attempt to identify differences in the wellness responses between males and females, independent  $t$ -tests were carried out. Table 5.2.8 shows that the mean scores are marginally higher for males than for females in all dimensions except for the occupational dimension. In Levene's test (Table 5.2.9), equal variances were assumed for the emotional ( $\bar{x} = 3.74$ , SE = .17) and occupational well-being ( $\bar{x} = 2.93$ , SE = .19),

but no differences between males and females were significant for these dimensions,  $t(119) = -.18, p > .05$  and  $t(119) = .97, p > .05$  respectively. For physical well-being ( $\bar{x} = 3.42, SE = .15$ ) and intellectual well-being ( $\bar{x} = 3.49, SE = .19$ ) where equal variances were not assumed, again no significant differences between the genders were found,  $t(50.11) = -1.64, p > .05$  and  $t(57.91) = -.55, p > .05$  correspondingly. Similarly, the male and female respondents were not significantly different in spiritual ( $\bar{x} = 3.4, SE = .20$ ),  $t(50.11) = -.56, p > .05$  and social dimensions ( $\bar{x} = 3.04, SE = .19$ ),  $t(53.95) = -.04, p > .05$ . In brief there were not any gender influences for these wellness dimensions as revealed by the  $t$ -test analyses.

**Table 5.2.7 Gender and wellness dimensions (independent  $t$ -test group statistics)**

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Physical well-being (body)	Female	83	3.23	1.300	.143	2.94	3.51
	Male	38	3.84	2.125	.345	3.14	4.54
	Total	121	3.42	1.621	.147	3.13	3.71
Emotional well-being (feelings)	Female	83	3.72	1.727	.190	3.35	4.10
	Male	38	3.79	2.120	.344	3.09	4.49
	Total	121	3.74	1.851	.168	3.41	4.08
Intellectual well-being (mind)	Female	83	3.41	1.894	.208	3.00	3.82
	Male	38	3.66	2.464	.400	2.85	4.47
	Total	121	3.49	2.082	.189	3.11	3.86
Spiritual well-being (values, purpose)	Female	83	3.31	2.000	.219	2.88	3.75
	Male	38	3.58	2.596	.421	2.73	4.43
	Total	121	3.40	2.197	.200	3.00	3.79
Social (family, friends, relationships)	Female	83	4.04	1.797	.197	3.64	4.43
	Male	38	4.05	2.588	.420	3.20	4.90
	Total	121	4.04	2.067	.188	3.67	4.41
Occupational (career, skills)	Female	83	3.06	2.020	.222	2.62	3.50
	Male	38	2.66	2.351	.381	1.89	3.43
	Total	121	2.93	2.128	.193	2.55	3.32

Table 5.2.8 Independent Samples *t*-Test Results: Wellness Dimensions and Gender

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Physical well-being (body)	Equal variances assumed	22.25	.000	-1.95	119	.053	-.613	.314	-1.23	.008
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.64	50.11	.107	-.613	.373	-1.362	.136
Emotional well-being (feelings)	Equal variances assumed	2.41	.123	-0.18	119	.855	-.067	.364	-.787	.654
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.17	60.39	.866	-.067	.393	-.852	.719
Intellectual well-being (mind)	Equal variances assumed	8.91	.003	-0.61	119	.545	-.248	.409	-1.058	.561
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.55	57.82	.584	-.248	.450	-1.150	.654
Spiritual well-being (values, purpose)	Equal variances assumed	12.86	.000	-0.62	119	.539	-.266	.431	-1.120	.588
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.56	57.91	.578	-.266	.475	-1.216	.685
Social (family, friends, relationships)	Equal variances assumed	25.40	.000	-0.04	119	.968	-.016	.407	-.822	.789
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.04	53.95	.972	-.016	.464	-.947	.914
Occupational (career, skills)	Equal variances assumed	0.86	.357	0.96	119	.337	.402	.417	-.423	1.228
	Equal variances not assumed			0.91	62.99	.365	.402	.441	-.479	1.284

It was observed, however, that majority of the respondents found low levels of wellness benefits from the spa experience, most especially on the occupational (n = 54, 40.9%), spiritual (n = 41, 31.1%) and intellectual (n = 34, 25.8%) dimensions. Hence, cases were selected from the original data set with the condition that the participants did not answer “no benefit” or “can’t remember” to the questions regarding the dimensions of wellness and the extent to which they benefited from the spa experience. A total of 58 cases (42.3% of the original data set) were selected and analysed as a separate data set.

#### **5.2.5.1 Date refined: The case of 58 respondents**

The refined sample consisted of 86 per cent females (n = 43) and those mostly in their mid to late 20’s (n = 19, 35.2%). Almost 23 per cent of the respondents have professional/technical-natured jobs (n = 12). The sample also consisted of 63.8 per cent domestic tourists (n = 37), most of whom were residing in the Philippines (n = 46, 79.3%). Similar to the original data set, non-water-based treatments such as massage were the most popular for this cohort (n = 44, 75.9%).

Factorial ANOVA was carried out to explore relationships between gender, residence and the contributions of the spa experience to the trip. Additional factorial analyses were also performed to search for potential interactions between these variables and the respondents’ feelings and thoughts post-spa activity. Firstly, it was found out that for this small sample, the main and only effect of the benefits of the spa-going activity on the trip was for gender, specifically for the statement “*the spa experience made the trip a memorable one*”,  $F(1,45) = 5.49, p < .05$ . There was no effect found for residence. Similarly, no interaction between the two variables was evident. The results of the analysis exploring relationships between the benefits after the spa experience and the independent variables revealed that there were no effects on both gender and residence, and that there was no interaction between the variables. Fig. 5.4 shows that there is not much difference in the responses between female domestic and international tourists who view the spa experience as a memorable element of the trip ( $\bar{x} = 6.11$  vs.  $\bar{x} = 6.06$ ) compared to the males. Between male domestic and international tourists, however, the former felt that the spa activity was less of a memorable part of the holiday than the latter ( $\bar{x} = 4.02$  vs.  $\bar{x} = 5.5$ ).

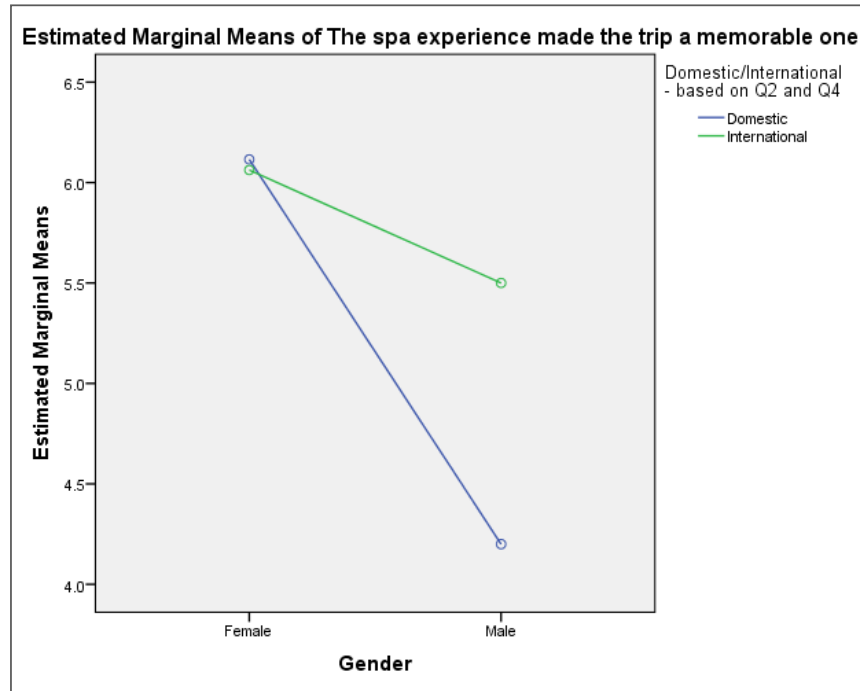


Figure 5.4 **Factorial ANOVA: Interaction between gender, residence and the statement “the spa experience made the trip a memorable one”**

In analysing the temporal extent of the benefits on the different wellness dimensions, a third data set was created to assist the full exploration of the material. The new data set only had two variables: the dimensions and the timeframes. Each response of every participant was treated as a single case. Respondent 1, for example, was treated as six cases because each dimension had a corresponding timeframe (e.g. physical – 3-5 days; emotional – 3-5 days; intellectual – 1-2 weeks, and so on). The variables were also re-coded since the cases had been selected based on the completeness of their responses for this particular section. Each timeframe was assigned a corresponding value, where 1 as the lowest (within 3-5 days) and 5 as the highest (within 6-12 months) (see Table 5.2.10).

**Table 5.2.9 Refined sample: Wellness dimensions**

<b>Dimensions</b>		<b>Within 3-5 days</b> <i>Value = 1</i>	<b>Within 1-2 weeks</b> <i>Value = 2</i>	<b>Within a month</b> <i>Value = 3</i>	<b>Within 3-5 months</b> <i>Value = 4</i>	<b>Within 6-12 months</b> <i>Value = 5</i>
Physical (body)	n	13	12	21	8	4
	%	22.4	20.7	36.2	13.8	6.9
Emotional (feelings)	n	9	9	25	9	6
	%	15.5	15.5	43.1	15.5	10.3
Intellectual (mind)	n	4	15	24	6	9
	%	6.9	25.9	41.4	10.3	15.5
Spiritual (values, purpose)	n	10	12	20	8	8
	%	17.2	20.7	34.5	13.8	13.8
Social (family, friends, relationships)	n	6	11	18	11	12
	%	10.3	19.0	31.0	19.0	20.7
Occupational (career, skills)	n	8	13	14	14	9
	%	13.8	22.4	24.1	24.1	15.5

An array of statistical tests was performed to explore the relationship between the dimensions of wellness and the enduring timing effects which the respondents reported as a result of their spa-going activity. Pearson’s chi-square was the main test that was carried out in understanding the potential relationship between the variables. Phi and Cramer’s V were also used to measure the strength of association between the variables. The cross-tabulation between the well-being dimensions and the duration for which the benefits lasted is presented below.

Table 5.2.10 Cross-tabulation: Well-being dimensions and duration

Dimensions		Duration					Total
		About 3-5 days	About 1-2 weeks	About a month	About 3-5 months	About 6-12 months	
Physical	Count	13	12	21	8	4	58
	Expected Count	7.7	12.2	18.9	10.2	9.0	58.0
	% within Dimensions	22.4%	20.7%	36.2%	13.8%	6.9%	100.0%
	% within Duration	8.1%	4.7%	5.3%	3.7%	2.1%	4.8%
	% of Total	1.1%	1.0%	1.7%	.7%	.3%	4.8%
	Std. Residual	1.9	-.1	.5	-.7	-1.7	
Emotional	Count	18	18	50	18	12	116
	Expected Count	15.3	24.4	37.8	20.5	18.0	116.0
	% within Dimensions	15.5%	15.5%	43.1%	15.5%	10.3%	100.0%
	% within Duration	11.2%	7.0%	12.6%	8.4%	6.3%	9.5%
	% of Total	1.5%	1.5%	4.1%	1.5%	1.0%	9.5%
	Std. Residual	.7	-1.3	2.0	-.5	-1.4	
Intellectual	Count	12	45	72	18	27	174
	Expected Count	23.0	36.6	56.7	30.7	27.0	174.0
	% within Dimensions	6.9%	25.9%	41.4%	10.3%	15.5%	100.0%
	% within Duration	7.5%	17.6%	18.1%	8.4%	14.3%	14.3%
	% of Total	1.0%	3.7%	5.9%	1.5%	2.2%	14.3%
	Std. Residual	-2.3	1.4	2.0	-2.3	0.0	
Spiritual	Count	40	48	80	32	32	232
	Expected Count	30.7	48.8	75.6	41.0	36.0	232.0
	% within Dimensions	17.2%	20.7%	34.5%	13.8%	13.8%	100.0%
	% within Duration	24.8%	18.8%	20.2%	14.9%	16.9%	19.0%
	% of Total	3.3%	3.9%	6.6%	2.6%	2.6%	19.0%
	Std. Residual	1.7	-.1	.5	-1.4	-.7	
Social	Count	30	55	90	55	60	290
	Expected Count	38.3	61.0	94.5	51.2	45.0	290.0
	% within Dimensions	10.3%	19.0%	31.0%	19.0%	20.7%	100.0%
	% within Duration	18.6%	21.5%	22.7%	25.6%	31.7%	23.8%
	% of Total	2.5%	4.5%	7.4%	4.5%	4.9%	23.8%
	Std. Residual	-1.3	-.8	-.5	.5	2.2	
Occupational	Count	48	78	84	84	54	348
	Expected Count	46.0	73.1	113.4	61.4	54.0	348.0
	% within Dimensions	13.8%	22.4%	24.1%	24.1%	15.5%	100.0%
	% within Duration	29.8%	30.5%	21.2%	39.1%	28.6%	28.6%
	% of Total	3.9%	6.4%	6.9%	6.9%	4.4%	28.6%
	Std. Residual	.3	.6	-2.8	2.9	0.0	
Total	Count	161	256	397	215	189	1218
	Expected Count	161.0	256.0	397.0	215.0	189.0	1218.0
	% within Dimensions	13.2%	21.0%	32.6%	17.7%	15.5%	100.0%
	% within Duration	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% of Total	13.2%	21.0%	32.6%	17.7%	15.5%	100.0%



The descriptive material shows that most of the respondents felt the benefits for each of the dimension for about one month after the spa experience, with the total accounting for 32.6 per cent for the well-being dimensions. Of the dimensions, the occupational aspect lasted the shortest (about 2-3 days = 29.8%). On the contrary, the lasting effects of the spa experience were felt by most respondents on the social dimension (6-12 months, 31.7%). The results of Pearson's chi-square (Table 5.2.12) shows a significant relationship between the dimensions of well-being and the duration by which the benefits of the spa experience were felt by the spa-going tourists ( $\chi^2(20) = 61.90$ ,  $p < .05$ ). This result indicates that spa experiences can indeed contribute to one's overall well-being for a certain period of time. For this data, the Cramer's statistic is .113, which represents a small association between the dimensions and the duration of benefits as perceived by the respondents. This value, however, is significant ( $p < .05$ ) which also indicates that the strength of the association is significant, confirming the chi-square results (Table 5.2.13).

**Table 5.2.11 Chi-square tests: Well-being dimensions and duration of benefits**

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	61.901 <sup>a</sup>	20	.000
Likelihood Ratio	63.174	20	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	7.615	1	.006
N of Valid Cases	1218		

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 7.67.

**Table 5.2.12 Strength of association between well-being dimensions and duration of benefits**

		Value	Approx. Sig.	Exact Sig.
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.225	.000	.000
	Cramer's V	.113	.000	.000
	Contingency Coefficient	.220	.000	.000
N of Valid Cases		1218		

### 5.2.6 *Synthesis*

This study sought to identify the benefits that tourists have achieved as a result of their spa experiences. The statements which the respondents rated were derived from two theories. The first set of statements about how the spa experience was beneficial to the participants' current trip was modelled from the travel career pattern (TCP) model which was used as an overarching theory for the motivational concepts in this thesis. In the discussion of results, it was mentioned that relaxation and novelty were the most agreed on benefits that the participants achieved for their holiday. The other theory which framed further questions was based on the multidimensional and holistic nature of wellness. This approach included the different dimensions of one's well-being such as the physical, psychological and social aspects. The research explored how the individual benefited along each of these dimensions, thus addressing the second aim of the study.

In the analysis of how long the perceived benefits of spa activities extended into the lives of spa-going tourists, it was found that the spa experience was beneficial to participants' social dimension for the longest period of time, even spanning up to 12 months after the spa experience. On the other hand, the occupational dimension benefited the least. The sample was then purposely selected and limited to those individuals who claimed to have benefited across all the dimensions. The results of further analysis of the selected cases indicated that similar to the original result, the benefits of spa experiences lingered longest in the social dimension (about 6-12 months, 20.7%). The manner in which the questions were laid out in the survey, however, had implications which will be discussed in the next section.

Gender and residence were the key variables that were used as linkages to the identified benefits of spa experiences. Independent *t*-tests and factorial ANOVA were carried out in identifying relationships and possible interactions between the variables and the benefits. In relation to the benefits on the trip, it was found that female domestic tourists and male international tourists shared similar thoughts that the spa experience made them appreciate nature and their relationships more than their opposite sex counterparts. In the case of the selected respondents, it was revealed that for women (domestic and

international), the spa experience was a memorable element of the trip. Further, no effect for residence and no interaction between the variables were found.

### ***5.2.7 Implications arising from the methodology***

The sampling technique that was used in this study is recognised as limited in some key ways. The method of recruitment, for example, is believed to have been influential in generating a high percentage of respondents who have had their spa experience in India, Thailand and the Philippines. The snowball effect of the sampling technique using spa websites, networking sites, electronic and printed fliers were powerful. More specifically, the distribution of the printed fliers was concentrated in these three countries while electronic and web-links were used to advertise the survey in a more global scope.

The recruitment strategy, however, had two related disadvantages. One of the weaknesses of the technique lies in the concentration of the sample in terms of country of residence. It should be noted that majority of the sample in this study live in the Philippines, and it is thought that it would have been more beneficial if the advertisement of the online survey was spread across more nations and continents. While the online survey's potential for generating a more diverse sample from across cultures and regions because of the World Wide Web's global scope was recognised, it was not fully realised. A secondary network could have been developed which included individuals and spa businesses in the South East Asian region and might have potentially yielded a better mix of respondents. A tertiary network, which is like a third layer of contacts which included entities that are external to the South East Asian sub-continent would have possibly aided in the distribution of fliers and invitations to potential respondents as well.

The notion that networking sites such as Twitter and Facebook are the places for information to "go viral" or to "snowball" is commonplace. The other related issue arising from the recruitment method was the use of the researcher's personal network which resulted in a greater number of respondents from the Philippines. Although the benefits are thought to have been maximised, the impact of using personal online networking sites and personal emails on the diversity of the sample in terms of

residence (domestic or international tourists) was overlooked. This is not to say that the use of personal networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter should be avoided in the future. It is also not suggested that the use of these facilities should be minimised. What is advocated, however, is to diversify and extend the range of any existing networks. One of the recommended paths is to create different layers of networks as suggested above. The invitation to participate in the study can in future work extend beyond any researcher's personal network. Indeed, this requires more resources, time, and considerable planning.

A few issues resulting from the presentation of some questions need to be addressed. It is appreciated that simple questions yield simple answers, as in the case of asking "why people travel" instead of asking "what motivates certain groups of people to travel to a certain destination". In the context of asking the respondents their agreement to the benefit-related statements, it was realized that follow-up questions probing the depth of their answers would have been more helpful. A different set of scales about how important the benefits are to the respondents' trip and to their lives in general could have been included. Open-ended questions revolving around why they agree or disagree with the statements is another probing question. Another set of questions which requires further thought and development was the use of the different dimensions of wellness (or of well-being as used interchangeably in this study). The importance of a much deeper analysis of the elements that make up the different dimensions of wellness was realized. Again, follow-up questions would have been advantageous.

## **CHAPTER 5 (Part 2)**

### ***Plucked from the Blogosphere: Of travellers' spa experiences***

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#### **5.3 STUDY 3 – BLOG ANALYSIS**

This portion of the chapter presents further results defining tourists' spa experiences and the benefits they realise from spa-going holiday activities. The data reported here are concentrated on the benefits and the positive spa experiences. It is recognised, however, that there may be negative components of a spa experience. Hence, this chapter will discuss any negative experiences that some tourists have reported in their travel blogs. The results presented in this section are from a separate study to those involving on-site and online survey approaches. The names used to report statements in this chapter are fictitious. They were changed to protect the bloggers' identity and privacy (cf. Kozinets, 2002).

##### ***5.3.1 Literature Review***

###### **5.3.1.1 Travel Blogs and Tourist Experiences**

The advent, global encroachment and inevitable advancement of the internet make it easier for people to search for information, make tourism-related business transactions, communicate and narrate their travel experiences to a much broader audience. Blogging is internet based journal-keeping, and has become increasingly popular. The person who writes a blog is called a "blogger" and the collective activity of blogs and bloggers has become known as the "blogosphere" (cf. Carson, 2008). Given that travel and tourism are among the most popular subjects on the internet, travel blogs are indeed gaining more prominence in the blogosphere (Baker & Green, 2005; Carson, 2008; Crotts, Mason, & Davis, 2009; Heung, 2003). Apart from independent blog hosts such as [www.travelblog.org](http://www.travelblog.org) and [www.travelpod.com](http://www.travelpod.com), travel blogs are hosted by different tourism-related sites such as commercial guidebooks (e.g. [www.lonelyplanet.com/blogs](http://www.lonelyplanet.com/blogs)), travel agencies (e.g. [www.blogs.statravel.com](http://www.blogs.statravel.com), [www.tripadvisor.com](http://www.tripadvisor.com)), destination marketing organisations, digital branding and online marketing service providers for tourism (e.g. [www.dottourism.com/blogs](http://www.dottourism.com/blogs)). In addition, travel blogs are also found on personal websites with a single blogger.

Research cannot directly access an individual's experiences (Caru & Cova, 2008). Travel blogs, however, are a "manifestation of travel experience" (Pan, MacLaurin, & Crofts, 2007, p. 35) which can serve as a representation of people's real thoughts and feelings (Carson, 2008). As they are akin to travel diaries, travel blogs are credible and realistic accounts of travel experiences. As Nardi, Schiano, Gumbrecht and Swartz (2004) suggest, there are five intrinsic motivations for blogging which are not mutually exclusive and may come into play simultaneously: to document one's life, to provide opinions and commentary, to express deeply felt emotions, to articulate ideas through writing and to form and maintain community forums. The desire to share experiences with family, friends and other potential tourists also exist (Sharda & Ponnada, 2008). Sharda and Ponnada (2008) add that self-expression, interaction and information enhancement are also factors motivating bloggers. Travel blogs are indicative of human thoughts, opinions and feelings neatly recorded in text and sometimes in photographs.

#### **5.3.1.2 Netnography**

A way of studying these tourist experiences through travel blogs is netnography; it is also known as "online ethnography" or "ethnography on the Internet" (Kozinets, 2002). The term "netnography" is defined by Kozinets in two ways: as a research methodology and as a product. As a methodology, it is "a new qualitative research methodology that adapts ethnographic research techniques to study the cultures and communities that are emerging through computer-mediated communications" (2002, p. 62). As a product, netnography is a "written account of online cyber culture, informed by the methods of cultural anthropology" (1997, p. 470). As a qualitative, or more specifically an interpretive method, netnography originates from ethnography and anthropological research and is now commonly used in consumer and marketing research (cf. Kozinets, 1997, 1998, 1999; 2002) as well as in tourism research (cf. Crofts, et al., 2009; Pan, et al., 2007). Since it is based on the observation of textual discourse alone, this method differs from the balancing of discourse and observed behaviour that occurs during in-person ethnography (Arnould & Wallendorf, 1994; cited in Kozinets, 2002)

Kozinets also argues that the netnographic approach can be adapted to study blogs, audio visual, photographic and podcasting communities, mobile communities and social networking sites, as well as forums, chat and newsgroups. Blogs are a special type of

webpage which are ideally frequently updated. They consist of dated entries arranged in a chronological order in such a way that whichever appears first is the most recent entry (Walker, 2008). Graphics and photographs are used quite extensively in blogs. Community interaction occurs between bloggers (i.e. blog authors) and blog readers, between and among bloggers, and between different blog readers who can possibly form communal relationships (Kozinets, 2010).

Because the adaptation of ethnographic techniques to the online environment is not straightforward (Rice and Rogers, 1984; Kozinets, 2010), it is imperative to identify the differences between face-to-face ethnography and computer-mediated communications. Kozinets (2010; p. 68) has therefore emphasised four critical points of difference to consider in employing netnography as a research method: 1) the nature of the researcher-respondent interaction due to the nature and rules of the technological medium; 2) the anonymity of participants; 3) the accessibility of a plethora of online forums open to participation by anyone; and, 4) the automatic archiving of conversations and data facilitated by the online medium.

### **5.3.1.3 Previous blog-based research**

There are many scholars and researchers who have employed netnography in their studies. Some have used it to understand tourist experiences and behaviour. Pan and colleagues (2007), for example, used semantic network and content analyses and found out that bloggers usually wrote about their travel experiences and emphasised the advantages of using travel blogs as in describing guests' likes and dislikes in terms of their purchase experiences with destination organizations. They strongly advocate that travel blogs are economical sources of rich, authentic and unsolicited customer feedback.

Pearce and Foster (2007) have used backpackers' travelogues from which they drew quotes revealing that skills were used, gained or developed as a result of travel experiences. Douglas and Mills (2006) studied 350 blogs from the travel blog site TravelPod to identify the brand images communicated by travel bloggers who visited North Africa and the Middle East. They suggested that accessing travellers' attitudes

may also be a useful tool in shaping marketing ideas by identifying the positive characteristics that bloggers report about a destination.

### **5.3.2 Aims of the study**

This study aims to:

4. Identify the body of travel blogs about spa experiences in South East Asia, and particularly in India, Thailand and the Philippines.
5. Profile, as closely as possible, those who write blogs about their spa experiences in India, Thailand and the Philippines while travelling;
6. Identify the themes within the reported material during and after a spa treatment.

### **5.3.3 Methodology**

The technique to select the blogs for this study has to marry insightfulness and representativeness, as suggested by Decrop (2004). The procedure adopted in this project was a 4-stage process, following certain criteria in each stage for consistency. The first stage involved recognizing the diversity and volume of available travel blogs, including identifying three travel blog sites as a productive source of spa-related tourist blogs. The second stage involved filtering the blogs through a coding process, which aided in classifying blogs according to tourists' detailed account and their perceived benefits from the spa experience. The third stage and fourth stages focused on reports of people experiencing or having experienced the spa treatments rather than anticipating such treatments.

#### **5.3.3.1 Stage 1 – “How much has been reported by tourists about spa experiences?”**

Essentially, this initial stage of the blog selection process addresses the first aim of the study which is to have an overview of how much is written about spa experiences by travelers themselves in South East Asia. The first step taken to identify a broad and diverse corpus of blogs was to search for “South East Asian spa experience blogs” from Google. The three most comprehensive travel blog sites identified in this search were TravelPod ([www.travelpod.com](http://www.travelpod.com)); Travel Blogs ([www.travelblog.org](http://www.travelblog.org)); and, Lonely



Planet Blogs ([www.lonelyplanet.com/blog](http://www.lonelyplanet.com/blog)). Because of the volume of blogs that resulted in the initial searches of these sites (see Table 5.3.1), the blogs that were considered for further analysis in this study should have been published between 2005 and 2010 only. The blogs published before and beyond this period were still considered, but were disregarded in the later stages of this study.

A paper-based “search log” was designed to record the search history that took place between September 2010 and May 2011. This document contained the date of search, the matched keywords and the number of related blog entries found. The mechanism in searching for blogs was also multi-staged and involved mixing and matching spa-related key words (e.g. spa, spa experience, spa holiday, wellness holiday, massage) from the broadest to the specific geographical context of the research (i.e. Asia, South Asia, Southeast Asia, India, Thailand, Philippines, ). A total of 56 combinations were recorded from each blog site. The combinations of keywords used in the blog search for all the three sites are shown in Table 5.3.1 (see Appendix D for the full list of keywords). The table also shows the volume that resulted from the search. Instead of taking a certain percentage of these blogs for extended analysis, the blog selection was taken through a further filtering process in the second stage.

### **5.3.3.2 Why India, Thailand and the Philippines?**

This blog study could easily have been conducted with a larger geographical scope. This thesis, however, has been focused on South East Asia, and specifically India, Thailand and the Philippines as the geographical context of the research project. A consistent approach to the views of spa-going tourists in India, Thailand and the Philippines is deemed to offer a better understanding of Asian spa experiences. The “geographical uniformity” in all the studies conducted in this project can therefore be logically and theoretically linked together, and thus patterns that can be extracted from tourists’ spa-going behavior can be argued to be more robust and sound. While a limited geographical scope is involved in this research, it is also recognised that a greater geographic coverage of this topic in future studies may offer a better understanding of global tourists’ spa-going behavior.

Table 5.3.1 **Keyword combinations and number of related blogs**

Keyword combinations	Travel Pod		Travel Blog		Lonely Planet Blogs		Total Related
	Related entries	Related trips	Related entries	Related trips	Related entries	Related trips	Blog Entries
Spa, Southeast Asia	96	1	5,067	Not specified	100	10	5,263
Spa holiday, Southeast Asia	13	--	5,673		1,687	35	7,373
Massage, Southeast Asia	299	2	7,987		147	4	8,433
Spa, massage, Southeast Asia	30	--	12,324		272	18	12,626
Spa, India	4,372	5	7,776	Not specified	281	68	12,429
Spa, Thailand	1,238	25	12,600		720	257	14,558
Spa, Philippines	943	3	3,827		94	29	4,864
Spa holiday, India	50	1	7,711	Not specified	66	3	7,828
Spa holiday, Thailand	118	2	971		144	3	1,233
Spa holiday, Philippines	10	--	333		14	2	357
Massage, India	1,330	7	8,606	Not specified	508	62	10,445
Massage, Thailand	4,375	29	23,547		1,056	102	28,978
Massage, Philippines	208	3	5,742		112	5	6,062
Spa, massage, India	131	--	8,537	Not specified	49	7	8,717
Spa, massage, Thailand	423	1	437		169	37	1,029
Spa, massage, Philippines	29	--	695		21	2	746

### 5.3.3.3 Stage 2 – Filtering and coding of blogs

The second stage for this study was mainly aimed at filtering the blogs that were accessed in Stage 1. This was effectively an initial stage of blog coding. A log sheet was also designed for this phase for quick references. The log sheet contained the blog details such as date of publication, the blogger and the blog title. It also included a remarks field for other information regarding the spa experience. The idea of having a remarks field was prompted by the fact that some of the blogs that were randomly read by the researcher at the outset of the study contained accounts of spa experiences not of the blogger, but of his/her companions. There were also cases where the stories were from the bloggers' previous travels. Such information, although essential to the record,

needed to be identified at this stage as part of the filtering process so as not to be mixed with the stories that met the criteria as mentioned in Stage 1.

Also during this stage, it was important to identify the blogs relevant to the study. A relevance guide that involved a coding system was employed. The blogs were coded in the following manner:

- 1 - The blogger mentioned “spa” but did not have any spa experience during that trip;
- 2 - The blogger **merely mentioned** about the spa treatment that he/she had, but did not elaborate on the experience;
- 3 - The blogger **gave relatively more detail** about the spa treatment that he/she had, but did not elaborate on the experience;
- 4 - The blogger wrote about his/her thoughts and feelings **during** the spa experience; and,
- 5 - The blogger wrote about his/her thoughts and feelings **after** the spa experience.

Due to numerous blogs that resulted from the search, only the spa-related key words matched with “India”, “Thailand” and “Philippines” were selected because of three key reasons. One is to avoid redundancy in the blogs accessed that is, the possibility of analyzing one blog multiple times. The second and third reasons are about focus and consistency. Overall, the number of blogs that relate to India, Thailand and the Philippines were thought to be more manageable and better suited to this study than a selection from a continent or sub-region. Also, a more diverse collection of blogs can be expected when the selection is not limited to blogs from 3-4 cities/towns in each country.

There were, however, more complex blogs that the researcher uncovered. The complexity of these blogs lies in the assortment of spa treatments received by the blogger, as well as in the heterogeneity of the blogger’s thoughts and feelings about the spa experience(s). In a single blog that contains accounts of multiple spa experiences in the same trip, for example, each spa visit was treated as a single experience. It should be noted, nonetheless, that a single spa visit may involve multiple spa treatments (e.g. massage combined with body scrub and a facial). Such combinations of treatments are often bought as a ‘treatment package’, hence treated as a single unit of experience. This special criterion employed in this stage was based on the accepted notion that tourist

services and experiences are heterogeneous in nature (Bowen & Clarke, 2009; Cohen, 1979, 1996; Lopez-Bonilla & Lopez-Bonilla, 2010). Bowen and Clarke (2009) argued that “no two customers... no two employees... no two service acts are alike”, thereby suggesting that no two experiences are exactly alike. The heterogeneous pattern of experiences was evident in a few of the blogs where the authors wrote about the differences between their spa treatments (i.e. both were massages) in two different places. In one blog, the blogger described one experience as “relaxing”, and the subsequent experience as “painful”. In another blog, the foot spa in the first visit was “ticklish”, while the second was “soothing”. This non-uniformity in spa experiences was a compelling reason to isolate one spa visit from another in a single blog.

Although most of the blogs had multiple codes at this stage, only the blogs coded **4** and **5** were considered for further analysis. It should also be noted that only blogs written in English were selected for this study, and no further sub-selection criteria such as gender, nationality were employed. It can be observed that wherever possible, it is valuable to record these variables in interpreting communication efforts as they have been shown to have some impacts on traveler self-disclosure (Pearce, 1991). The sample in this study was presumed to cover a broad range of cases and influencing factors for initial consideration and screening (Veal, 2004). It was initially thought that the spa-related trips would contain very detailed accounts of the spa experience. It was, however, not the case. Although many of the blogs under the related trips category contained relevant spa experience stories, many blogs outside this focused spa travel were also found to be useful.

#### **5.3.3.4 Stages 3 and 4 –Bloggers’ thoughts and feelings during and after the spa experience**

The third and fourth stages of the blog selection process involved only the blogs that were coded “4” and “5” in the sample. In each of these final stages, the only criterion for the blogs to be included in further analysis is that the bloggers should have written about his/her thoughts and feelings **during** and **after** the spa experience respectively. There were 125 blogs that were included in the analysis; more than 43 per cent of them are from Travel Blog (n = 54), while about 42 per cent were from Travel Pod (n = 53). As expected, the majority of the blogs that were coded “4” were based on experience in

Thailand (n = 71, 56.8%). Similarly, the number of blogs included in Stage 4 (coded “5”) was 134 (13.8% of the total sample). Thailand-based spa experience accounts were dominant in this sample (n = 87, 64.9%).

#### **5.3.3.5 Data analysis**

Overall, the approach employed in the filtering the data was the conventional, long-hand method. The blogs were printed on A4 paper (2-sided), and were subsequently coded. In the third and fourth stages of filtering the blogs, about 30 stories were randomly chosen to identify the recurring themes. In the Stage 3 analysis, it was evident in the reports of “feeling good” and similar moods of spa-goers, that the focus during the treatment was the “self” and how they felt. The positive experiences were divided into three dimensions: physical, which refers to any feeling that they felt pertaining to the body; psychological, which refers to their feelings, moods and other sensations that the physical body does not directly or necessarily feel; and, social/environmental, which refers to how they respond not only to people around them during the treatment, but also to other certain products that are being used as part of the therapy.

In the fourth stage, the bloggers were not just focused on how they felt and how they “saw themselves”. As they reported positive experiences after the spa treatment, some have picked up on other people’s observations (“how others saw them”). These two observations that are “of the self” and “of others” were also recorded. Similar to the classification of blogs in Stage 3, the first set of personal observations were subdivided into physical, psychological and social/environmental. On the other hand, the other people’s observations of the blogger/spa-goer were broken down into two dimensions: physical and social/environmental.

In an attempt to explore the blogs, the use of software that analyses textual data was initially taken into consideration. More specifically, Leximancer, a software which potentially identifies concepts within the text by clustering related keywords and defining terms as conceptualized by the author, was thought to be a good tool. Moreover, it was thought of as a means to take the study slightly further than the conventional highlighting, listing, counting and theme-forming ways of analysing blogs. The use of Leximancer, however, was not pursued. Upon reading the blogs, it was

observed that most sections of the stories that contained accounts of positive experiences were not very comprehensive (shallow) and were often too short to be fed into the software. The Leximancer software builds on word linkages in the text and inadequate sentence length and short descriptions do not suit the approach. Perhaps because the travel blog authors had many other topics to write about, many of them casually move to another topic after a brief description of their thoughts and feelings about the spa experience. Ace, who was travelling in Bangkok, for example, wrote:

*“I thought it would be a good idea to get a massage... so cheap here!! First I only did a foot massage and that was so nice I decided to go for a Thai massage. Felt very relaxed and thought I should treat myself to a facial... I’ll definitely be treating myself to more of those ;-) I wasn’t really sure where I wanted to go after Bangkok... so many places to see and things to do...”* (Blog 8).

A different software, however, was used in this study. The profiling information was gathered and was subsequently entered into SPSS. Variables such as the bloggers’ gender and travel party were keyed in forming a data set of 972 cases. The software was used to process descriptive statistics such as frequency that are being reported in this chapter. SPSS also aided in producing visual graphs that enhances the presentation of these results.

#### **5.3.4 Results & Discussion**

Experiences, according to Caru and Cova (2008), cannot be directly accessed by research. Travel blogs, however, are a “manifestation of travel experience” (Pan, et al., 2007) and can be thought of as more representative of the ‘real’ thoughts and feelings of consumers (Carson, 2008). The results of this study which attempted to access the thoughts and feelings of travel bloggers in the context of spa experiences can be linked to the existing corpus of knowledge that underpins the relationship between tourist experiences and aspects of well-being in the context of Asian spa tourism.

This section addresses two of the three aims of the study as outlined earlier in the chapter. Profiling the travel bloggers who have written accounts of their spa experiences in India, Thailand and the Philippines was the second aim for the chapter. A brief

section on the bloggers profile will be presented. The third aim of the chapter addressed here is two-fold; the aim was to identify themes relating to the positive thoughts and feelings that the blogger had **during** the spa experience. The second purpose of this dual aim refers to the thoughts and feelings **after** the treatment.

**Table 5.3.2 Number of blogs accessed and coded for the study**

	TravelPod	TravelBlog	Lonely Planet Blogs	Total	Number of coded blogs (1% of the total)
India	5,883	32,631	904	39,418	<b>394</b>
Thailand	6,155	37,554	2,090	45,799	<b>458</b>
Philippines	1,189	10,598	242	12,029	<b>120</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>13,227</b>	<b>80,783</b>	<b>3,236</b>	<b>97,246</b>	<b>972</b>

The volume of accessible blogs from the three travel blog sites was impressive. In Stage 1, the search using key word combinations resulted in more than 97,000 blogs. A more realistic number was necessary to be included in the study. It was decided that only one per cent of this volume would be carried over to the second stage, hence a total of 972 blogs were coded (Table 5.3.2). In the initial coding process, it was found out that each blog can have multiple codes depending on the account of the spa experience/s. For example, a blogger writes about the details of the spa treatment and describes the feeling after the massage as “great” which was coded as 3 and 5. The blog was coded as 3 because the blogger gave relatively more detail about the treatment than simply stating what the treatment was. It was also coded as 5 because the context of the feeling (i.e. “great”) was interpreted as a post-treatment feeling rather than a during-treatment sensation. Table 5.3.3 is an illustration of the frequency of blogs that were coded accordingly.

Table 5.3.3 The coded sample: Travel blog sites and location of spa experience

		Blog Code										
		1		2		3		4		5		
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Blog site	Travel Pod	India	66	31	28	27	31	32	18	34	10	22
		Thailand	129	61	67	64	57	59	32	60	32	71
		Philippines	18	8	9	9	9	9	3	6	3	7
	Total		213	100	104	100	97	100	53	100	45	100
	Travel Blog	India	80	31	41	29	30	33	18	33	22	28
		Thailand	149	59	84	59	51	57	32	59	49	63
		Philippines	25	10	18	13	9	10	4	7	7	9
	Total		254	100	143	100	90	100	54	100	78	100
	Lonely Planet Blogs	India	22	33	7	21	9	32	9	50	2	18
		Thailand	42	64	22	65	14	50	7	39	6	55
		Philippines	2	3	5	15	5	18	2	11	3	27
	Total		66	100	34	100	28	100	18	100	11	100

- 1 - The blogger mentioned “spa” but did not have any spa experience during that trip;
- 2 - The blogger **merely mentioned** about the spa treatment that he/she had, but did not elaborate on the experience;
- 3 - The blogger **gave relatively more detail** about the spa treatment that he/she had, but did not elaborate on the experience;
- 4 - The blogger wrote about his/her thoughts and feelings **during** the spa experience; and,
- 5 - The blogger wrote about his/her thoughts and feelings **after** the spa experience.

#### 5.3.4.1 The bloggers’ profile

This section of this chapter addresses the second aim of the study, which is to profile the spa-going tourists in India, Thailand and the Philippines. The bloggers whose accounts of spa experiences were coded in the second stage of this blog study were profiled according to the most explicit information that can be gathered from their profile and in some cases, their stories. Although the gender of about 34 per cent of the bloggers was ambiguous or unidentified (n = 331), it was noted that almost 36 per cent of them were females (n = 347), while about 16 per cent were males (n = 154). Some of the travel blogs were also observed to be co-owned or co-authored. These bloggers were identified as couple/group cohort (n = 140, 14.4%). About 2.5% (n = 24) of them had more than one blog in the current study.

From the accounts of these travel bloggers, an attempt was made to identify who they were travelling with (travel party variable). Because of the freestyle structure and the varying length of the blogs, it took some time to gather the information and it was challenging to follow some of the stories. Almost 43 per cent of the bloggers were either travelling alone (n = 206, 21.2%) or with their partner/spouse (n = 211, 21.7%).



About 23 per cent were travelling with their family, some with children (n = 109, 11.2%) and some were without children (n = 111, 11.4%). Interestingly, nearly eight per cent of them were travelling with friends, and almost five per cent were with people whom they have met while on holiday (e.g. fellow backpacker). Almost 22 per cent, however, were unidentified/ambiguous (n = 212).

**Table 5.3.4 Cross-tabulation: Blog site vs. (destination) location of spa experience**

		Blog site			Total
		Travel Pod	Travel Blog	Lonely Planet	
India	Count	118	137	36	291
	Expected Count	118.0	137.1	35.9	291.0
	% within Location	40.5%	47.1%	12.4%	100.0%
	% within Blog site	29.9%	29.9%	30.0%	29.9%
	% of Total	12.1%	14.1%	3.7%	29.9%
Thailand	Count	237	275	72	584
	Expected Count	236.7	275.2	72.1	584.0
	% within Location	40.6%	47.1%	12.3%	100.0%
	% within Blog site	60.2%	60.0%	60.0%	60.1%
	% of Total	24.4%	28.3%	7.4%	60.1%
Philippines	Count	39	46	12	97
	Expected Count	39.3	45.7	12.0	97.0
	% within Location	40.2%	47.4%	12.4%	100.0%
	% within Blog site	9.9%	10.0%	10.0%	10.0%
	% of Total	4.0%	4.7%	1.2%	10.0%
Total	Count	394	458	120	972
	Expected Count	394.0	458.0	120.0	972.0
	% within Location	40.5%	47.1%	12.3%	100.0%
	% within Blog site	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
	% of Total	40.5%	47.1%	12.3%	100.0%

As mentioned earlier, the blogs were taken mainly from three travel blog sites namely Travel Pod, Travel Blog and the Lonely Planet Blogs. More than 47 per cent of the blogs were taken from Travel Blog (n = 458), while about 40 per cent were from Travel Pod (n = 394). The blogs from Lonely Planet that were used for analysis were marginal in number (n = 120, 12.3%). Table 5.3.4 shows that most of the blogs written were about spa experiences in Thailand (n = 584, 60.1%). The blogs about India accounted for almost 30 per cent of the sample, while those from the Philippines represented only 10 per cent of the total sample.

### 5.3.4.2 “My thoughts, my feelings...”: Positive spa experiences during the spa treatment

In the analysis of blogs that were coded “4” (n = 125), it was observed that the observations of the spa-goer/blogger were focused on the self. Most of the thoughts and feelings that were reported in relation to their on-going spa experience were emic and personal. As mentioned in the previous section, reports of the bloggers’ own positive feeling and moods became apparent even at the outset of the analysis. A total of 12 key themes were identified from the blogs. The themes were later grouped and represented three dimension of a person’s well-being: physical (“of the body”), psychological (of feelings, moods, thoughts and sensations that were not “of the body”), and social/environmental (of awareness of one’s relationships not only with people but also with nature). The bloggers’ comments were coded into these categories but since the material is spontaneously generated, the words used to fit into these counts varied in frequency.

Table 5.3.5 Stage 3 - Positive spa experiences during the spa treatment

Bloggers' Thoughts/Feelings	Raw Count (Total = 125)	% of all relevant coded blogs
<b>A. Physical</b>		
Relaxing	84	67.2
Muscles loosening up	22	17.6
Invigorating/energizing (feeling of strength/vigour)	57	45.6
Ticklish	31	24.8
Warmth	41	32.8
<b>B. Psychological</b>		
Relaxing (for the mind)	42	33.6
Feeling of lightness/weightlessness	13	10.4
Peaceful	28	22.4
Calm	18	14.4
<b>C. Social/Environmental</b>		
Positive connections with companion(s)	22	17.6
Appreciation of nature-derived products	31	24.8
Appreciation of nature	26	20.8

#### *The physical dimension during treatment*

The most prominent thought among the spa-goers during treatments was the feeling of being relaxed. Two types of relaxation were observed in the blogs. One of them was the physical relaxation (n = 84, 67.2%), and the other was mental relaxation (n = 55, 44%).

Although the idea of mental relaxation fits well with the psychological dimension, its inclusion in this discussion is important because of its linkage to a few related observations. Relaxation as a thought/feeling during a spa treatment is uncommon. There are two factors that can be related to this finding. One is the treatment being received, and the other relates to the ambience of the place.

It is somewhat predictable that massage is the most popular spa treatment as underpinned in both in commercial and academic studies, including in this research. While many respondents have identified massage as their preferred treatment, it was difficult to ascertain the type of treatment that many other bloggers had during their spa visit. Regardless of the treatment, however, many of the travel blog authors reported a soothing and/or calming effect that the treatment had on their bodies and minds. Indeed, touch has been part of healing in cultures and civilizations over the past centuries. In the context of spa services, touch is inevitable and is thought of as a very important tool in the spa experience. Touch therapy, especially in the field of care-giving, is seen to be highly beneficial. In the field of medicine, the benefits of touch therapy are well-commended. Massage, the most popular treatment in spas, is defined by the US National Institutes of Health (NIH) as “the manipulation of muscles and their tendons, ligaments and other connective tissue by applying pressure to the body” (2010). Massage is proven to help the body release certain chemicals that aids in relaxation, improving blood circulation and eliminating toxic substances from the muscles(NIH, 2010).

The other factor that was observed to have contributed to these claims was the spa ambience where pleasant aromas, soothing interiors and relaxing music are usually the important elements. Nathan, a blogger from the USA who was backpacking in Thailand recounted, “...*the smell of that oil... it must have been lemongrass or lavender or something made me want to go to sleep... I can't remember the last time I felt that relaxed...*” (Blog 334). Similarly, Marianne felt that the sound of gushing water and birds chirping in the background made her feel that she was “*in the middle of a garden... My eyes were closed but they felt real!! That spa tricked me into thinking that I was in some Garden of Eden. The sound of water and birds were from a CD!!*”(Blog 576). While many of the bloggers found the experience relaxing and soothing, more than 45 per cent (n = 57) claimed to have felt invigorated during the treatment.

Claims of loosening muscles, ticklish feelings and warmth were also prominent in the results. The idea of loosening muscles during treatment (n = 22, 17.6%) is an indicator that the massage was received at the spa. The loosening of stiff and sore muscles is just an immediate precursor to a more lasting end that is, relaxation. Interestingly, about 25 per cent felt ticklish during the treatment (n = 21, 24.8%). For some people, feeling ticklish is a negative experience. Nonetheless, feeling ticklish was treated as a positive theme in this study because the bloggers who felt the sensation recognised the spa experience as positive overall. Reports on warmth were somewhat ambiguous in most stories. The more straightforward accounts of warmth, however, were more inclined towards the physical dimension. In one story, Alvin wrote, "*The aircon was blowing directly at me. I removed my clothes and I was cold. The towel provided warmth but when the massage started I forgot how cold it was in the room... I fell asleep during the massage...*" (Blog 799). Another story says, "*I took a couple of Ayurvedic massages where the extremities of my body got quite cold (hands and feet), and felt very relaxed and well charged after them.*" (Kevin, Blog 157).

#### *The psychological dimension during treatment*

As discussed earlier, mental relaxation was highlighted as an instantaneous benefit of spa treatments. The benefits of touch in one's mental state are indeed emphasized in the study of medicine. Gagne and Toye (1994), for example, suggested that touch therapy aids in the significant reduction of reported anxiety. Many people who get massages feel better taken care of because of the touch and contact with the therapist (National Institutes of Health, 2010). Another benefit related to mental relaxation is the reported recovery from fatigue (n = 20, 16%). At first, it was thought of as a physical rather than a psychological element because of its association with physical relaxation. It was however observed that the description of the experience related more to the bloggers' state of mind than of the body. Expressions such as "*I felt the stress evaporating*" (Alvin, Blog 799) was a psychological element more than a physical element.

Feelings of peacefulness (n = 28, 22.4%) and of calmness (n = 18, 14.4%) were also reported by the travel blog authors. Again, these states of mind are linked to the benefits of touch. Similarly, they are connected to the ambience that the spa provided. The use of essential oils, which is commonplace in Asian spas, is thought of as a

contributory factor to these feelings. Based on this assumption, these results can be underpinned by medical research on aromatherapy. The use of essential oils in massages (i.e. aromatherapy massage) is recognised in the modern-day medical field as one of the complementary/alternative medical treatment options. In a study by Cooke and Ernst (2000), it was suggested that aromatherapy massage has a mild, transient anxiolytic effect (meaning it reduces anxiety). In addition to the benefits of aromas, the physical feel (fixtures, furniture, and lighting) and perhaps, music also contribute to feelings of peacefulness and calmness.

#### *The social/environmental dimension during treatment*

The elements of social and environmental dimensions were combined because of some linkages observed in a few of the blogs. In the social dimension, positive connections with the bloggers' companions (spouse/partner, family, friends, and/or fellow travelers) were reportedly enhanced (n = 22, 17.6%). It was observed that the treatments received by the individuals who reported this outcome were being given in a less personal space that is, not in very private massage rooms. More specifically, the treatments involved foot spa, facials and sauna. These spa services are usually given in shared spaces; hence spa-goers have more opportunities to interact.

A few of the blogs had a sense of duality in their stories, where the appreciation of nature and the products derived from it was the topic of the conversation with the companion(s) during the treatment sessions. Geena recalls:

*“we (referring to her sister) were sipping fresh coconut juice earlier and next thing we knew they were applying coconut oil on us. We decided that it was going to be a coconut day!!!! We bought coconut products on that day!! Nikki spent most of her money on accessories made of coconuts... No jokes... they're expensive!!!!”*

About 21 per cent and 25 per cent of the filtered sample appreciated nature (n = 26) and the products derived from it (n = 31) more during the treatments.

### 5.3.4.3 “Of myself, by myself, and by others...”: Post-spa experiences

The last phase of the blog selection involved filtering the stories based on their reports of post-spa experience benefits. A total of 134 were coded as **5**. The information gathered on the benefits after the spa treatments are divided into two categories. One theme reflects the bloggers’ own thoughts and feelings, and the other is about the companions’ thoughts and feelings about the blogger.

#### *“I feel better!”: Accounts of benefits after spa treatments*

Similar to the mechanisms presented in the previous section, the positive after-effects of spa treatments are also categorised according to the three dimensions: physical, psychological and social/environmental. The difference, however, is that more benefits were identified in this stage than in the previous one. Ten elements were noted as contributing to the physical dimension, while eight elements were classified as psychological benefits. The social/environmental benefits have five elements.

#### *The post-spa physical dimension: the bloggers’ perspective*

The ability to sleep better was a common self-reported benefit after the spa experience. This result can be linked to the treatment that was received, and medical-related studies are available to support this claim. Richards (1998), for example, studied different methods in solving sleeping problems among critically ill patients. He found out that back-massage was the most helpful in improving the quality of sleep. Similarly, Agarwal and colleagues(2000) investigated the benefits of massages using oils among infants, and found out that massage does improve growth and sleep among babies. They also found out that of the oils that they tested, sesame oil showed significant benefits.

Skin-related benefits were also reported, mostly by females. Apparently, the spa treatment helped the bloggers achieve smoother/more supple skin (n = 39; 29.1%) and “whiter” (lighter skin colour, n = 14, 10.4%). By these accounts, it can be assumed that the bloggers had a facial or a body scrub/wrap. In some cases, smooth/supple skin may also be attained from a simple massage using specially-medicated oils (e.g. Ayurveda massages). In relation to these improved skin conditions, the perception of the self to be

“looking more relaxed” (n = 32; 23.9%) and “looking younger” (n = 24, 17.9%) were also identified as benefits.

There were interesting claims related to post-spa experiences. The term “detoxified” or “detoxification” was mentioned in all 32 blogs (23.9%). Terms such as “*I felt clearer inside...*” and “*I got rid of the junk in my bloodstream*” were thought to be related terms; hence they were associated with detoxification. These reports, however, are supported by clinical studies suggesting that massage treatments aid in promoting blood circulation (n = 14, 10.4%) and eliminating toxins from the body (NIH, 2010). Another interesting benefit was better smell. Although all the blogs expressed it in a humorous note, it was still a positive effect hence it was taken into account. Harold commented, “*I went in smelling of the beach... I walked out smelling like potpourri*” (Blog 574). Finally, the term “slimmer” appeared more than a dozen times in the blogs. They were, however, counted even if it was not clear whether the person indeed lost weight or was merely “feeling” slimmer. In some of the blogs, the claim also had a humorous tone.

Table 5.3.6 **The bloggers’ perspective after the spa experience: Physical dimension**

Bloggers' Thoughts/Feelings	Raw Count (Total = 134)	% of all relevant coded blogs
<b>A. Physical</b>		
Slept better	74	55.2
Smoother/more supple skin	39	29.1
Looked more relaxed	32	23.9
Felt detoxified	32	23.9
Less tight muscles	29	21.6
Looked younger	24	17.9
Better blood circulation	14	10.4
Slimmer	14	10.4
"Whiter"/lighter skin colour	14	10.4
Smelled better	13	9.7

*The post-spa psychological dimension: the bloggers’ perspective*

One of the more general comments after the spa experience was “I felt better”, accounting for almost 84 per cent of the coded blogs. While reading the blogs, it was thought that the expression “I felt better” is very generic, yet very powerful when

conveyed in blogs by travelers. It can be argued that multiple meanings and feelings can be attached to it. Nonetheless, the image of a tired tourists getting physical and psychological relief from a massage which is often depicted in the blogs provides a potent understanding of the expression “I felt better”. Arguably, relaxation is a benefit that is always attached to this feeling (n = 97, 72.4%). Feeling less fatigued (n = 94, 70.1%), which is thought of as synonymous to feeling energized/revitalized (n = 54; 40.3%) can also be considered to be closely related to reports of feeling better.

**Table 5.3.7 The bloggers’ perspective after the spa experience: Psychological dimension**

Bloggers' Thoughts/Feelings	Raw Count (Total = 134)	% of all relevant coded blogs
<b>B. Psychological</b>		
Felt better	112	83.6
Relaxed	97	72.4
Less fatigued	94	70.1
Energized/revitalized	54	40.3
Calm	39	29.1
Peaceful	27	20.1
Happier	26	19.4
Felt younger	16	11.9

Reports of calmness, peacefulness and happiness made up a combined 68.6 per cent of the coded blogs. As discussed in the earlier sections, feelings of calmness and peacefulness can be attributed to touch therapy. The concrete sources of happy feelings as a result of the spa experience, however, are not clear. Using the researcher’s personal judgment of the stories, it was surmised that the sources of such feelings were related to companionship (being with family/friends during the treatment), with a sense of achievement (having found a spa and the opportunity to relax), and with money (relatively cheaper treatments). In relation to price, Lorraine from the USA wrote of her spa experience in the Philippines: *“Oh what a way to spend a good hour and a half. I love this, really really love this. For only P300 or under US\$7, you get an hour’s massage. It was so good I could not get myself up after an hour, and opted for half hour more of rubbing. Now, this is the way to really pamper yourself...”* (Blog 960).



*The post-spa social/environmental dimension: the bloggers' perspective*

Like Lorraine, 37 other bloggers (28.4%) appreciated being pampered and looked after. This benefit was labeled a social aspect because of the connectedness that the bloggers felt even after the treatment. While one can argue that feeling pampered is more of an in-situ/during-treatment type of feeling, it should be noted that the bloggers reported the continuing value of this benefit after the spa experience and hence it was considered as a post-spa benefit. In a few stories, the feeling of being pampered and well-looked after was indeed clearly a post-treatment outcome. Czarina, for example, wrote, “*I was done with my massage and I was ready to go but they asked me to stay for a cup of lemongrass tea... who would not like that?:-)*” (Blog 412).

**Table 5.3.8 The bloggers' perspective after the spa experience:  
Social/environmental dimensions**

<b>Bloggers' Thoughts/Feelings</b>	<b>Raw Count (Total = 134)</b>	<b>% of all relevant coded blogs</b>
<b>C. Social/Environmental</b>		
Pampered/looked after	38	28.4
Feeling of connectedness to companion(s)	24	17.9
Sharing of experiences	17	12.7
Appreciation of nature-derived products	13	9.7
Appreciation of nature	11	8.2

Sharing experiences and connectedness may be combined as a single benefit. The latter, however, is more towards the companions of the blogger while at the spa (n = 24, 17.9%). Sharing experiences, conversely, was not necessarily with spa-going companions but with other individuals outside the travelling party (it could be with fellow travelers, local people or with spa therapists). In one story, a blogger discussed the Ayurvedic massage that she had in Kerala with a fellow backpacker that she met in Calcutta. In another Indian-based spa experience, a couple recounted their spa experience to their fellow international passengers during a long inter-state train ride and how oily but “blissful” they felt after the massage. A better appreciation of nature and its products were also reported.

*“Do I look better?”: Accounts of companions’ perceptions of bloggers after spa treatments*

The other perspective that was considered in the analysis of blogs was other people’s observations of the blogger, which are reported in the travel stories. This is an etic approach, that is, it was how other people looked at them after the spa treatment. This part of the discussion provides an alternative perspective on the study, because the whole research has been all about organic experiences and perspectives. It simply means that the observations, thoughts and feelings were also sourced from other individuals apart from the research participant (in this case, the blogger), albeit they are being reported by the travel blog author. A total of eight benefits have been identified from the blogs, and were classified into physical and social/environmental dimensions. The results, however, will be discussed in a single section to avoid redundancy in the presentation.

*The post-spa physical and social dimensions: the companion’s perspective*

The results here can be tied back to the results discussed in the previous sections. These benefits are seen as supportive or confirmatory observations of the bloggers’ own thoughts and feelings. Observations such as looking younger (n = 23, 17.2%), having lighter skin (n = 12, 9%), smoother skin (n = 32, 23.9%) and slimmer (n = 10, 7.5%) were mentioned to be linked to the treatments received. Similarly, looking more relaxed is thought of as an outward reflection of the bloggers’ state of mind and being that is related to a relaxed, calm, peaceful and happy state.

The blogs are indeed a manifestation of the reflection phase of tourist behavior. The results presented in the social dimension suggest an entirely new set of elements. About 38 per cent of the bloggers in this sample expressed that the spa-going was an enjoyable activity. In most of the blogs, it was clearly a reflective statement, which appeared to be somewhat nostalgic in a positive tone. Also, appreciation of positive connections with companions as a result of the spa experience was reported (n = 38; 28.4%). In about 35 per cent of the blogs, an intention to repeat the experience was expressed.

Table 5.3.9 **The companions’ perspective after the spa experience: Physical and social dimensions**

Bloggers' Thoughts/Feelings	Raw Count (Total = 125)	% of all relevant coded blogs
<b>A. Physical</b>		
Looked younger	23	17.2
Looked more relaxed	54	40.3
Smoother/more supple skin	32	23.9
Slimmer	10	7.5
"Whiter"/lighter skin colour	12	9.0
<b>B. Social</b>		
Enjoyable activity for family/friends	51	38.1
Positive connections with companion(s)	38	28.4
Will do it again with family/friends	47	35.1

#### 5.3.4.4 **The other side of the coin: Tourist’ negative experiences from spas**

The blogs that were coded 4 and 5 were also searched for possible negative experiences. Table 5.3.10 shows that ticklishness which hindered the spa-goer to maximize the benefit of the spa experience, constituted almost 13 per cent of all coded blogs (n = 16). Ticklishness, as discussed in Chapter 4, also affected the respondents’ propensity to experience flow in some of the dimensions such as concentration and control. Ticklishness is as a sensation and subsequent response separate from pain, itch or pressure (Cutler, 2006). Cutler argues that when receiving a massage, ticklish individuals will not be able to relax thus preventing them from gaining the full benefit of a massage and posing a real problem during a treatment. Hence, the feelings of pain or discomfort (n = 12, 9.6%) may potentially be linked to the feelings of ticklishness. In some situations, the pressure during a massage may have been too hard for the person receiving the massage. The unsettling feeling of shame due to “nakedness” is another negative experience (n = 12, 9.6%). Similar to feelings of ticklishness, the unsettling/uncomfortable feelings that are associated with nakedness during a spa treatment (presumably a massage) was labelled a negative experience. After the spa experience, the bloggers also reported experiencing pain which may involve stiff muscles and/or bruises (n = 15, 11.2% of all blogs).

Table 5.3.10 **Negative experienced during and after the spa treatment**

Bloggers' Thoughts/Feelings	Raw Count (Total = 125)	% of all relevant coded blogs
<b>DURING</b>		
Ticklishness	16	12.8
"Nakedness"/embarrassment/uncomfortable	12	9.6
Feeling of pain/discomfort	10	8
Bloggers' Thoughts/Feelings	Raw Count (Total = 134)	% of all relevant coded blogs
<b>AFTER</b>		
Stiff muscles/neck	8	6
More pain (than when started)	5	3.7
Bruises/marks	2	1.5

In addition to these identified negative experiences, it is important to add some comments which, while they are not mentioned very much in the blogs, are likely to exist. One reality in spa experiences in South East Asia is the existence of some residual anxiety about massage businesses as sexually linked operations. The images of some spas in Thailand, for example, involve seeing them as a “front” for sexual services/prostitution. Basic search on Google about this matter results to expat stories, news and other materials. In one website, the readers are educated about “massage parlours”: *“Many massage parlours are just that – places to get a good massage. Most massage parlours will give just a massage if that is what the customer wants but some also offer extra services (a massage with a ‘happy ending’)... Massage parlours that provide a private room may well offer extra services”* (Know Phuket, 2011).

### 5.3.3 *Overview of Findings*

The findings in the blog study can be summarised in terms of the aims that were identified earlier. Firstly, this study sought to identify the volume of existing travel blogs containing information on spa experiences in South East Asia. A systematized method of searching blogs involved using and matching key words and the name of the country/sub-region. The 56 keyword combinations resulted to more than 100,000 blog entries. After choosing more specific keyword combinations, 97,000 of blogs were streamlined to one per cent of the blogs searched (n = 972) and were coded.

The second aim focused on the creation of a simple profile of the travel bloggers whose work(s) were included in the analysis of these data. The bloggers consisted of about 36 per cent females, but about 34 per cent of the bloggers' gender was undefined/unambiguous. The bloggers were also profiled according to ownership of stories. It was found that almost 43 per cent of the bloggers were either travelling alone (n = 206, 21.2) or with the partner/spouse (n = 211; 21.7%).

Thirdly, the study sought to identify the benefits which the respondents thought they received from the spa experience. The positive experiences during the spa experience were classified into physical, psychological and social/environmental dimensions. After the spa, more benefits were identified. The benefits, however, were two-fold. The first one was the bloggers' observations of the benefits on themselves, while the second one was other people's (travel companion) observations of the benefits on the bloggers. It was found, however, that a limited number of negative thoughts and feelings also arise from spa experiences, and these issues were briefly discussed towards the end of the chapter.

## **5.4 CHAPTER CONCLUSION**

### ***5.4.1 Highlights of findings***

The concept of benefits from spa experiences as reported by spa-going tourists was the central theme in this two-part chapter. In the first part, the benefits based on the TCP and wellness literature were assessed by spa-going tourists in South East Asia. The results indicated that in terms of the holiday, the spa experience was mostly found to be a relaxing way to unwind and escape from the stress and demands of travelling. Conversely, it was highly thought of as an opportunity to be pampered – something which most of the tourists do not experience at home. The benefits of the spa activities which also contributed to a positive travel experience involve the perceived novelty of spa experiences being integrated into the trip, which subsequently made the trip more enjoyable. The result of exploring the relationships between gender, residence and these perceived contributions of spa experience to travel indicated existing interactions between these variables. The main interactions involved the concept of appreciation of three distinct elements: nature, the tourists' own relationships, and the uniqueness of the

spa experience. The appreciation of these elements was mostly felt by female domestic tourists and male international tourists.

The other post-spa experience benefits highly agreed upon by tourists were the feelings of relaxation, youthfulness and energy. They also reported to have slept better, felt more peaceful and calmer after the spa treatment. The results of factorial ANOVA between gender, residence and the benefits of the experience to the person showed that main interactions between the variables on the perceived improvement of overall physical health, attaining a sense of peacefulness and calmness, and a feeling of having become a better person. Gaining a sense of belongingness, of independence and self-confidence were also evident of the interactions between gender and residence. Overall, the results indicated that female domestic tourists and male international tourists were more likely to realise these benefits than their opposite sex counterparts.

The different dimensions of well-being were assessed in terms of how long they lasted for the spa-going tourists. The independent *t*-test results showed that there were no gender influences for the wellness dimensions. To examine these further, the respondents who reported to have benefited from the spa experience in all dimensions were selected ( $n = 58$ , 42.3% of the total sample) and their responses in this section of the questionnaire were re-coded to fully explore the material. The cross-tabulation results suggested that most of the respondents felt the benefits for each dimension for about one month after the spa experience. Overall, it is suggested that spa experiences can indeed contribute to one's overall well-being for a certain period of time.

The second part of the chapter involved the analysis of travel blogs. Overall, it was revealed that during and after spa experiences, the positive thoughts and feelings of spa-goers which are conceived as benefits in this study vary in terms of dimensions. During spa experiences, the thoughts and feelings are about the bloggers' own "self" and are categorised into physical, psychological and social/environmental dimensions. After the spa experience, the stories revealed that the thoughts and feelings are not just about one's own perceptions, but also about other people's (usually a travel companion) observations of the blogger. The post-spa benefits are also categorised into physical, psychological and social/environmental dimensions, while the latter is divided into physical and social dimensions.

#### *5.4.2 Methodological synthesis*

Both studies discussed in this chapter have addressed the specific aims. One of the more important achievements in this chapter, however, lies in establishing a connection between the methods used in both online survey and blog analysis. Despite the differences in the approach (quantitative vs. qualitative), some linkages between the studies can be drawn. Two key but related connections relate to the concept of positive experiences that tourist spa-goers gain from the spa activity as well as to the dimensions of well-being. Positive experiences (i.e. benefits) were found to encompass the different dimensions of well-being. Three important dimensions were thought to have benefited the most as a result of the spa experiences: physical, psychological and social. The physical domain is usually immediately affected by spa treatments. As discussed this chapter, touch (and its therapeutic benefits) plays a vital role in this process. The label “psychological dimension” may have been used in the blog analysis, but it is also thought as a combination of emotional, intellectual and to some extent spiritual domains of an individual. Finally, the social dimension relates to how a person values relationships as well as how one interacts with others.

The significance of spa activities as a source of positive experiences and as contributors to well-being were recognised in this chapter. As the reflection chapter, that is the fifth phase in travel behaviour, it should be noted that memory recall played an important part in accessing the experience of the respondents. In the first study, they were required to think of their spa experience that they had one to 18 months prior to the survey. Recalling a past experience (3-5 months old the most), was also involved in writing the travel blogs which were accessed for analysis. While importance is also given to the age of experience, it is acknowledged that it is a less relevant factor compared to the value that the experience has for tourists. This is to say that positive experiences are indeed worth recalling and reflected on despite the span of time since it they occurred.

# CHAPTER 6

## Conclusions, Implications & Future Directions

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*“Experiences, like goods and services, have to meet a customer need; they have to work; and they have to be deliverable. Just as goods and services result from an iterative process of research, design, and development, experiences derive from an iterative process of exploration, scripting and staging.. .”*

**B. Joseph Pine II and James Gilmore  
Welcome to the Experience Economy (1998, p. 102)**

### Chapter Structure

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- 6.1 INTRODUCTION: A REVIEW OF THE RESEARCH’S OVERARCHING AIM
  - 6.2 OVERVIEW OF RESULTS
    - 6.2.1 Motivation (Pre-travel)
    - 6.2.2 Flow (On-site Experiences)
    - 6.2.3 Benefits (Reflection)
  - 6.3 RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS, APPLICATIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS
    - 6.3.1 Theoretical/Conceptual Implications
    - 6.3.2 Practical Applications & Commercial/Marketing Considerations
  - 6.4 LIMITATIONS, CHALLENGES AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS
  - 6.5 FINAL REMARKS
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### **6.1 INTRODUCTION: A REVIEW OF THE RESEARCH’S OVERARCHING AIM**

A relationship between tourism and positive psychology does exist, and this PhD project sought to highlight the meshing of these two contemporary fields of study in the context of tourist experiences, particularly spa experiences in South East Asia. Understanding what motivate tourists to travel to India, Thailand and the Philippines and subsequently what motivate them to visit spas in these destinations is one of the main aims of this research. By applying the flow construct from positive psychology in this research, tourists’ propensity to experience flow from spa experiences is explored. Further, the perceived benefits from spa experiences are investigated through an online survey and an analysis of travel blogs.



This concluding chapter summarises the aims and results of the studies that were presented in the previous chapters. It also discusses the limitations and challenges that were faced in this project, and presents the implications of the research across three domains: theoretical/conceptual, practical and commercial/marketing. The limitations and challenges of the project are identified and subsequently linked to the future direction of this area of study. Some recommendations for researchers are emphasised and some final remarks from the researcher are presented.

## **6.2 OVERVIEW OF RESULTS**

Three studies were conducted to support the overarching aims of the research. The first study involved on-site surveys in India, Thailand and the Philippines. The second study was framed from the initial results of the first study; it involved an online survey of spa-going tourists in South East Asia. The third and final study entailed an analysis of travel blogs about spa experiences in India, Thailand and the Philippines. The discussion in this section involves not only the results of these studies, but also how they are linked in achieving the aims of the project. In essence, the results are not presented by study but by chapter.

### **6.2.1 Motivation (Pre-travel)**

Chapter 3 consisted of two parts which discussed the tourist motivation-related findings from the on-site and online surveys. The aims of the first study were to profile the tourist spa-goers in India, Thailand and the Philippines and identify their key motives in visiting these countries. The motives were classified as push factors (intrinsic) and pull factors (destination-based influences). In exploring the pull factors, it was found that the tourists were most concerned about their safety and security, and therefore was the most important factor in choosing a destination. The affordability and the local culture at the destination were also important. The TCP was the main theory used in analysing the push factors, and the results were very similar to the original TCP study conducted by Pearce and Lee (Lee & Pearce, 2002, 2003; Pearce, 2005; Pearce & Lee, 2005). Novelty, escape and relaxation were found to be the most important motives for the tourists in the three countries.

Another aim of the study was to assess the role of expanded levels of travel experience in modifying the importance of health as a travel motive. In the process, the integration of health as a motive factor in the TCP underpinned the dynamism and flexibility of the model. Health as a travel motive (i.e. “*improving my health*” and “*maintaining my health*”) was found to be moderately important among the respondents. Additionally, it was found that the pursuit of health was not as important to experienced travellers as they were to less experienced travellers. This is to say that as one gains more travel experience, the importance of health diminishes.

The second part of Chapter 3 was about the travel and spa motives of tourists who participated in the online survey. Seven statements related to the pursuit of beauty, health and wellness were added into the TCP. For both travel and spa-going sets of motives, it was found that novelty, relaxation and escape were the most important for the respondents. Unlike health in the previous study, *beauty, health and wellness* as a motive factor was the least important travel motive for the respondents. As a spa-going motive, however, it was regarded to be moderately important.

### **6.2.2 Flow (On-site Experiences)**

The applicability of the flow construct to tourist experiences was explored in this research. The Flow State Scale-2 (FSS-2, also known as *Event Experience Scale*), one of the flow scales developed by Jackson and Eklund (2002, 2004) was used in measuring flow experiences among tourists. More specifically, the FSS-2 was used to address an aim of the study that is, to assess the tourists’ propensity of experiencing flow during a spa experience. The data for this chapter was part of the same study which surveyed travel motives among tourists in India, Thailand and the Philippines (Study 1).

This particular chapter explicitly highlighted the linkages between tourism and positive psychology through the study of flow in spa experiences in South East Asia. The nine dimensions of flow (Mihalyi Csikszentmihalyi, 1990) was the framework of the FSS-2. Overall, the results of the study showed that the 319 spa-going tourists reported a moderately high propensity of experiencing flow ( $x = 3.48$  out of 5) during a spa treatment, thereby indicating that spa treatments generally provide positive experiences to tourists. Of the nine dimensions, autotelic experience – the domain which refers to

the view that the individuals involved in the activity are inclined to do or experience the activity again even if they did not have to – was the highest-regarded among the respondents. The statements “*I really enjoyed the experience*” and “*the experience left me feeling great*” had the highest mean scores ( $x = 4.31$  and  $4.09$  respectively). These results indicated that overall, tourist spa-goers are likely to experience intrinsic rewards from spa treatments. Also, the results suggested that tourists are likely to purchase spa treatments for their future holidays.

To address the final aim and to highlight the novel approach used in this study, the mean scores of each flow dimension in the spa activity were compared with the mean scores of other activities that were previously studied by the developers of the FSS-2. It should be noted that the FSS-2 was originally designed to measure flow in activities in a physical setting such as sports, yoga, various forms of exercise, dancing and music among others. Receiving a spa treatment, on the contrary, is conceived as a passive (less physical) activity in this study, therefore the use of the flow state scale was viewed as a novel application of the technique. The results indicated that *loss of self-consciousness* and *action-awareness merging* were lower in spa settings than the other activities. Meanwhile, spa activity was comparatively higher on the concentration dimension than the other activities. In general, this comparison also suggested that spa-going on holidays is a positive activity that is beneficial to tourists.

### **6.2.3 Benefits (Reflection)**

The two-part Chapter 5 presented the concept of benefits from spa experiences as reported by tourists. In the first part, the results from part of the online study were presented. The second part of the chapter provided insights from travel blogs that were coded and analysed. Overall, the findings in both studies revealed the connection between the methods used in both online survey (Study 2) and blog analysis (Study 3). It was revealed that the positive-experience paradigm that tourist spa goers gain from the spa activity was found to encompass the different dimensions of well-being. More specifically, the physical, psychological and social dimensions benefited the most from spa experiences. One’s physical domain is usually affected by touch during spa treatments. The psychological dimension (emotional, intellectual and sometimes spiritual domains) involves the feelings and thoughts during and after the spa

experiences. Finally, one's social dimension is also affected through perceived improvement in relationships as a result of the spa experience.

The connections established here were realised by addressing the aims of the studies. The online survey sought to assess the benefits which were derived from motivation and wellness literature. More specifically, the TCP motives and the multidimensionality of wellness were adopted to construct the benefits. Overall, the results indicated that among tourist spa-goers, the spa experience was found to be a relaxing way to unwind and escape from the stress and demands of travelling. It was also thought to be an opportunity to be pampered – an experience that many tourists do not get at home. Hence, the perceived novelty of the spa experience as part of the trip apparently made the trip more enjoyable.

In exploring these benefits with gender and residence, it was found that female domestic tourists and male international tourists felt a greater appreciation of three things: nature, relationships and the uniqueness of the spa experience. It was also found that these cohorts of tourists were more likely to have felt an overall improvement in physical health, in attaining a sense of peacefulness, calmness and a better sense of self. They reported to have gained greater sense of belongingness, of independence and self-confidence. Overall, however, the respondents reported heightened feelings of relaxation, youthfulness and energy and achieved better sleep, a sense of peacefulness and calmness as a result of the spa experience.

### **6.3 RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS, APPLICATIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS**

The implications of this project are three-fold. The first implication lies in the theoretical or conceptual contributions of the study. In general, the main contribution of this study lies in underpinning the existing yet under-studied relationship between positive psychology and tourism. More specifically, the contributions involve the application of the TCP model and the flow construct in the study. The practical and commercial contributions of this research are related and are focused on spa activities as a source of positive experiences for tourists. Although related, these contributions will be discussed separately.

### ***6.3.1 Theoretical/Conceptual Implications***

As mentioned earlier, one of the research opportunities seized through this research was to test and expand existing models and theories. Two novel contributions can be identified from this project. One of them is the integration of a new set of travel motives into the TCP. In the first study, two health-related statements were added in the model. In the online study, seven statements relating to health, beauty and wellness were included. The integration of these new motive items in the TCP has tested the dynamism and flexibility of the model. In the concluding section of Chapter 3, an assessment of the TCP as a sound tourist motivation theory was presented. It demonstrated that each element or requirement of a sound theory was addressed in this research. The term “tourist motivation” is thought to encompass not only the factors that influence travel decisions (pre-travel phase) but also the factors that tourists take into consideration when choosing activities at the destination (on-site experiences). Hence, by confirming these characteristics of the TCP, it is suggested that this model is a sound framework for studying not only travel motives, but also general motives that tourists have in undertaking more specific activities while on holiday such as spa-going.

The other novel contribution of this research lies in the use of the FSS-2 in a passive activity such as receiving a spa treatment. This application is seen not as contradictory but as an extension to the original intention of the developers of the flow state scales, which was to measure flow in activities in a physical setting. The results indicated that participants in this study as well as in the previous FSS-2 studies have a moderate to high propensity to experience flow across several dimensions. As discussed in the Chapter 4, however, some limitations and challenges were faced as a result of using the scales in their original form. Despite these difficulties, the assessment of the linkage between tourism and flow states from positive psychology through tourist spa experiences is thought to be a worthwhile pathway to further explore this area of inquiry.

Another theoretical contribution that enhances the link between tourism and positive psychology is the apparent association between benefits-sought, motivation and the influences that spa experiences have on the tourist and on their overall holiday experience. The concepts of benefits-sought and motivation are closely intertwined. The

derivation of the benefit-related statements from the TCP underpins this notion. Also, the benefits from spa experiences that were identified in both studies indicated that they contribute to one's well-being, specifically in the physical, psychological and social dimensions. This finding reaffirms the existing literature suggesting that wellness is a state of being that is indeed *multidimensional* (addressing multiple domains of an individual), *relative and subjective* (it is perceptual and changes over time) and *self-dependent* (its manifestation is dependent on the individual; it is a matter of choice). In the spa context, achieving wellness is a prime objective both for the spa-goer and the spa business. The achievement of such a state of being, however, is dependent on the individual's perceived benefits from the spa activity. This is to say that if an individual finds the spa treatment beneficial to his/her well-being over a period of time, the experience is perceived to be positive.

### ***6.3.2 Practical Applications & Commercial/Marketing Considerations***

Tourist well-being is core to the tourism-positive psychology relationship. This project begins to offer some practical applications in the cultivation of various ways of enhancing tourist well-being. The results in Studies 2 and 3 indicated that the participants reported a high degree of positive response about their spa experience while travelling. This perceived benefit of spa experiences suggests that even though moderate to limited flow experiences have been reported in the study, the spa-going activity can be a source of positive experiences that is beneficial to tourists' well-being. And for many holiday-makers and travellers who experience stress, fatigue and often cross time zones, the physical or psychological relief and/or the enhancement of their relationships from spa activities can contribute to their well-being albeit at varying degrees and for diverse length of time.

Tourist well-being includes well-being for those who travel long distances is, however, just one aspect of the full research program. The project was intended to develop a conceptual understanding of the spa experience. It is also focused on South East Asia and how tourists experience spas offers additional marketing perspectives for businesses. The advantage of focused regional studies of tourism topics lies in specifying how experiences differ and can be managed in local contexts. A more specific marketing consideration arising from this research is the customisation of spa

experiences (service offerings). It is possible to suggested tailored promotional strategies that target specific market segments. The varying levels of spa experience suggest that individuals also vary in the amount of spa-related knowledge. Aptly communicating the benefits of spa experiences to the target markets is important; the use of language in promotional materials should also correspond to the target market's level of spa use, travel experience and knowledge. This consideration for commercial and marketing processes does not only apply to tourists, but also the local users of spa businesses. This application is therefore seen to be potentially beneficial to all spa businesses/operators and users (both locals and tourists). The most specific part of this recommendation lies in suggesting promotional opportunities targeted at those likely to be experienced users and stressing the benefits to this group differently than for those who are inexperienced spa users.

#### **6.4 LIMITATIONS, CHALLENGES AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

Some limitations and challenges were encountered while undertaking this research project. Unavoidable social issues and implications arising during the project implementation were faced. Adaptation of the study plan was undertaken. The incident that affected the research was the series of terror attacks in Mumbai, which occurred in 26 November 2008. The incident was a compelling factor to change the course of the research plan. Because the potential research participants were originally targeted at individuals who were specifically on spa holiday, spa businesses were contacted and requested for the permission to access the spa tourists as potential research participants. After the attacks, however, the businesses had to tighten safety and security measures within properties that housed and catered to tourists, thus the access to spa tourists which was previously granted to the researcher was lifted.

In Chapter 4, several other kinds of challenges were also outlined. One of them lies in the use of the FSS-2 in the study. The perceived length of the questionnaire and the repetition of questions were observed by many of the respondents. The repetitive nature of questions in FSS-2 was also a problem area for some tourists. Another challenge in using the FSS-2 was related to language. Because the original use of the FSS-2 was to measure flow experiences in physical activities and because the statements were used unaltered in the study, some expressions were thought to be out of context which caused

confusion among the respondents. Several words/phrases also appeared to be ambiguous to the respondents. In some cases, the definition of terms and expressions were required by participants. The researcher (nor her assistants), however, offered any definition to the respondents to avoid biases. Essentially, the respondents were told that the expressions were open to their own interpretation. There are two pathways that can be taken for the future use of the FSS-2 in measuring flow in various activities. One way is to customise the scales according to the activity that is, to use the most suitable language that describes or relates to the activity of choice. It is suggested that the developers of the FSS-2 be consulted if changes are to be made. The other pathway is to use the FSS-2 unaltered. A set of definitions (of terms and expressions) could be made more explicit in the questionnaire. Similarly, the developers of the FSS-2 would need to be consulted to consider the effects of these changes for comparative and benchmarking analysis.

In Chapter 5, it was noted that this project employed a quantitative analysis of how tourists view their spa experience in terms of the benefits that they gained and how these benefits influenced not only their trip but also penetrated beyond the holiday and into their daily lives. From here, different directions can be considered for future research. One direction is a deeper analysis of the elements that make up the different dimensions of wellness. Instead of simply identifying the dimensions and briefly describing them in the questionnaire, a more searching set of items could be developed and measured. Another direction is an in-depth qualitative approach to this area of inquiry. Although netnography was carried out to explore spa benefits identified by tourists as a qualitative approach, focus group discussions and/or interviews of tourists are also thought to provide an augmentative and a more comprehensive understanding of the benefits of spa experiences.

This research can be replicated in several geographical and socio-cultural settings. One of the recommended future directions of this area of research is that a similar study be conducted in other countries in the Southeast Asian sub-continent to verify if the findings continue to apply within the regional context of the research. More specifically, Indonesia and Malaysia are seen as potential sources of richer information about tourists' spa experiences. One of the areas that can be investigated relate to whether issues of touch and the broader cultural context of the Muslim faith make differences in



the way massage, touch and spas are organised and the consequential benefits to participants. Subsequent to the shift of countries, further exploration of whether different types of spa treatments and massage approaches (e.g. Ayurveda, Chinese, Thai treatments) have different benefits to tourists. Stemming from this idea of varying treatment styles is the question of authenticity or congruence in treatments. Specific questions related to the origin of the treatment and how different it is practiced in another country, not only in the technique but also in the thoughts, feelings and positive psychology implications for tourists. For example, one may ask whether a Thai treatment in Thailand differ from Thai treatment in China or India. Congruence or dissimilarity in tourist spa-goers' experience and perceived benefits can therefore be further explored in this context. Indeed, tourists' spa-going activity is a very specific form of tourism. Its dependence on context and place as an area of research, however, promises vast possibilities in terms of future directions.

## **6.5 FINAL REMARKS**

The globalisation of wellness as a phenomenon and as an industry has indeed affected the growth and subsequent globalisation of tourism. The pursuit of health and wellness is recognised as an ancient and pervasive tourism product spanning over centuries of civilisations, wars and evolving technologies. Spa-going, an old practice of European origins is seen as one of the key contemporary activities in pursuing wellness. In the context of South East Asia, India, Thailand and the Philippines are just three of the several countries that continue to develop as a spa destination. While specific destinations and regions have attributes that draw tourists, South East Asia's spa tourism industry is seen as a vital pull factor; the region continues to generate popularity because of the implicit meshing of ancient Eastern healing philosophies and modern Western applications. Spa experiences in South East Asia are diverse and therefore inherently heterogeneous. Nevertheless, the bottom line for the pursuit of these experiences is always positive.

Indeed, everyone has a good reason to travel and eventually visit a spa at the destination. Whatever the motive is, the ultimate spa experience is about the spa-goer – his/her comfort, goals and peace of mind are at the heart of every spa experience. Spa-going while on holiday is thought to be an activity that enhances one's well-being,

considering the benefits that one gets from the experience. These benefits, as seen from the results of this research, are not just limited to the physical and psychological domains but may also extend to the social domain of an individual. Overall, spa-going is certainly a beneficial activity for tourists.

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# APPENDIX A – On-site Survey Questionnaire

This is a template of the questionnaire used in India. The font style and size were altered to fit the standard thesis requirements.

	<p><i>The Asian Spa Experience</i></p> <p>This survey is part of my PhD project. It seeks to understand and improve your spa experience. The questions will hopefully give me information to link the demand and supply of spa experiences. It will only take 15 minutes of your time.</p>
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**Your Spa Experience.** Firstly, kindly tell me about your thoughts and feelings during your spa experience. Also, please tell me how satisfied you are with your experience.

Please read each question and mark your answers by filling the circles like this: ●

1. Could you tell me what kind of spa experience have you just had? (e.g. massage, sauna, facial)
2. Please answer the following questions in relation to the spa experience that you have just had. There are no right or wrong answers. Think about how you felt during the spa treatment/activity and answer the questions using the rating scale below. For each question, please fill the circle of the number that best matches your experience.

Event Experience Rating Scale				
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	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
	1	2	3	4	5
I was challenged, but I believed my skills would allow me to meet the challenge.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I made the correct movements without thinking about trying to do so.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I knew clearly what I wanted to do.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It was really clear to me how my performance was going.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My attention was focused entirely on what I was doing.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I had a sense of control over what I was doing.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I was not concerned with what others may have been thinking of me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Time seemed to alter (either slowed down or speeded up).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I really enjoyed the experience.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My abilities matched the high challenge of the situation.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Things just seemed to be happening automatically.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I had a strong sense of what I wanted to do.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I was aware of how well I was performing.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It was no effort to keep my mind on what was happening.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I felt like I could control what I was doing.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I was not concerned with how others may have been evaluating me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The way time passed seemed to be different from normal.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I loved the feeling of the performance and want to capture it again.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### Event Experience Rating Scale

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
I felt I was competent enough to meet the high demands of the situation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I performed automatically, without thinking too much.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I knew what I wanted to achieve.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I had a good idea while I was performing about how well I was doing.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I had total concentration.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I had a feeling of total control.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I was not concerned with how I was presenting myself.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It felt like time went by quickly.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The experience left me feeling great.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The challenge and my skills were at an equally high level.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I did things spontaneously and automatically without having to think.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My goals were clearly defined.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I could tell by the way I was performing how well I was doing.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I was completely focused on the task at hand.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I felt in control of my body.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I was not worried about what others may have been thinking of me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I lost my normal awareness of time.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I found the experience extremely rewarding.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

3. How satisfied are you with your overall spa experience during this holiday?
- Very satisfied
  - Somewhat satisfied
  - Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
  - Somewhat dissatisfied
  - Very dissatisfied

*Now, let's talk about your reasons for coming here for a spa experience*

**Your Travel Motives.** Please tell me about how you decided on your spa holiday.  
*(A spa holiday involves travelling to a place other than your usual place of residence to use spa services for more than one day)*

4. Below are some factors that you may have considered in choosing your **spa destination**.  
 Please rate each decision factor according to importance.

Factor Rating Scale	
NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT	VERY IMPORTANT

Affordability (as compared to similar destinations)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Safety & security	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Popularity of the destination (i.e. to both international & domestic tourists)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Proximity (i.e. nearer/farther from home)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Season/time of the year (i.e. summer)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Climate at the destination (e.g. cooler, warmer)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Natural setting of the place (e.g. beaches)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Nature-based activities at the destination (e.g. swimming, surfing, scuba diving, hiking, mountain climbing)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Historical/religious significance of the place	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Non-nature based activities at the destination (e.g. shopping)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### Factor Rating Scale

NOT AT ALL  
IMPORTANT

VERY  
IMPORTANT

Indigenous/traditional spa treatment (e.g. Ayurveda (India), "Thai massage", Philippine "hilot")	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other spa treatments (e.g. aromatherapy, Swedish/Shiatsu massage)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Luxurious lifestyle (i.e. lifestyle that the spa/resort/hotel is offering as part of its services)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Name/brand name of the spa/hotel/resort	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Local cuisine (Indian – vegetarian/vegan, regional cuisine)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Local culture of the people in general	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other ( <i>please specify</i> ) .....	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

5. Please rate the following reasons when you generally think about this spa holiday. These statements relate to what you want to get or achieve out of your spa experiences and holiday as a whole. There are no right or wrong answers. Kindly fill the circle of the number that best describes the importance of each reason.

### Motive Rating Scale

NOT AT ALL  
IMPORTANT

VERY  
IMPORTANT

Having Fun	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Experiencing something different	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Feeling the special atmosphere of the vacation destination	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Visiting places related to my personal interests	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Resting and relaxing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Getting away from everyday psychological stress/pressure	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Being away from daily routine	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Getting away from the usual demands of life	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Giving my mind a rest	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Not worrying about time	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Getting away from everyday physical stress/pressure	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Doing things with my companion(s)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Doing something with my family/friend(s)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Being with others who enjoy the same things as I do	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Strengthening relationships with my companion(s)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Strengthening relationships with my family/friend(s)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Contacting with family/friend(s) who live elsewhere	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Being independent	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Being obligated to no one	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Doing things my own way	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Viewing the scenery	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Being close to nature	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Getting a better appreciation of nature	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Being harmonious with nature	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Learning new things	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Experiencing different cultures	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Meeting new and varied people	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Developing my knowledge of the area	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Meeting the locals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Observing other people in the area	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



### Motive Rating Scale

NOT AT ALL  
IMPORTANT

VERY  
IMPORTANT

Following current events	○	○	○	○	○
Exploring the unknown	○	○	○	○	○
Feeling of excitement	○	○	○	○	○
Having unpredictable experiences	○	○	○	○	○
Being spontaneous	○	○	○	○	○
Having daring/adventuresome experience	○	○	○	○	○
Experiencing thrills	○	○	○	○	○
Experiencing the risk involved	○	○	○	○	○
Develop my personal interests	○	○	○	○	○
Knowing what I am capable of	○	○	○	○	○
Gaining a sense of accomplishment	○	○	○	○	○
Gaining a sense of self-confidence	○	○	○	○	○
Developing my skills and abilities	○	○	○	○	○
Using my skills and talents	○	○	○	○	○
Feeling personally safe and secure	○	○	○	○	○
Being with respectful people	○	○	○	○	○
Meeting people with similar values/interests	○	○	○	○	○
Being near considerate people	○	○	○	○	○
Being with others if I need them	○	○	○	○	○
Feeling that I belong	○	○	○	○	○
Gaining a new perspective of life	○	○	○	○	○
Feeling inner harmony/peace	○	○	○	○	○
Understanding more about myself	○	○	○	○	○
Being creative	○	○	○	○	○
Working on my personal/spiritual values	○	○	○	○	○
Experiencing the peace and calm	○	○	○	○	○
Avoiding interpersonal stress and pressure	○	○	○	○	○
Experiencing the open space	○	○	○	○	○
Being away from the crowds of people	○	○	○	○	○
Enjoying isolation	○	○	○	○	○
Thinking about good times I've had in the past	○	○	○	○	○
Reflecting on past memories	○	○	○	○	○
Having romantic relationships	○	○	○	○	○
Being with people of the opposite sex	○	○	○	○	○
Sharing skill and knowledge with others	○	○	○	○	○
Showing others I can do it	○	○	○	○	○
Being recognised by other people	○	○	○	○	○
Leading others	○	○	○	○	○
Having others know that I have been there	○	○	○	○	○
Maintaining my current health condition	○	○	○	○	○
Improving my current health condition	○	○	○	○	○

## Your Past & Future Spa Experiences

6. Excluding this trip, have you been on a spa holiday in the last 5 years?

- No **Go to Question 7**  
 Yes Where? .....  
 How many times?  Once  
 2-3 times  
 4-5 times  
 More than 5 times

Overall, how satisfied were you with your previous spa holiday(s)/experiences?

- Very satisfied  
 Somewhat satisfied  
 Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied  
 Somewhat dissatisfied  
 Very dissatisfied

7. At home, how often did you visit a **day spa** in the last 12 months? (A **day spa** is a facility for day-use that offer services including, but are not limited to facials, waxing, massage, and other non-invasive procedures)

- Never **Go to Question 8**  
 More than once per week  
 Once per week  
 Once in 2-3 weeks  
 Once per month  
 Once in three months  
 Once in six months

Overall, how satisfied were you with your previous day spa experiences?

- Very satisfied  
 Somewhat satisfied  
 Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied  
 Somewhat dissatisfied  
 Very dissatisfied

8. Are you planning to go to another spa holiday in the next 12 months?

- No **Go to Question 9**  
 Yes  
 Where? .....

## Just a little about yourself

11. In which of the following categories does your occupation fit?

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Homemaker                  | <input type="radio"/> Sales/marketing              |
| <input type="radio"/> Professional/technical     | <input type="radio"/> Self-employed/Business owner |
| <input type="radio"/> Executive administrator    | <input type="radio"/> Clerical or service          |
| <input type="radio"/> Labourer                   | <input type="radio"/> Retired                      |
| <input type="radio"/> Middle management          | <input type="radio"/> Student                      |
| <input type="radio"/> Tradesman/machine operator | <input type="radio"/> Others                       |

9. Are you:

- Female  
 Male

10. Below are age groups.

In which group do you belong?

- |                                |                               |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> Under 18 | <input type="radio"/> 41-50   |
| <input type="radio"/> 18-20    | <input type="radio"/> 51-60   |
| <input type="radio"/> 21-30    | <input type="radio"/> Over 60 |
| <input type="radio"/> 31-40    |                               |

12. Where do you usually live?
- In this country ➤ *In which city/town?* .....
  - Overseas ➤ *From which country?* .....

13. How did you find out about this spa destination?

Please choose **up to three sources** that best apply.

- |  |                                   |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> Word of mouth from fellow travellers | <input type="radio"/> Internet    |
| <input type="radio"/> Word of mouth from family/friends    | <input type="radio"/> Newspapers  |
| <input type="radio"/> Guidebook                            | <input type="radio"/> Magazines   |
| <input type="radio"/> TV/Radio                             | <input type="radio"/> Other ..... |
| <input type="radio"/> Previous visit                       |                                   |

How many times have you been here before?

- Once
- 2-5 times
- More than 5 times

14. How long are you away from home on this holiday?

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="radio"/> 2-3 days                  | <input type="radio"/> 15-21 days (about 3 weeks) |
| <input type="radio"/> 4-7 days                  | <input type="radio"/> 22-31 days (about a month) |
| <input type="radio"/> 8-14 days (about 2 weeks) | <input type="radio"/> More than 1 month          |

15. Are you travelling:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Alone                                     | <input type="radio"/> With friends                 |
| <input type="radio"/> With spouse/partner                       | <input type="radio"/> With an organised tour/group |
| <input type="radio"/> With family (including children under 18) |  |
- How many children under 18? .....

16a. Is this a packaged spa holiday?

- No ➤ **Go to Question 16b**
- Yes ➤ Please choose all that are included in your package
 

<input type="radio"/> Air transfers (from home and back)	<input type="radio"/> Spa/health treatments
<input type="radio"/> Accommodation	<input type="radio"/> Medications
<input type="radio"/> Breakfast only	<input type="radio"/> Yoga/meditation/tai chi
<input type="radio"/> All meals	<input type="radio"/> Other activities (e.g. art, music)
<input type="radio"/> Use of facilities such as swimming pool, sauna	<input type="radio"/> Tours (e.g. city/town tours)
<input type="radio"/> Professional/medical consultations	<input type="radio"/> Others

.....

Were there any problems with the inclusions in your spa package?

  - No ➤ **Go to Question 17**
  - Yes ➤ Which inclusion(s) was a/were problem(s)? .....

16b. If this is not a packaged spa holiday, did you have problems with any of the following?

**Please choose all that applies.**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Booking air transfers          | <input type="radio"/> Booking for (a) spa treatment(s)         |
| <input type="radio"/> Searching for an accommodation | <input type="radio"/> Booking for tours (e.g. city/town tours) |
| <input type="radio"/> Booking for an accommodation   | <input type="radio"/> Others                                   |
| <input type="radio"/> Searching for a spa            |  |

17. How many times have you travelled **out** of your usual country of residence in the last 5 years?

- Never
- 1-4 times
- 5-10 times
- More than 10 times

18. How many times have you travelled **within** your usual country of residence in the last 5 years?

- Never
- 1-4 times
- 5-10 times
- More than 10 times

19. What **one language** are you most comfortable in using during your spa holiday?

.....

20. Do you have any suggestions for improving the spa services you are completing/have experienced?

.....  
.....

*And finally...*

21. Do you want to receive a summary of this study's findings?     Yes                       No

22. Do you consent to be contacted for future studies                       Yes                       No  
(i.e. about six months hereafter)?

If you said YES to any of these questions, kindly provide your:

Name: *(printed)*.....

.....

Email address **OR** Telephone

number:.....

Signature: .....                      Date: .....

.....

.....

*Thank You!*

# APPENDIX B – Online Survey Questionnaire

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## **Asian Spa Experience Survey 2010**

*(This document has exported from Qualtrics Online to Microsoft Word. It has been reformatted to enhance its readability.)*

### **THE ASIAN SPA EXPERIENCE: A study of tourist motivations and the benefits of spa experiences**

This online survey is about tourists' spa experiences in South/Southeast Asia. This project aims to understand why people go to spas while travelling, and why people, in general, travel to these destinations. It also explores the relationships between travel motives and the level of travel experience. Lastly, this study aims to identify the perceived benefits from the spa experiences.

This study is being conducted by Jenny H. Panchal and will contribute towards her PhD in Tourism at James Cook University. Before you begin with the survey, please be informed that:

- *You should be at least 18 years old;*
- *You should have had a spa experience while you are on a domestic/international trip in any South/Southeast Asian country in the last 18 months;*
- *Participation in this survey is completely voluntary;*
- *This survey takes approximately 20 minutes to complete;*
- *You may withdraw from the study at any time before you submit your responses, as they will be automatically processed upon submission;*
- *Any information you provide will be recorded anonymously and will be kept confidential;*
- *You will not be identified in any way in research publications and/or conferences, where the data from this study will be used; and,*
- *You may forward the link to this survey to others to whom the above conditions are applicable.*

By participating in the survey, you will get the chance to win an online gift certificate entitling you to a spa/wellness/beauty treatment. Information on how to enter the draw will be provided at the end of the survey. Entering the draw is not compulsory.

Your time and participation is highly appreciated. For more information and/or a copy of the findings, you may contact:

#### **Jenny H. Panchal (Principal Investigator)**

PhD Candidate (Tourism)

School of Business, James Cook University Townsville 4811 QLD, Australia

E-mail: [Jenny.Panchal@jcu.edu.au](mailto:Jenny.Panchal@jcu.edu.au)

Or

#### **Prof. Philip Pearce (Supervisor)**

Foundation Professor of Tourism

School of Business, James Cook University Townsville 4811 QLD, Australia E-mail:

[Philip.Pearce@jcu.edu.au](mailto:Philip.Pearce@jcu.edu.au)

**Q1 Firstly, what is your usual country of residence?**

**Q2 While planning for your holiday, did you include a plan to visit spas and/or purchase spa treatments/services at the destination?**

- Yes (1)
- No (2)
- I can't remember (3)

*If Yes Is Selected, Then Skip to Q2a Click to write the question text*

*If No Is Selected, Then Skip to End of Block*

*If I can't remember Is Selected, Then Skip To End of Block*

**Q2a How much of a priority was the spa-going activity in your holiday plan?**

- Very high (1)
- High (2)
- Medium (3)
- Low (4)
- Very low (5)

**Kindly tell me about your most recent spa experience in Asia.**

*For this survey, a **SPA EXPERIENCE** refers to either a single or a collective set of treatments/therapies that you have experienced over a period of time during your trip to an Asian country. The treatments/therapies involved may be therapeutic or medicinal.*

**Q3 In which of the following countries did you have your last spa experience while traveling/on a holiday in Asia?**

- India (1)
- Thailand (2)
- Philippines (3)
- Cambodia (4)
- China (Mainland) (5)
- Hong Kong / Macau (6)
- Indonesia (7)
- Laos (8)
- Malaysia (9)
- Maldives (10)
- Singapore (11)
- Vietnam (12)
- Other countries (13) \_\_\_\_\_

**Q4 How long ago was your last spa experience while you were on holiday/traveling in Asia?**

- Within the last 4 weeks (1)
- 2-3 months ago (2)
- 4-6 months ago (3)
- 7-12 months ago (4)
- More than a year ago (5)

**Q5 How many spa treatments/therapies did you have during your trip?**

**Example: massage = 1 treatment massage + sauna = 2 treatments massage + facial + footscrub = 3 treatments**

- 1-2 treatments (1)
- 3-5 treatments (2)
- 6-10 treatments (3)
- More than 10 treatments (4)

**Q6 What kind of spa services/treatments did you use while you were on your last spa experience? (Tick all that apply)**

- Facial treatments (1)
- Non-water-based body treatments (e.g. massage, body scrubs and wraps, ) (2)
- Hand and feet treatments (e.g. hand/foot massage, hand/foot scrubs, manicure/pedicure, ) (3)
- Heat and water therapies (e.g. balneotherapy, hydrotherapy, steam baths/sauna) (4)
- Ayurveda treatments (traditional) (5)
- Chinese medicinal treatments (traditional) (6)
- Other (please specify) (7)

**Q7 Were any of the spa treatments that you used traditional/indigenous?**

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Answer If Were any of the spa treatments that you used traditional... Yes Is Selected

**Q8 How satisfied were you with the traditional/indigenous treatments that you used?**

- Very Dissatisfied (1)
- Dissatisfied (2)
- Neutral (3)
- Satisfied (4)
- Very Satisfied (5)

**Now, let us talk about your motivations.**

The following statements relate to what you want to get or achieve out of **a) your spa experience**, and b) your holiday in general. Please tick the circle that best describes the importance for each reason. There are no right or wrong answers.

**Q9 Beauty, Health and Wellness**

	YOUR SPA EXPERIENCE					YOUR HOLIDAY IN GENERAL				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Seeking treatment for a medical condition (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Restoring my youth and vitality (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Enhancing my physical appearance (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Losing weight (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Seeking relief from some body pain (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Maintaining my overall health condition (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Improving my overall health condition (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**10 Novelty, Escape and Nature**

	YOUR SPA EXPERIENCE					YOUR HOLIDAY IN GENERAL				
	1 = Not at all important; 5 = Very important					1 = Not at all important; 5 = Very important				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Having Fun (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Experiencing something different (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Feeling the special atmosphere of the vacation destination (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Visiting places related to my personal interests (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Resting and relaxing (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Getting away from everyday psychological stress/pressure (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Being away from daily routine (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Getting away from the usual demands of life (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Giving my mind a rest (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Not worrying about time (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Getting away from everyday physical stress/pressure (11)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Viewing the scenery (12)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Being close to nature (13)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Getting a better appreciation of nature (14)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Being harmonious with nature (15)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Seeking to be pampered (16)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



**Q11 Relationships**

	YOUR SPA EXPERIENCE					YOUR HOLIDAY IN GENERAL				
	1 = Not at all important; 5 = Very important					1 = Not at all important; 5 = Very important				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Doing something with my family/friend(s) (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Being with others who enjoy the same things as I do (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Strengthening relationships with my companion(s) (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Strengthening relationships with my family/friend(s) (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Contacting with family/friend(s) who live elsewhere (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Feeling personally safe and secure (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Being with respectful people (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Meeting people with similar values/interests (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Being near considerate people (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Being with others if I need them (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Feeling that I belong (11)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### Q12 Stimulation and Self-Development

	YOUR SPA EXPERIENCE					YOUR HOLIDAY IN GENERAL				
	1 = Not at all important; 5 = Very important					1 = Not at all important; 5 = Very important				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Exploring the unknown (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Feeling of excitement (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Having unpredictable experiences (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Being spontaneous (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Having daring/adventuresome experience (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Experiencing thrills (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Experiencing the risk involved (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Learning new things (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Experiencing different cultures (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Meeting new and varied people (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Developing my knowledge of the area (11)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Meeting the locals (12)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Observing other people in the area (13)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Following current events (14)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Develop my personal interests (15)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Knowing what I am capable of (16)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Gaining a sense of accomplishment (17)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Gaining a sense of self-confidence (18)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Developing my skills and abilities (19)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Using my skills and talents (20)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Q13 Autonomy and Isolation**

	YOUR SPA EXPERIENCE					YOUR HOLIDAY IN GENERAL				
	1 = Not at all important; 5 = Very important					1 = Not at all important; 5 = Very important				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Being independent (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Being obligated to no one (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Doing things my own way (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Experiencing the peace and calm (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Avoiding interpersonal stress and pressure (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Experiencing the open space (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Being away from the crowds of people (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Enjoying isolation (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Q14 Self-Actualization, Recognition, Romance & Nostalgia**

	YOUR SPA EXPERIENCE					YOUR HOLIDAY IN GENERAL				
	1 = Not at all important; 5 = Very important					1 = Not at all important; 5 = Very important				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
Gaining a new perspective of life (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Feeling inner harmony/peace (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Understanding more about myself (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Being creative (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Working on my personal/spiritual values (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sharing skill and knowledge with others (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Showing others I can do it (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Being recognised by other people (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Leading others (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Having others know that I have been there (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Thinking about good times I've had in the past (11)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reflecting on past memories (12)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Having romantic relationships (13)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Being with people of the opposite sex (14)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Now, think about what you thought and how you felt after your spa experience.

**Q15 Overall, the spa experience during the trip:**

	Strongly Disagree (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	Strongly Agree (7)	N/A (8)
was a relaxing way to unwind and get away from the usual stress and demands of travelling (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
gave me the chance to be pampered, which I do not get so often at home (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
made me feel important (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
made me appreciate nature (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
made me appreciate my relationship with my partner/spouse/family/ friends (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
strengthened my ties with my partner/spouse/family/ friends (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
was an opportunity to learn more about the place, the local people and their culture (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
was an opportunity to try a new and different experience while travelling (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
contributed to my achievements as a traveller (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
was a unique part of the trip (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
made the trip a memorable one (11)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
made the trip more enjoyable (12)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Q16 After the spa experience:**

	Strongly Disagree (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	Strongly Agree (7)	N/A (8)
I was more relaxed (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My physical appearance has improved (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I felt better about myself than before (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I felt more youthful and energized (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My overall physical health has improved (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I slept better (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I gained a sense of belongingness (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I gained self-confidence (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I gained a sense of independence (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I became more peaceful and calmer (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I learned to love and appreciate myself even more (11)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I became a better person (12)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Q17 If you think your spa experience during the trip contributed to your well-being, approximately how long did the benefits last in terms of your:**

	No benefit (1)	About 3-5 days (2)	About 1-2 weeks (3)	About a month (4)	About 3-5 months (5)	About 6-12 months (6)	Can't remember (7)
Physical well-being (body) (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Emotional well-being (feelings) (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Intellectual well-being (mind) (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Spiritual well-being (values, purpose) (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Social (family, friends, relationships) (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Occupational (career, skills) (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Q18 As a result of your spa experience on your last trip, how likely are you to:**

	Very Unlikely (1)	Unlikely (2)	Undecided (3)	Likely (4)	Very Likely (5)
Incorporate another spa experience in my next trip (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Try other spa treatments/therapies on my next trip (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Tell my family/friends to include a spa experience on their next trips (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Visit more spas more frequently at home (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Q19 In the last five years, how many times have you travelled OUTSIDE your usual country of residence?**

- Never (2)
- 1-4 times (1)
- 5-10 times (4)
- More than 10 times (5)

**Q20 How about WITHIN your usual country of residence?**

- Never (2)
- 1-4 times (1)
- 5-10 times (4)
- More than 10 times (5)

**Answer**

If In the last five years, how many times have you traveled ... Never Is Not Selected

**Q21 You mentioned that you have travelled outside your usual country of residence  $\{q://QID14/ChoiceGroup/SelectedChoices\}$ . Have you visited a spa during those times?**

	Never (1)	Just once (2)	2-5 times (3)	6-10 times (4)	More than 10 times (5)
In the last five years? (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In the last 12 months? (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Answer**

If How about WITHIN your usual country of residence? Never Is Not Selected

**Q22 You have also mentioned that you have travelled within your usual country of residence  $\{q://QID48/ChoiceGroup/SelectedChoices\}$ . Have you visited a spa during those times?**

	Never (1)	Just once (2)	2-5 times (3)	6-10 times (4)	More than 10 times (5)
last five years? (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
last 12 months? (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

answer

If Have you visited a spa while you were traveling outside - 2-5 times Is Selected  
 Or Have you visited a spa while you were traveling outside - Just once Is Selected  
 Or Have you visited a spa while you were traveling outside - 6-10 times Is Selected  
 Or Have you visited a spa while you were traveling outside - More than 10 times Is Selected Or  
 Have you visited a spa while you were traveling within - Just once Is Selected  
 Or Have you visited a spa while you were traveling within - 2-5 times Is Selected  
 Or Have you visited a spa while you were traveling within - 6-10 times Is Selected  
 Or Have you visited a spa while you were traveling within - More than 10 times Is Selected

**Q23 You mentioned that you have previously visited a spa while traveling. What type of spa have you visited while you were traveling within and outside your usual country of residence in the last five years and the last 12 months? (Tick all that applies)**

	LAST FIVE YEARS (1)	LAST 12 MONTHS (2)
DAY SPA (spa services may include cosmetic spa services such as facials, peels, waxing, . on a day-use basis; it is usually an independent spa which is not located within a hotel/resort) (1)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
HOTEL/RESORT SPA (owned and/or operated by and located within a hotel/resort) (2)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
DESTINATION SPA (usually offers lifestyle-changing programs that include spa services, fitness activities, healthy cuisine, ; visits are usually 3-7 days or longer) (3)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
MINERAL SPRING SPA (offers an on-site source of natural mineral, thermal or seawater used in hydrotherapy treatments) (4)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
CLUB SPA (its main purpose is fitness, but offers different spa services on a day-use basis) (5)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
CRUISE SHIP SPA (a spa on a cruise ship) (6)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
MEDICAL SPA (operates under the fulltime supervision of a licensed health care professional and offers medical care, aesthetic/cosmetic and wellness procedures wherein spa services and other complementary and alternative therapies and treatments are integrated) (7)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Q24 Are you a:**

- Female (1)
- Male (2)

**Q25 Below are age groups. In which group do you belong?**

- Under 18 (1)
- 18-20 (2)
- 21-25 (3)
- 26-30 (4)
- 31-35 (5)
- 36-40 (6)
- 41-45 (7)
- 46-50 (8)
- 51-55 (9)
- 56-60 (10)
- Over 60 (11)

**Q26 In which of the following categories does your occupation fit?**

- Homekeeper (1)
- Professional/technical (2)
- Executive/administrator (3)
- Labourer (4)
- Middle management (5)
- Tradesman/machine operator (6)
- Sales/marketing (7)
- Self-employed/business owner (8)
- Clerical or service (9)
- Retired (10)
- Student (11)
- Others (12)

**THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!**

At this stage, may I invite you to enter the draw\* to win a gift certificate<sup>+</sup> entitling you to a spa/wellness/beauty treatment or products (worth up to AUD 100).

Just provide your details below, and you're in the draw!  
If you have a key code~, please provide it as well.

Terms & Conditions: Winners will be notified by email on or before 30 January 2011.

\*Entering in the draw is NOT COMPULSORY.

+You may nominate a local spa/wellness/beauty retailer/establishment, but it must provide a safe method of payment, e.g. BPAY, PayPal.

~The keycode is only available in selected locations. It is printed on the lower right-hand corner of survey information coupon which may have been handed to you from a participating establishment or by volunteers.

**Q27 Your e-mail address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Please type in the key code if you have received the invitation to this survey from a participating establishment/retailer?**

\_\_\_\_\_



# APPENDIX C – Sample of the Online Survey Invitation

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Below is a sample of a flier which served as an invitation to complete the online survey. This particular flier (with key code RIFY) was sent to a personal contact based in India.

Have you had a spa experience while travelling in South Asia (India, Sri Lanka, Mauritius, Maldives) or Southeast Asia (Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, Philippines, etc) recently? Why don't you tell me about it and get the chance

**WIN  
A Spa Treatment!**

All you have to do is to complete the survey\* on  
<http://tiny.cc/asianspa>

\*Terms & conditions apply.

 **JAMES COOK  
UNIVERSITY**  
AUSTRALIA

Celebrating  
**40**  
YEARS  
1970-2010

For more information, contact  
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*Ethics Approval Number: H3668*

**Keycode: RIFY**

## APPENDIX D - Keyword Combinations and Number of Related Blogs

Keyword combinations	TravelPod		Travel Blog		Lonely Planet Blogs		Total Related Blog Entries
	Related entries	Related trips	Related entries	Related trips	Related entries	Related trips	
Spa, Asia	527	5	52,601	Not specified	941	716	54,070
Spa, South Asia	182	1	1,893		228	72	2,303
Spa, Southeast Asia	96	1	5,067		100	10	5,263
Spa, India	4,372	5	7,776		281	68	12,429
Spa, Thailand	1,238	25	12,600		720	257	14,558
Spa, Philippines	943	3	3,827		94	29	4,864
Spa, Mumbai	56	1	1,122		32	3	1,209
Spa, Goa	96	--	778		57	9	931
Spa, Kerala	31	--	757		36	4	824
Spa, Bangkok	3	--	4,145		172	23	4,320
Spa, Phuket	254	5	1,122		2	--	1,378
Spa, Manila	39	2	1,686		46	6	1,771
Spa, Baguio	1	--	47		5	1	53
Spa, Bohol	7	1	122		14	3	143
Spa holiday, Asia	69	1	51,913	Not specified	128	23	52,110
Spa holiday, South Asia	25	1	4,634		73	4	4,732
Spa holiday, Southeast Asia	13	--	5,673		1,687	35	7,373
Spa holiday, India	50	1	7,711		66	3	7,828
Spa holiday, Thailand	118	2	971		144	3	1,233
Spa holiday, Philippines	10	--	333		14	2	357
Spa holiday, Mumbai	8	1	1,108		6	--	1,122
Spa holiday, Goa	10	--	778		12	--	801
Spa holiday, Kerala	3	--	716		8	--	727
Spa holiday, Bangkok	74	1	3,973		89	1	4,135
Spa holiday, Phuket	27	1	1,122		54	1	1,203
Spa holiday, Manila		--	136	3	--	140	
Spa holiday, Baguio		--	48		--	48	
Spa holiday, Bohol		--	123	2	1	125	
Massage, Asia	1,637	14	64,994	Not specified	894	338	67,525
Massage, South Asia	525	3	2,134		304	38	2,964
Massage, Southeast Asia	299	2	7,987		147	4	8,433
Massage, India	1,330	7	8,606		508	62	10,445
Massage, Thailand	4,375	29	23,547		1,056	102	28,978

Massage, Philippines	208	3	5,742		112	5	6,062
Massage, Mumbai	130	3	902		69	3	1,101
Massage, Goa	201	2	1,170		101	3	1,473
Massage, Kerala	209	3	950		125	11	1,284
Massage, Bangkok	2,773	23	9,708		812	26	13,292
Massage, Phuket	589	2	2,492		277	21	3,359
Massage, Manila	94	2	1,763		76	1	1,933
Massage, Baguio	--	--	53		3	--	56
Massage, Bohol	17	--	159		16	--	192
Spa, massage, Asia	171	--	3,807	Not specified	167	96	4,146
Spa, massage, South Asia	55	--	7,367		48	9	7,470
Spa, massage, Southeast Asia	30	--	12,324		272	18	12,626
Spa, massage, India	131	--	8,537		49	7	8,717
Spa, massage, Thailand	423	1	437		169	37	1,029
Spa, massage, Philippines	29	--	695		21	2	746
Spa, massage, Mumbai	19	--	101		8	1	127
Spa, massage, Goa	17	--	1,177		10	1	1,205
Spa, massage, Kerala	13	--	1,143		9	--	1,165
Spa, massage, Bangkok	253	1	1,756		121	9	2,130
Spa, massage, Phuket	80	--	451		53	16	584
Spa, massage, Manila	17	--	799		15	--	830
Spa, massage, Baguio	1	--	54		1	--	56
Spa, massage, Bohol	2	--	161		2	--	165

## APPENDIX E – Monitored blog counts for Southeast Asian countries (Apr 2010-Apr 2011)

Asian Country	Number of blogs as of:				
	12-Apr-10	12-Sep-10	10-Nov-10	22-Feb-11	15-Apr-11
India	18,011	18,912	19,857	20,850	21,892
Thailand	23,961	26,357	27,675	29,059	30,512
Philippines	2,584	2,713	2,849	2,991	3,141
Afghanistan	227	238	250	263	276
Armenia	205	215	226	237	249
Azerbaijan	149	156	164	172	181
Bangladesh	323	339	356	374	393
Bhutan	142	149	157	164	173
Brunei	139	146	153	161	169
Burma	624	655	688	722	758
Cambodia	6,426	6,747	7,085	7,439	7,811
China	18,878	19,822	20,813	21,854	22,946
East Timor	44	46	49	51	53
Hong Kong	3,312	3,478	3,651	3,834	4,026
Indonesia	3,629	3,810	4,001	4,201	4,411
Japan	8,203	8,613	9,044	9,496	9,971
Kazakhstan	97	102	107	112	118
Kyrgyzstan	169	177	186	196	205
Laos	4,461	4,684	4,918	5,164	5,422
Macau	260	273	287	301	316
Malaysia	6,340	6,657	6,990	7,339	7,706
Maldives	117	123	129	135	142
Mongolia	685	719	755	793	833
Myanmar	4	4	4	5	5
Nepal	3,087	3,241	3,403	3,574	3,752
North Korea	29	30	32	34	35
Pakistan	381	400	420	441	463
Singapore	3,039	3,191	3,350	3,518	3,694
South Korea	3,292	3,457	3,629	3,811	4,001
Sri Lanka	802	842	884	928	975
Taiwan	1,140	1,197	1,257	1,320	1,386
Tajikistan	32	34	35	37	39
Turkmenistan	32	34	35	37	39
Uzbekistan	217	228	239	251	264
Vietnam	10,985	11,534	12,111	12,717	13,352