

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter reviews the literature in Preference of Spa Therapists to Work in Thailand and Abroad in the main areas along with a summary:

Definition of spa

The Expectancy Theory of Motivation

The Theory of Prospect

The Theory of Perception and Reasoned Action

The Relevant Researches

2.1 DEFINITION OF SPA

Jarinporn Tantikijisiriwong (จรินพร ตันติกิจศิริวงศ์, 2004) mentioned that people have enjoyed a kind of water relaxation, spa, for more than 4,000 years. The oldest evidence was found in India, then followed by Greece and Rome respectively. As of the long foundation, there were many derivations. She stated that spa was named after “SPAU” the small city in Belgium in which the hot mineral bath originated during the Roman Empire. In addition, Lee (2004) stated that spa was from Latin phrases: “sanitas per aqua”, “solus per aqua” or “sanus per aqua” which all meant “health through water”. She also suggested that spa might be from a Walloon word, Espa, meaning “fountain”.

In those days spa was limited to the hot springs treatment for both medical remedy and relaxation. For the last decade, the forms of spa services have distinctly and dramatically changed. The International Spa Association (ISPA) classified the spa business into 7 types: destination spa, resort or hotel spa, day spa, medical spa, mineral spring spa and cruise ship spa. Besides, Jarinporn introduced 2 additional types: club spa and adventure spa.

In terms of treatment, spa today not only use Roman bath and several kinds of massages for holistic and relaxation, but also offer various innovated supplements and treatments to attract spa goers, for example, facial treatment with herbal extraction

products and body treatment with choices of scrubbing from flowers, fruits, vegetables and even chocolate and so on.

2.2 THE EXPECTANCY THEORY OF MOTIVATION

Victor Vroom (1964) studied the correlation of valence, instrumentality and expectancy, so-called Expectancy Theory of Motivation. People had preferences among various outcomes. To attain the target outcome, Valence, people would put more effort, Expectancy, to gain the better performance. The better performance, Instrumentality, would lead to rewards or outcomes. Deci (1992), citing Georgopoulos et al. (1957-1968), also explained that workers behaved as if what motivated resulted in their goal fulfillment.

Hence, this theory pinpointed the individuals' belief that a certain action would bring a certain outcome. Based on this theory, it is possible that spa therapists may attend more training, change their workplace and/or go abroad in order to improve their skill or performance bringing about the better outcome in terms of high income or benefits.

2.3 THE THEORY OF PROSPECT

Daniel Kahneman and Amos Tversky (2000) studied how people selected the options concerning change, risk and uncertainty. They explained that people tended to prefer the choice that was feasible more than the one that was hard to be achieved. They also described in their Prospect Theory that people would proceed if they could count a value, based on the possible outcome and their orderly probabilities. Therefore, in examining the spa therapists' in this study, it should be plausible to refer this theory in comparison to their preference to select working domestically or abroad to their feasible accomplishment.

2.4 THE THEORY OF PERCEPTION AND REASONED ACTION.

Bassett and Smythe (1979), citing Fishbein and Ajzen (1975), revealed the theory of reasoned action that people limited their perception or information on which

was positive or desirable and evaded the negative ones. Seiter and Gass (2004), as also cited in Fishbein and Ajzen (1975), additionally exposed that one of the factors which individuals considered as a risk and advantage was an attitude toward the behavior. Constructive attitude caused decision; whereas, destructive attitude caused disregard. Based on this theory, therapists may have a tendency to choose what is desirable, not what is reasonable.

2.5 RELEVANT RESEARCH

In 2004, Suladda Sarutilavan conducted a research paper on factors affecting decisions of the Thai working group in Bangkok on spa selection. Her hypothesis was that the service quality was the major factor affecting the decisions. This study focused on needs of the target groups or spa customers. From one of the findings, there were 91.3% of government officers and 85.4% of employees in private company who ranked the service quality which included the responsiveness, empathy of the staff, as the first and main factors to choose the spa. Therefore, the quality of the spa therapist was one of the key components to select a spa.

In 2006, Assistant Professor Oraphan Sitthichai (อรพรรณ สิทธิชัย, 2549) did a research study on factors affecting consumer behavior towards day spa service. One of her objectives was to find out the factors affecting consumer behavior. From one of her findings, the proficiency of the therapists was the most important factor consumers prioritized on.

Both of these results provide a strong evidence to prove that spa therapist's competence was one of the vital factors affecting the spa business achievement. The standard of competence would be caused by the continuity of their continual work and experience. For this reason, the higher the therapist turnover rate is, the lower the standardized the services are.