

CONDUCTING SERIAL MULTIPLE MEDIATION ANALYSIS IN HOSPITALITY MARKETING RESEARCH

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ABSTRACT

The hospitality researchers frequently examine the underlying mechanism of structure equation models by conducting the mediation analysis to understand the causal relationships among latent variables. The main purpose of this mini-review is to provide a concise, focused review of the paper--Effects of Service Experience on Behavioral intentions: Serial Multiple Mediation Model. In the first part of the paper, the introduction is addressed, including necessary background and the significant of the topic. The second part is about literature review and purposes of the paper. Based on the field of hospitality marketing, we indicate the reasons of using serial mediation for examining the relationships of emotions, perceived value, satisfaction, service experience and behavioral intentions. Following is the methodology that includes concisely description of reproducible methods. The results, implication and conclusion are presented in the final part.

BACKGROUND

The existing hospitality and tourism literature on the concept of experience considers experience to be an antecedent of behavioral intentions associated with various constructs, such as emotions, perceived value and satisfaction (Han Kiatkawsin, Kim & Lee, 2017; Altunel & Erkut, 2015). Several studies have asserted those customers' emotions (Loureiro, Almedia & Rita, 2013), perceived value (Chen & Lin, 2015) and satisfaction (Altunel & Erkut, 2015) associated with a service experience play an important role in defining their behavioral intentions. Although service-related research has established the importance of service experience, few studies have examined service experience in the wellness spa service sector in Thailand that is the largest spa market in the Asia-Pacific region. In addition, few studies have examined how customers' perceived service experience with Thai spa and massage services elicits emotions, values, satisfaction and behavioral intentions in the wellness spa context.

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LITERATURE REVIEW AND PURPOSE

The conceptual framework of this study was adapted from both of Holbrook (1986)'s C-E-V (consciousness-emotion-value) and C-A-B (cognitive-affect-behavior) paradigms. Both the C-E-V and the C-A-B models build on Mehrabian and Russell's (1974) S-O-R (stimulus-organism-response) model. The C-A-B model proposes that cognitive evaluation of product or service experience determines affective responses and in turn produces the behavioral effect. Although the C-A-B model does not adequately cover the nature of service experience, the effect of the physical environment has long been recognized to influence consumers' buying behavior (Kotler, 1976). Widely accepted that physical environment is one of the primary service experience cues. Holbrook then proposes the C-E-V model of consumption experience, which focuses on values derived by the customer during consumption experience (Fiorce & Kim, 2007). However, the C-E-V paradigm does not focus on behavioral intention, which is relevant to predict the actual purchase behavior. Thus, this study integrates the two paradigms to create a revised cognition-emotion-value-affective-behavior (C-E-V-A-B) causal chain to investigate the relationship between service experience and behavioral intentions in a spa business context. This growing interest is driven by the fast emerging business of the spa service (McNeil & Ragins, 2005). Therefore, the purposes of the study is to identify and confirm the measurement model of constructs in the proposed model for the drivers of the spagoers' behavioral intention; to uncover the applicability of the second-order structure of wellness spa service experiences and perceived value; to investigate the relationships between service experience, emotions, perceived value, satisfaction, and behavioral intentions; and to identify the mediating roles of emotions, perceived value, and satisfaction on the relationship between service experience and behavioral intentions within the proposed conceptual model

METHODOLOGY

The measurement items for each of the constructs in the questionnaire were developed through literature reviews. An expert panel consisting of wellness spa business, relevant subject educators validated the questionnaire to ensure they were relevant and appropriate. The target population and sample are day spa-goers who are visitors to the areas in Thailand. Stratified random sampling procedure was employed to select the target wellness spas and respondents for the survey administration. The wellness spas in Thailand were stratified according to their location into five regions. This data collection strategy helped to minimize bias among the respondents because the sample group represents a mixture of spagoers from major tourist cities in all parts of Thailand. We received 574 responses and approximately 100-115 responses from each city and 35-40 responses from each wellness spa. This study uses structural equation modeling technique as the primary quantitative analysis method to test the relationship and mediating effect among service experience, emotions, perceived experience value, satisfaction and behavioral intention.

SPSS 22 and AMOS 20 were used to analyze the data. Descriptive analysis was conducted to analyze the profile of the respondents. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was carried out to examine the relationships among latent variables and their related indicators. The following was to test and estimate the

relationships among the latent constructs (i.e., service experience, emotions, perceived value, satisfaction, and behavioral intentions) and to assess the model fit. The convergent validity, discriminant validity and construct reliability of the scales were tested to ensure the quality of the measurement model. The Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (CR) of all constructs exceeded a critical value of 0.70. The convergent validity constructs, factor loadings, and the average variance extracted (AVE) values exceed 0.5 and those for reliability exceed 0.7 as well. The hypothesized measurement model was demonstrated to be reliable and meaningful for structural tests of the relationships between the examined constructs.

RESULTS, IMPLICATION AND CONCLUSION

The results imply that emotions, perceived value and satisfaction acted as important mediators within the proposed theoretical framework. Nine of the ten hypotheses were supported, except for the direct effect. Specifically, indirect effects through the mediators were found to be significant, whereas direct effects were found to be insignificant, indicating the presence of full mediation. These results imply that emotions, perceived value and satisfaction acted as important mediators within the proposed theoretical framework. Combining all the results, we can generate a possible relationship model to demonstrate how emotions, perceived value and satisfaction jointly mediate the relationship between service experience and behavioral intentions. Furthermore, insignificant effects of service experience on behavioral intentions were found, highlighting that the relationships between these exogenous and endogenous variables are recognized via three joint mediators, as noted above. These findings are applicable to the Thai wellness spa context and provide significant support for Holbrook's C-E-V model of the consumer experience.

The results emphasize the important of service experience, emotions, perceived values and satisfactions in influencing customers' behavioral intentions. These issues are vital for wellness day spa managers in designing the marketing strategies. Based on the results of this study managers should try to meet the customers' expectations of service experience to inspire the emotion, perceived value and increase satisfaction and behavior intentions. Further research should consider to examine or compare the different types of spa and massage businesses and to consider how different types of customers perceive service experience and how such perceptions affect emotional responses, perceived value, satisfaction levels and behaviors.

In summary, we develop a framework that explains the decision-making process of wellness spagoers by combining theoretical frameworks to explain the relationships between service experience, emotions, perceived value, satisfaction and behavioral intentions. The findings provide a more holistic view of Thai spagoers' decision-making process. A causal chain between service experience, emotions, perceived value, satisfaction, and behavioral intentions can be established, demonstrating the role of cognition and emotions in shaping value and, in turn, satisfaction and behavioral intentions. No previous studies have examined this serial mediation relationship in the spa service setting. Serial mediation may help us to see how service experience and behavioral intention are linked and what the fundamental mediators are in the chain. Furthermore, this study highlights that relationships between service experience and behavioral intentions are mediated by emotions, perceived value, and satisfaction in the wellness spa context.

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