



**Client's expectations, perceptions and experiences of hotel
spas and their services in eThekweni municipality**

By

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DECLARATION

I, Sinethemba Khathi, hereby declare that this research project is my own work, and it has not been previously submitted for any other degree or examination at any other institution.

I am familiar with rules and regulations for higher education qualifications at the Durban University of Technology.

I understand that I have to publish an article for this research project and I am also expected to participate in other academic activities.

I understand that plagiarism is not accepted, and it leads to some penalties.

I hereby declare that the above details are correct.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to all South African Somatologist and Somatology students who are keen to further their studies within the industry.

I also dedicate this dissertation to the spa industry to improve service delivery. My final dedication goes to my family. Thank you for love and support you have given me all these years.

Proverbs 16: 3

“Commit to the LORD whatever you do, and he will establish your plans”

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS:

CBD	Central Business District
DUT	Durban University of Technology
IREC	Institutional Research Ethics Committee
IREC	Institution Research Ethics Committee
SA	South Africa
SASA	South African Spa Association South Africa
SPSS	Social Science Data and Software
WHO	World Health Organization

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ABSTRACT

Background

Spas are considered the fastest-growing sector in the tourism industry. Although a significant number of studies have been conducted in the spa industry, few have studied the spa market segmentation according to client expectations and experiences.

Aim of the study

This study aimed to explore clients' expectations, perceptions and experiences regarding hotel spas and their services in the eThekweni Municipality.

Methodology

A mixed method research approach was used to conduct this study. A purposive sample of 15, and convenience sample of 120, spa clients were invited to participate in the study. A SERVQUAL questionnaire and semi-structured interviews were used to collect data. Quantitative data was analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 24.0 and qualitative data was analysed thematically.

Results

The study had a 100% response rate. Almost all clients were not satisfied by the hotel spa treatments and services. The three main reasons for this were that spa management had no clue about what clients expected, the therapist's knowledge and skills needed improvement and the spa environment required transformation.

Conclusion

EThekweni hotel spa clients have high levels of expectations that are not met owing to a number of factors in spas. Clients suggested ways that can be employed to meet their needs in spas, some of them are modern spa set up, professionalism, hygiene and quality service. A therapist's qualification, training and industry board is recommended in order to control and improve the challenges faced by hotel spa clients.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The spa industry is one of the fastest growing segments within the tourism industry (Lo and Wu, 2014). This has resulted in various expectations and perceptions by clients. The rising demand for spa services is related to the changing lifestyle of clients (Yaman et al., 2012). People are now more concerned about their appearance and health, thus a spa provides treatments to cope with daily stresses and improve appearance. Kucukusta, D., Pang, L. and Chui, S et al. (2013) recognised the increasing number of hoteliers acknowledging the growth and popularity of the spa market in hotels. Most hotels now feature spas within their establishments and packages (Kucukusta et al., 2013). However, it was discovered that these hoteliers do not have a full knowledge of what a spa is. Therefore, they are unable to fulfil required spa services. This has created a negative image for the spa industry.

South Africa draws numerous spa clients, from other countries (Nicolaidis and Zigiariadis 2011). This may be as Johannesburg is the leading tourist destination followed by Durban according to the Durban Tourist Guide. Despite the considerable growth of the spa market, few studies have focused on spa clients and analysed the client's spa service preferences (Kucukusta and Guillet, 2014). Fierce competition in the spa industry stimulates the need for spa owners and employees to study spa clients (Lo and Wu, 2014). According to the researchers' search on eThekweni Travel Guide and eThekweni Hotel Guide, research, particularly on hotel spas is scarce, hence this research will contribute to and increase research data pertaining to spas in eThekweni.

This study is important and relevant to the current challenges faced in the spa industry, as hotel management lack a full understanding of spa business and clients' needs (Hodari, Waldthausen and Sturman, 2014). In addition, client's expectations are not met (Hodari et al. 2014). The spa industry is growing rapidly in South Africa, which may be due to a lack of policy control within the spa industry. This growth could result from a

diluted concept of what a spa really is. Most of the spas lack water based treatments (Intellegent-Spas, 2014), which is the key concept that qualifies the spa to be called a spa according to a definition (Pehlivanoğlu, 2012). This lack of knowledge could affect the clients' perception and expectation of what a spa should essentially provide.

Gonzalez (2007: 153) highlights that currently the spa industry is characterised by poor management, which affects delivery of the service quality required by the clients and potential clients. Poor management could be the result of the spa management lacking understanding of the spa (Jean 2016). This lack resulted in the spa owners and management being unable to meet clients' needs and expectations effectively (Hsieh 2014: 304). As the spa industry has no policy control, intense competition is growing rapidly within the industry. As a result, anyone can buy a spa business. This stimulates the necessity for the spas to understand clients' behaviours and expectations (Lo and Wu 2014) so they can meet clients' needs.

Understanding client's spa experiences can be a strong tool to use in such a highly competitive industry. This study will contribute to understanding clients' expectations, experiences and perceptions regarding spa services, both in detail and holistically. However, the changing expectations of clients should be considered, which prompts spas to change, add and refine the facilities and services offered (Kucukusta et al. 2013: 558). Therefore, the spa should have updated information and knowledge on clients' expectations at all times.

1.2 Background of the study

Spas must improve the quality of their service because clients perceive the quality of the spa to be the same as that of the hotel rating. In most cases hotels outsource the spa services making it impossible to compare it with the hotel rating. (Ker et al, 2007). Client's expectations are not based on whether they are hotel guests or not. What the client experiences provides a measure of their satisfaction (Jean 2016). This study will investigate client's expectations, experiences and satisfaction.

1.3 Problem statement

Clients' expectations, perceptions and experiences of the hotel spas and their services have not been understood in the spa industry, by both the owners and management (Jean 2016). Hence, the spas and their services are outsourced in most hotels with the intention to meet clients' expectations (Cohen and Bodeker 2008; Guo et al. 2015: 2). As a result, this study attempts to explain a solution to the main research question: what is the current level of client's satisfaction with services offered at the selected hotel spas in the Durban area. The following are research questions:

1. What are the treatments and services currently offered in hotel spas in Durban?
2. What are clients' expectations of services offered in hotel spas in Durban?
3. What experience do clients receive from hotel spas in Durban?
4. How do client expectations and experiences contribute to their satisfaction?

1.4 Objectives

The aim of this study is to investigate clients' satisfaction of selected hotel spas and services in the eThekweni area. The objectives of the study were as follows:

1. To explore treatments and other services offered by spa facilities
2. To determine the expectations of clients who utilise hotel spas
3. To determine the experiences of clients who utilise hotel spas
4. To determine the perception of clients who utilise hotel spas
5. To compare clients' expectations with current offerings of the selected hotel spas

1.5 Rationale of the study

With the increased number of spas in Durban, the researcher determined the number of spas registered with the South African Spa Association (SASA) and these figures are extremely low. This has raised a red flag. How has this resulted, as there is an association available, but almost all the spas are not registered with the SASA. Has this resulted in the poor management of a spa which affects the quality of service required by the clients.

1.6 Significance of the study

The outcome of this study will contribute to the development and improvement of spa services to meet client needs. This study will inform and equip spas to better understand clients and their spa expectations. Additionally, this study will provide the concept, skills and other spa related attributes that may improve the current prospects in relation to the business or management of the spa industry. Therefore, this study will contribute in improving the spa industry, spa education, and enlighten the spa market.

Furthermore, this could lead to spas devising a spa control policy which will ultimately improve spa service quality, modify and educate clients to fill the gap and even change the poor management status the industry is known for. If the spa lacks information on quality spa service expectations by the client, and how well or badly their services are perceived by clients, the ability to control and manage service quality is diminished (Liavoshka 2015).

1.7 Definition of terms and clarification of concepts

The following terms and concepts are used throughout the study and are described below in alphabetical order.

Client:	A person being dealt with by social or medical services (Collins Dictionary).
Consumer:	A person who purchases goods and services for personal use (Collins Dictionary).
Expectation:	The action or fact of anticipating or foreseeing something; the belief that something will happen (Collins Dictionary).
Experience:	Practical contact with and observation of facts or events.
Frequent:	Occurring or done many times at short intervals (Collins Dictionary).
Perception:	Is described as the process whereby stimuli are received, interpreted and translated into a response, thus an individual forms an opinion about the stimuli (Phongvivat and Panadis 2011: 9).

Hotel:	A hotel provides formal accommodation with full or limited service to the traveling public. A hotel has a reception area and offers a dining facility. A hotel must have a minimum of 4 rooms (Collins Dictionary).
Industry:	is defined as a particular form or sector of productive work, trade, or manufacture. In later use also more generally: any commercial activity or enterprise (Collins Dictionary).
Satisfaction:	The fulfilment or gratification of a desire, a need or appetite (Collins Dictionary).
Spa:	is described as a place of business with equipment and facilities for exercising and improving physical fitness (Vetitnev and Dzubina 2013).

The study used the above definitions as they had specific meaning for the purpose of the study.

1.8 Structure of dissertation

The chapters are organised as follows:

- 1.8.1 Chapter One: Introduction - This chapter introduces the research study, outlines the background to the study, purpose and significance of the study.
- 1.8.2 Chapter Two: Literature review - This chapter reviews the research that has been conducted by previous researchers. Research conducted internationally is presented first, followed by South African literature. This reviews and highlights similarities and contradicting evidence of theories.
- 1.8.3 Chapter Three: Research Methods - Describes the method of the study which includes the study design, identification of participants, the instruments used, the methods of data collection, ethical considerations and data analysis.

- 1.8.4 Chapter Four: Results – This chapter presents the results by displaying and presenting the main findings of this study. The research results are presented in the form of narratives, tables, graphs and percentages.
- 1.8.5 Chapter Five: Discussion of results – This chapter analyses the results of this study, comparing and contrasting them with the presented literature.
- 1.8.6 Chapter Six: Conclusion, limitations and recommendations - This chapter concludes the study. The limitations of the study are stated and recommendations suggested on how to strengthen the study which was limited in one way or the other.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a literature review of this study. There are limited studies conducted in hotel spas and spas in general, both nationally and internationally. The following literature critically reviews the client's expectations, experiences and satisfaction in hotel spas in eThekweni Municipality.

2.2 An overview of the spa

The word spa is an acronym for the Latin phrase "salus per aquam" or "health by water" (Pehlivanoğlu 2012: 495; Yaman, Alias and Ishak 2012: 495). In Britain, the term 'spa' is still used, whereas in the rest of Europe the term "thermal waters" is preferred (Kazandzhieva 2014). According to Ablin, Häuser and Buskila (2013), various alternative terms are used such as balneotherapy and hydrotherapy. According to Vetitnev and Dzubina (2013); and Intellegent Spas (2014: 12), a spa is defined as "a business offering water-based treatments delivered by qualified personnel in a professional, relaxing and healing environment". Spas are designed for clients to indulge in the spa services for adequate periods of time based on the outcome to be achieved.

2.2.1 Spa history

In 1326, in the town of Spa near Liege, the ironmaster Collin le Loup mentioned that the waters from the local spring cured him from medical conditions (Chieochankitkan and Sukpatch 2014: 17). Thereafter, historically the spa was defined as a location which had mineral spring water which was used to produce health benefits (Keri, Ottenbacher and Harrington 2007). The spa can be traced as far back as the ancient Egyptians, Sumarians, Babylonians, Greeks and Romans (Boekstein 2012: 19) when it was believed to be able to cure ailments such as rheumatism, skin infections, poor digestion and many other medical conditions.

According to Yaman, et al. (2012), visitation to the spa bath would last for hours and include other activities such as exercising, bathing and socialising among other clients.

Roman spa baths normally included other facilities for entertainment, namely reading rooms, restaurants, bars, marketplaces, museums and theatres. Baths were an important part of daily life, for men and women of all social classes. Fees needed to be paid to utilise spa baths. These facilities however, were easily afforded mostly by Romans (Yaman, et al. 2012). After some time, the ancient Romans transformed spas into art. Romans from the upper class started to build private baths in their own homes.

Ablin, et al. (2013: 2) stated that during the era from 57 BC to 935 AD in Korea, spa therapy had been used for treating arthritis. In 1458, it was declared that Korean spas were holy due to their reputation of being able to cure chronic skin diseases and other medical conditions. In Greece and Israel, the spa locations were reflected as holy and typically devoted to specific idols (Ablin, et al. 2013: 2). Greek physicians who practised in Rome were introduced to hydrotherapy (Ablin, Häuser and Buskila 2013). Subsequently, Roman bathing culture steadily changed towards becoming a place of relaxation and pleasure rather than for medical treatments. In 43 A.D people of Rome began to perceive spa baths as a method of resting, relaxing and comforting people in general not only those weary from war as it used to be (Yaman, et al. 2012). According to Ablin, Häuser and Buskila (2013) influenced by the Greeks, the Roman Empire was similarly charmed into the concept of utilising the spa as a place for relaxation rather than a place to treat medical conditions.

Europeans began to offer the spa services to aid tourists to overcome everyday stress (Yaman, et al. 2012). The growth and development of the spas continued into the 17th and 18th centuries where spas were built in isolated mountain towns providing tourists with magnificent sights and environments. It became normal for the spas to have medical professionals who prescribed to and monitored clients on spa treatments and services. Spa treatments of this age consisted mostly of soaking in water or drinking water. The spas grew rapidly and eventually expanded to add food and casinos to the spa premises (Yaman, et al. 2012: 495). In 1790, spas began to offer both treatments and accommodation for travellers, resulting in the hotel spas.

South Africa is relatively well endowed with thermal springs. The Limpopo province has more thermal springs than other provinces (Tshibalo, Olivier and Nyabeze 2015). A number of thermal springs were developed for recreational and tourism purposes. According to Intellegent.Spas (2014), the South African spa industry is relatively young compared to global spa standards. Established and emerging spa businesses need to constantly improve their spa and management skills to keep up with frequently changing spa trends.

2.2.2 Hotel spa

A hotel spa is defined as a “spa owned by or located within a hotel, providing professionally administered spa services, fitness, wellness activities and spa cuisine menu choices” (Jean 2016). Hotel spas serve as a great opportunity for travellers to take advantage of and enjoy a spa experience while away from home (Kucukusta 2013: 558). Hotel spas provide seclusion where hotel guests can escape from their busy everyday lives and stress, while enjoying the spa’s several treatments to reduce or eliminate the state of arousal and stress (Maree 2016).

According to Timothy and Teye (2009) a hotel is a business that provides lodging on a short term basis as well as a temporary basis. Traditionally, hotel rooms include a bed, bathroom, television and refrigerator. In recent years, hotels have had to compete with competitors and alternatives, resulting in hotels offering a large number of amenities and extras, such as swimming pools, conference halls, internet facilities and spas.

Some of the spa hotel packages include stay in, where clients can enjoy treatments and stay overnight (Yaman, et al. 2012: 494). Hotel guests want to maintain their healthy living even when they are travelling or on holiday (Guo et al. 2015: 1). According to Keri, et al. (2007), hotel spas have been transformed from support amenities for the hotel, to a profit centre, making a significant monetary contribution towards the hotel’s revenue. It is fundamental for spa managers and therapists to fully understand the ever-changing desires of clients to be able to meet their needs and expectations (Van Niekerk 2014: 47).

2.2.2.1 Hotel spa as a profit centre

Various hotels have spas, some not as a profit centre for the hotel, but as an extra amenity to provide customised service and to create client satisfaction. Hotel spas are also typically more profitable than the other spa types (Hodari et al., 2014). To attract clients, some hotel spas develop packages that combine the spa treatments and hotel services such as an overnight stay option plus spa packages (Kucukusta and Guillet, 2014). It is concluded that the spa has great input in the hotel. The spa industry plays a major role in the tourism industry (Nicolaidis and Zigiariadis 2011, Deswal, 2015). There is a slight growth and revenue improvement in hotels without a spa (Bhardwaj and Kumar, 2013) compared to hotels with a spa, as hotel spas are used to generate profit. Problems appear to arise when management jump on the spa band-wagon, yet they lack the appropriate expertise and skills needed to properly manage the spa (Keri et al., 2007).

2.2.2.2 Hotel spa and tourists

The majority of tourists and consumers seek more than a single benefit from travelling or from a hotel experience (Kazandzhieva, 2014). Tourists specifically choose to stay in a hotel with a spa, mainly to utilise the spa products and services (Hsieh, 2014). There is a growing number of consumers who are willing to spend their hard-earned money in a spa, however Rasheed and Abadi (2014) emphasised that clients desire excellent services with reasonable prices. Consumers want to ensure that their trip or holiday creates a memorable experience (Smith and Puckzo, 2014), hence clients are willing to spend money for their desires to be satisfied.

2.2.2.3 Hotel spa attributes

In Hong Kong, a study of the spa market segmentation according to client preference was conducted. This study examined perceptions among the spa clients on selected spa attributes. It revealed that the most important motives for the hotel spa visit were: relaxation, pampering and beautification relaxation, relief, escape, self-reward, indulgence, health and beauty (Kucukusta and Guillet, 2014). The study further analysed the aims and motives for inbound travellers in Hong Kong to specifically select hotel spas rather than other spas. It was found that professionalism, skills, product and service

knowledge, privacy, spa facilities and product branding were the greatest significant attributes for clients to specifically choose the hotel spa (Kucukusta and Guillet, 2014).

In Malaysia, a study of spa factors indicated that tourists (notably from the America, Europe and Australasia regions) to be indirectly attracted to spa attributes at the holiday destination because their main travel motivators are mostly associated with relaxation. This research suggested that marketing strategies for spa should focus on the individual tourist health-related needs and wants. As relaxation and pamper are the significant motivational factors for health and spa tourists, the health-spa providers should position their spas based on the relaxation attributes that may stimulate a relaxing mood throughout the spa experiences; the atmosphere, the layout and decoration, the staffs, and the spa treatments (Azman, I and Chan, J., 2016).

Although studies have identified the critical factors or attributes influencing the spa experience, no studies have examined the relative importance of the spa attributes and how these attributes are perceived as important to clients. Hence this study made the attempt to identify clients' expectations (Kucukusta and Guillet, 2014). Both spa management and clients consider a spa theme, environment, products, treatments, personalised and value-added services, as essential factors to enhance the spa experience. Professional skills, therapists' appearance, attitude, cleanliness of facilities, privacy, price, product branding, therapist qualification and the range of spa facilities, were also rated among the most important factors in the success of the spa experience (Kucukusta and Guillet, 2014).

2.3 Current spa concept

A spa should have water-based therapies such as a jacuzzi, vichy showers, a sauna and many more features in order to qualify to be called a spa. A relaxing environment, ambience and setting are required to ensure that clients have a good spa experience so that non-spa businesses such as beauty salons, massage centres and clinics are not confused with the true spa (et al 2014).

The spa is considered an “antidote” to stress (Boekstein 2012: 14). Reducing stress and improving relaxation is the ultimate goal of the spa (Lo, Qu and Wetprasit 2013). The spa is considered a path that aims to rejuvenate a person’s wellbeing, which includes the body, mind and soul (Lo, Qu and Wetprasit 2013). The spa visitation is becoming a social norm, with concepts such as birthday celebrations, anniversary celebrations and bridal showers, which is today’s clients’ latest trend (Kucukusta and Guillet 2014). The spa visit has become a lifestyle choice (Mielniczak and Sinaga 2006) therefore, the spa industry should distinguish clients’ motives and aims when visiting the spa.

The spa industry has three client segments, namely; peripheral segment, midlevel segment and core segment (Kucukusta and Guillet 2014: 419). The peripheral segment includes clients that are price sensitive, who are typically less focused on health and wellness, who are more focused on beauty and pampering treatments (Kucukusta and Guillet 2014: 419). These could be first time spa clients (Smith and Puckzo 2014: 123). The World Health Organization (WHO) considers the spa as an alternative approach to treat medical or health conditions. Midlevel segment clients are individuals seeking a relaxing experience through traditional spa treatments such as massages. These clients are keen to request therapists of their choice to perform their treatments (Smith and Puckzo 2014: 123). Core segment clients are the spa experienced clients who are keen on health and ‘wellness’ lifestyles (Kucukusta and Guillet 2014: 419; Smith and Puckzo 2014: 123). These are regular clients who are considered relatively affluent and well-educated. To them, the spa is not a luxury but part of their daily lives. For the purpose of this study, the researcher conducted the study on the core clients segment, as regular clients are most suitable for the study.

In South Africa, a higher proportion of hotel spas offer a high standard of support facilities as compared to other types of spas (Intellegent Spas 2014: 54). This is due to the fact that the hotel spas need to maintain the hotel standard, thus the spa design elements enhance social interaction among clients (Lo, Qu and Wetprasit 2013).

2.4 Motives and aims for a spa visit

In the spa industry, motivation has been used for exploring client behaviour and their decision-making process. Furthermore this will help spas to understand client demands and bring satisfaction (Deswal 2014).

Clients find visits to a spa beneficial for many different reasons. A growing concern regarding a person's appearance is one of the major reasons for the rising demand in the spa industry (Mohan and Kumar 2015). Improved physical flexibility, weight management, improved digestion and blood circulation, psychological and physical relaxation along with cosmetic surgery and stress management, have been identified as the origin of clients' motives for the spa visit. Some clients visit the spa not for physical needs only but rather for emotional needs as well (Mohan and Kumar 2015).

There is no doubt that modern living is fast, stressful and exhausting (Smith and Puckzo 2014: 95) as we have over 2.5 million spa clients in South Africa (Intellegent.Spas 2014: 17). One of the main aspects for the spa visit is to reduce anxiety and escape from work related stress (Mielniczak and Sinaga 2006). Smith and Puckzo (2014: 7) stated that it is not easy to escape from daily life stress, which could possibly be a barrier to the enjoyment of the spa services and experiences. Physical hand touch aids in the reduction of anxiety and stress (Panchal 2014: 54), which is one of the most common motives for the spa visit.

Touch is a basic need for human beings and without this need being met, touch hunger may occur (Cohen and Bodeker 2008). Touch hunger is symptomatic of modern societies and growing technology usage, which results in disconnected lifestyles (Cohen and Bodeker 2008). Touch promotes development and maintenance of social bonds and also has a powerful emotional effect (Peled-Avron, Perry and Shamay-Tsoory 2016). Touch has proved to enhance positive feelings which contribute to clients' behaviour and which enhances clients' brand experience (Nagarjuna and Sudhakar 2015: 124), therefore touch hunger might be the motive for the spa visit, whether a client is aware or not.

There are factors that relate to motives for the spa visit. For an example, an environment that is surrounded by nature is the most important element for experienced spa clients as opposed to less experienced clients who visit the spa mostly for individual growth, relationship maintenance, self-actualisation, romance and recognition (Bhardwaj and Kumar 2013). Smith and Puckzo (2014: 12) stated that there are other factors that can be the motive to visit the spa, such as hair, nails, waxing maintenance, a gift, social experience and medical reasons. As depicted in table 2.1 below, the types and possible aims for the spa visit are presented (Boekstein 2012: 100). Understanding clients' motives is imperative and will result in fulfilment of clients' expectations (Chieochankitkan and Sukpatch 2014: 40).

Table 2.1: Types of motives and possible aim for spa visitation

Types of motives	Possible aim for spa visitation
Physical motives	Relaxation, exercise, health and physical benefits
Cultural motives	Sightseeing, experiencing new cultures
Emotional motives	Romance, adventure, escapism, spiritual contentment
Personal motives	Visit with friends, relatives and making new friends
Personal development motives	Increase knowledge, learn new things and adventures
Status motives	Exclusivity, trend, ostentatious spending opportunities

Source: Kucukusta and Guillet (2014: 86)

2.4.1. The spa services and associated benefits

Spa clients select the spa according to the services that the spa provided (Smith and Puckzo 2014: 85). Mohan and Kumar (2015) emphasised that certain spas focus on a particular aspect such as weight loss, treatment of muscular pain, laser treatment and beauty or facial treatments and derive all treatments from a specific focal point. Other spas however, do not focus on any particular aspect/s as all treatments are offered (Langviniene 2011). These include massages, manicures, pedicures, baths, body exfoliation, body wraps, fitness training, nutritional counselling and cosmetic procedures

(Deswal 2014; Intellegent Spas 2014: 63). Dry body brushing, herbal compressing, makeup and hairdressing also form part of services offered.

The spa is known for wellbeing promotion, thus it contributes to maintain or improve a person's quality of life (Smith and Puckzo 2014). The spa industry proved that spa services go beyond pampering; it provides methods that positively impact human physiology and deliver reliable solutions to improve the lives and health status of individuals (Smith and Puckzo 2014: 210). However, the spa cannot be expected to improve an individual's quality of life if they have no desire to increase or enhance their quality of life (Smith and Puckzo 2014: 105). The level of awareness of spa benefits is increasing and clients are reaping both the physical and the psychological benefits from the services (Deswal 2014; Hashemi et al. 2015).

The spa visit, products and services have various benefits, depending on the product or service. There are however four classifications of spa benefits includes: social, relaxation, health and rejuvenation (Kucukusta, et al. 2013). The benefits of the most popular spa treatment namely massages are relief from chronic pain, ease in joint movements, relief from stress and an overall improvement in health and wellness (Deswal 2014). Today's clients seek massage therapy to prevent and heal specific medical conditions (Kerr 2012).

Facial and cosmetic procedure benefits include skin exfoliation, skin hydration, anti-aging effects, beauty enhancement, skin nourishment, younger looking skin, relaxation and boosting self-esteem (Deswal 2014). Benefits experienced from fitness training and nutritional counselling are healthier lifestyle, weight management, improved self-confidence and esteem, detoxification and anti-aging effects (Deswal 2014). The spa services should be delivered in a professional manner at all times, as service quality has a great impact on clients' spa experience (Lo, Wu and Tsai 2015).

2.5 Clients' satisfaction

Satisfaction can be described as the fulfilment gained by a client after consuming a product or service (Hashemi et al. 2015). According to Vildova et al. (2015) satisfaction is defined as “the level of satisfaction of a customer’s expectations that is linked to how the customer perceives and values the purchased product”. Satisfaction is a significant determinant of a repeat visit (Hashemi et al. 2015).

It is believed that there are several levels of satisfaction. The first level may be considered as simple satisfaction. The second level represents the willingness to recommend the product or service to others, known as fidelity. The highest and most valuable level is loyalty when the customer willingly recommends the product or service to others and returns (Vildova et al. 2015). The value of merely satisfying customers has been questioned in the spa industry. In this regard, it is essential to understand perceived service quality characteristics that can build loyal relationships with clients (Elias-Almeida, et al. 2016).

Hotel spa facilities are very important in achieving client’s satisfaction. Without adequate comfortable and expected facilities, a client can easily be dissatisfied. In a study that was conducted by Elias-Almeida, Miranda and Almeida (2016) it was found that hotel spa management provided an environment that ensured that listening to clients’ concerns and feedback were considered. Findings supported the direct positive effect of service quality on customer satisfaction as an indirect effect on loyalty. Therefore, when a spa delivers clients expectations, clients become more involved and committed to the hotel spa. Consequently, the customer will be more likely to recommend the spa to others. In addition, Navarro, Llinares and Garzon (2016) stated that clients that are dissatisfied do not have a responsible behaviour, do not recommend the service, and either do not share any information or feedback with spa employees. To ensure clients satisfaction, spa performance evaluation needs to be put in place (Simon et al. 2015).

According to Loureiro, Almeida and Rita (2013) satisfaction seems to mediate the relationship between relaxation and trust, and word of-mouth. As for the implications for

the management of hotel spas, they should pay more attention to the more intangible aspects that most directly contribute to the sensations perceived by the five senses. Satisfaction can be measured through comparing satisfaction and experience.

2.5.1. Expectations of the spa clients

Expectations occur prior to the actual consumption or experience. These can be derived from previous experience, perception or external communications. According to Liavoshka (2015) spas are places that people tend to have high expectations about. They expect a great facility, great treatments, great amenities, and a great staff offering exceptional customer service. Those who come to a spa are modern spa clients expecting to receive value for money and exceptional customer service from the moment they make an appointment to the time they leave. The service they receive from the spa employees sets the stage for the clients' experience during and after their treatment, and determines whether they return (Liavoshka 2015).

Service or intangible product expectations largely focus on service costs versus benefits (Chieochankitkan and Sukpatch 2014: 58). Therefore, service price should be equivalent to service benefits. Clients base their service or product assessments upon whether or not their expectations have been met, therefore meeting clients' expectations and needs is vital (Chieochankitkan and Sukpatch 2014: 40) for every service provider.

To meet every client's expectations can be extremely challenging and satisfying all clients in all aspects is impossible (Smith and Puckzo 2014: 134). However, spa management includes methods to harmonise the spa environment, especially in social interaction areas such as in the waiting and reception areas (Smith and Puckzo 2014: 134). There are aspects that contribute to the client's experience such as nationality and age. For instance, mature spa clients may dislike sharing some facilities with young clients, as younger people are loud and energetic, and this might distract and annoy mature clients. Mature clients generally have adequate money, ample time, and high motivation to experience life and enjoy themselves. This is a good target market for a spa as mature

clients have a tendency to spend freely on spas or activities that are focused on personal health (Hsieh 2014).

A study conducted by Bastič and Gojčič suggested that clients showed a preference for an environmentally friendly spa, as clients are ecologically aware. The expectations of ecologically sound behaviour in the spa industry has increased as clients have become more educated and aware of eco-labels. Eco-labels have become a valuable marketing tool to attract environmentally conscious clients (Bastič and Gojčič 2012: 1019). Clients perceive and relate an eco-label with a good quality service (Bastič and Gojčič 2012: 1019). Only 41 percent of South African spas have implemented an energy management system (Intellegent.Spas 2014: 9) which is the popular eco-labelling component. Clients are keen to pay extra for the hotel or the spa with an eco-component. An example of an eco-component that can be implemented in the spa is an automatic light control, as well as automatic water-saving systems in restrooms and any eco-friendly or bio-degradable products (Bastič and Gojčič 2012: 1019). The eco-component is a trend across industries as people are contributing to save the Earth (Hauschild 2015). According to Liavoshka (2015) clients want to be able to book either by phone or electronically and also to feel safe while in the spa. Clients want a “time deepening” experience where an individual is involved in more than one activity at the same time. Many people at home combine activities such as watching television while ironing, or reading while listening to music. An increasing number of spas offer spa packages that allow people to combine treatments such as body wrap and facial at one time, to make better use of the time.

2.5.2. Clients' spa experience

Schmitt (2012: 10) indicated that experience is multi-dimensional which includes sensory, cognitive and behavioural dimensions, hence Panchal (2014: 54) highlights that research cannot directly access an individual's experience. Previous experience has a great impact on behavioural intentions to spa visiting (Kim et al. 2010). However, good client experience still remains one of the factors that is lacking in the spa industry (Chen and Quester, 2015: 13). Spas primarily sell an experience (Lo, Wu and Tsai 2015: 156) which is not limited within the physical spa location. It also involves a psychological process which can be an attitude and which has an influence on the spa experience (Lo and Wu, 2014), for an example, a client's mind set or perception towards a spa or treatment. Experience is considered subjective and a psychological activity (Lo, et al. 2015: 156) that results from interaction between a service provider and a client. It also relies on clients' expectations, such as first contact with the service provider.

Many studies have indicated that communication with a client prior to the spa visit and during the treatment is essential, as it enhances the spa experience (Lo, Qu and Wetpravit 2013: 182; Kucukusta and Guillet 2014; Lo, et al. 2015: 172). Also the client feels taken care of. Efficient communication with a client is likely to lead to greater understanding ultimately resulting in a good experience (Diegmann, Basten and Pankratz 2015).

When a client arrives, he or she should not be left unattended or wait for too long (Lo, et al. 2015: 172) (Liavoshka 2015) as this will have an impact on the spa experience and result in a negative experience. It is indicated that communication skills between spa clients and spa therapists are certainly lacking (Kucukusta and Guillet 2014: 420). This gap in communication arises from managers and clients differing in understanding the realm of the spa and the elements that enhance a spa experience (Kucukusta and Guillet 2014: 420). Therefore, it is possible for clients' expectations of a good experience not to be met even if there are resources to meet clients' needs. Communication with a client is seen as a tool for building trust and reducing misunderstandings (Diegmann, et al. 2015). Therefore, beyond spa experience elements, it is vital to understand clients' expectations, and that can be achieved through communication. Inadequate communication might

increase the risk of failing to deliver (Diegmann, Basten and Pankratz 2015) and service delivery is a crucial aspect of the spa industry.

Ambience, customer service and treatment quality strongly contribute to the spa experience (Lo, Wu and Tsai 2015: 156). According to Jean (2016) the spa experience does not commence in the spa or in the treatment room, but it occurs at all times as the client interacts with the spa brand, such as in telephonic communication, emails, social media and newsletters. The spa experience is a very personal service and the client's experience is greatly influenced by the interaction with spa employees. Spa clients consider that the skills and attitude of the therapists are particularly important in affecting their spa experience (Liavoshka, 2015).

The spa industry should be aware that a good spa experience is not based entirely on consumption of the spa services; it should be memorable and produce good emotions. Consumption emotion is an emotional response a client has after the service or experience (Lo 2015: 156). A positive experience inspires a client to seek an equivalent positive experience in the future. A study conducted by Lo et.al (2015) indicated that emotions contribute to the spa experience. Responsiveness was found to be the most important determinant factor in explaining positive emotions, followed by reliability, empathy, and tangibles. The results demonstrated the importance of spa service quality in enhancing the attainment of positive emotions by spa clients. Making information easy to access for spa clients could also influence their emotions (Liavoshka, 2015). Well-designed service processes, standardized service procedures, and training, can help to enhance spa service quality, generate positive emotions, and ultimately create a better spa experience for clients. The spa should therefore maintain service standards and quality, since positive emotions provide a sense of involvement, self-discovery and self-development which can be a client's motive for the spa visit (Smith and Puckzo 2014: 8). According to Kang (2011), pleasure of emotion is what spa clients seek through spa services. Spa components such as smoothness, softness, comfortable temperature, and humidity are the most important sensory stimulations to please clients. The spa industry should consider having a balance of sensory components to take advantage of the

synergic effect through the sensory combinations. Research regarding the impact of environmental factors on customer emotion and behaviour has been done mostly on retail shops and restaurants while limited research has been done on the spa industry, whereas, emotions are greatly influenced and triggered by the spa environment (Morrison et al. 2011: 559).

2.6 Factors influencing spa satisfaction

Spa has various elements that negatively or positively affect a client, below are some of the factors that contribute to client's satisfaction.

2.6.1. Spa environment and design

The environment is an important feature contributing to the spa experience (Boekstein 2012). Relaxation and enjoyment of the spa experience depends a lot on how safe and secure the customer perceives the environment to be (Liavoshka, 2015). There are factors that contribute to clients' satisfaction and are considered when clients compare the spas (Lo, Qu and Wetprasit 2013; Okech 2014: 71; Chen and Quester 2015: 114). Spa theme, atmosphere, facility variety, products and treatments, cleanliness, value-added services, clients' privacy, therapist attitude, personalised services, therapist's professionalism and spa aroma are all factors that determine a positive or negative spa experience.

Aroma plays a significant role in creating a relaxed environment (Cohen and Bodeker 2008) and certain aromas can bring memories of an experience. According to Morrison et al. (2011: 560) the consumers' emotions, behaviours and experience are highly influenced by music and aromas which tend to soothe, thus creating a pleasant atmosphere. Pleasure and arousal from the environment results in a positive mood (Morrison et al. 2011: 560). A positive mood results in willingness to consume a product or service again (Morrison et al. 2011: 60). Whenever clients are satisfied with a service, it has both short and long term behavioural effects, of which a revisit is one (Hashemi et al. 2015). This increases business revenue. Therefore, the spa environment has a direct impact on the client's experience and also contributes to brand recognition (Cohen and Bodeker 2008).

The design of the spa requires a logical process (Pehlivanoğlu 2012). Treatment rooms and social areas should be separated as should dry areas from wet areas (Pehlivanoğlu 2012). In the rooms or facilities where clients at some point spend time alone, mental and physical relaxation occurs, therefore a sense of peace should be created in such a way that the design appeals to the soul. This can be achieved through aroma, temperature and music (Pehlivanoğlu 2012). As these areas are visible to everyone, they should not have language, race or religious symbols (Pehlivanoğlu 2012).

The main areas to be found in the spa are (Pehlivanoğlu 2012): reception and waiting areas, administrative offices and staff rest areas, men's and women's dressing and rest rooms, beauty units (hairdresser or skin care rooms), massage rooms, baths and wet areas and storage areas. There are two area categories a spa should have, a dry area and a wet area. In a dry area, the rooms should be designed to appeal to five human senses. This can be done through design, lighting, a special music system, aromatherapy oils as well as sense of touch through furniture texture and design. Hence it is suggested that the walls are painted with natural colours such as grey, brown and other muted colours. This however, depends on the spa theme and style.

The wet area should include saunas, showers, a swimming pool, jacuzzi and steam room. More than one sauna is suggested if the spa is large enough (Smith and Puckzo 2014: 195), as , some clients prefer saunas at different temperatures.

The sound of water can be used for soothing, however, swimming pools should not be considered for this and swimming pool/s should be centrally located to be a focal point of interest in all amenities.

The spa should have single and double treatment rooms (SASA 2013). Treatment rooms are suggested to be suitable to execute both dry and wet treatments, therefore each room must have a shower or a bath. Location of the mirrors in the treatment rooms should be positioned not to reflect a client or therapist (Pehlivanoğlu 2012) as this will cause distraction.

Relaxation areas should be convenient (Smith and Puckzo, 2014: 195) and have reading material, snacks and scent from oil burners. Ventilation should not be audible (Pehlivanoğlu 2012). The spa should be designed to accommodate old persons as well as disabled persons (Pehlivanoğlu 2012). Several small storage areas in several places are suggested, rather than one large established place, as this will minimize movement and distraction around the spa (Pehlivanoğlu 2012). Fitness areas should preferably receive daylight, and cardio equipment like treadmills should be located facing towards the landscaping and natural green areas (Pehlivanoğlu 2012).

2.6.2 Spa therapist

The spa services are very personal and spa experience is significantly influenced by contact with a therapist (Lo et al. 2015: 171). Therapists' service quality and product knowledge, professionalism and ability to deliver accurate information to clients leads to reliability and trust in the therapist (Lo, Wu and Tsai 2015).

The essential characteristic of the spa is a "place for emotional sensitisation" (Kang et al. 2011: 1). It is essential that therapists are also sensitive to clients' emotions (Lo, Wu and Tsai 2015: 172). Being sensitive to the customers' concerns and needs is also important to ensure that clients can whole-heartedly enjoy their spa treatments (Liavoshka 2015). According to Olamilekan and Dastane (2014) the conversation generated during spa services is important, rapport generated between service professional and client may be more important as the treatment to the client. Therefore, the spa should consider training therapists in communication skills to meet the clients' expectations, for clients who are more concerned about conversation with a therapist.

According to Anderssen (2015) to be a therapist is to listen, therefore it is crucial to give a client sufficient time to open up and talk. Clients often do not want solutions from the therapist, they just want to be listened to (Anderssen 2015). This suggests that clients' motives are not only for their physical needs to be met but emotional needs as well.

It is the therapists' responsibility to ensure that a client has a good spa experience (Lo, et al. 2015: 172). The spa services are considered very personal and intimate. Therefore,

it is vital for therapists and the spas to fully understand clients' expectations and desires pertaining to the therapist-client relationship (Lo, Wu and Tsai 2015: 172).

Therapists' behaviour directly has an impact on clients' experience (Lo, Wu and Tsai 2015: 172) 172). Hence, there are statements a therapist should never utter or to be heard saying (Smith and Puckzo 2014) such as "If you do not see it, it was probably sold out" and "Oh those were old prices". These statements indicate that a therapist is not professional and updated concerning the spa's products and services, and is therefore not client concerned or centred.

According to Lo, Wu and Tsai (2015: 171), the spa managers should invest more in employees than on the spa features, as features can easily be imitated by competitors in the market. Well-trained and skilled therapists contribute invaluablely to a client's experience and satisfaction (Lo, Wu and Tsai 2015). According to Merdjan (2015) a therapist needs to be well trained and able to deliver clients' expectations. Spa clients feel better taken care of mainly because of the contact and interaction with therapists (Panchal 2014). The researcher believes that the spa management needs to acknowledge the role therapists play to fulfil clients' needs. The spa therapist should be considered as the most basic element of a successful spa.

2.6.3 Service quality

According to Prybutok (2012: 19) service quality is an attitude that strongly relates to the consumer's satisfaction, which is the outcome of the consumer's expectations compared to the service offered or received (Lo, Wu and Tsai 2015). Rasheed and Abadi (2014: 300) perceived service quality as the service provider's ability to deliver according to clients' expectations (Chieochankitkan and Sukpatch 2014). As a spa offers mostly intangible services, the spa industry is obliged to focus on and improve service quality (Chieochankitkan and Sukpatch 2014). Service quality is a key to building relationships with clients and ensuring their return Liavoshka (2015).

Clients have their own criteria and expectations to compare with the service, hence (Lo, Wu and Tsai 2015) it is more difficult to assess intangible product quality as opposed to

tangible product quality. Lo, Wu and Tsai (2015: 159) conclude that service quality is a form of cognitive appraisal. Although service quality is considered cognitive, service providers are still expected to maintain and improve service (Rasheed and Abadi 2014: 299), as service quality is significant for a positive effect on the consumer (Lo et al. 2014) and has an impact on the spa experience (Lo, Wu and Tsai 2015).

Quality plays an imperative role in the spa industry (Hashemi et al. 2015). According to Chen (2015: 114) service quality in the spa industry can consist of any of the following factors: politeness, friendliness, concern for clients' interests, attention to service details and consistency of service quality. Service quality results from the ability of a service provider to meet needs and satisfy clients according to their expectation level (Yaman, Alias and Ishak 2012: 26). Therefore, understanding clients' expectations will enable the marketer to satisfy clients and maintain good quality service. Due to the active development of the spa and wellness industry, it is advised that the spa sector applies quality systems to manage the whole of the industry. Quality management is seen as a framework for all aspects of the business and is known as "total quality management" (Liavoshka 2015). This could ultimately standardize quality service in all the spas.

2.6.4 Wellness treatments

The wellness aspect has begun to be excluded from the spas. This is a major concern in the spa industry (Jean 2016). The spas are now focusing mostly on treatments such as waxing, manicures, pedicures and nail work (Jean 2016). Although these treatments are important, they should not be the main focal point, as beauty treatments are not considered to be an official part of the spa industry (Cohen and Bodeker 2008). Wellness treatments such as reflexology should be the spa's main point of focus (Jean 2016).

In various hotels, the spas have converted to massage centres and do not provide other treatments and services as a spa is supposed to. This might be due to the fact that hotel guests book for massages more than other treatments. It is vital that the spa offers a variety of treatments. One method to achieve this can be through offering extra treatments for clients, when it is necessary. This will familiarise clients with other services offered by the spa, ensuring the spa to be a place of wellness (Jean 2016) not just a beauty salon.

According to Merdjan (2015), the spa should always strive to grow and maintain the number of people who are interested in overall wellness treatments and life-style not exclusively for beauty treatments.

2.6.4.1 Spa products and techniques

The spa may have a theme and a signature treatment. The spa treatments however, should allow a client to experiment with unique ancient and traditional techniques of a particular visited spa. Although international clients enjoy seeing a product range with which they are familiar, they would also like to experience products or services unique to the respective spa (Demeerlaere 2009).

Techniques may differ according to theme, preference or spa region. Technique variety may include e.g. sequence followed when conducting a treatment, tools used to massage and medium used to massage.

The spa products that clients purchase for home usage can trigger a memory of the spa experience and a client might be reminded to return for the same experience. This might result in client attachment to the spa with patrons possibly becoming regular clients (Lo, Qu and Wetprasit 2013: 13), the spa therefore should have a retail section and the necessary skills.

2.7 Spa perception

Perception is a process of receiving, selecting and interpreting received stimuli (Karde 2011), therefore perception is based on the individual's frame of reference. There are factors that influence individuals' perception, such as attitude, motives, interest, experience and expectation. The spa must be able to distinguish clients' and potential clients' perception in order to be competitive in the spa industry (Chieochankitkan and Sukpatch 2014). In Europe, a spa study was conducted, the results of which indicated that less attention has been paid to spa clients' perception and motivation for visiting a spa (Kim et al. 2010).

The spa perception differs in different countries and regions: for example, spa clients in Europe commonly perceive the spa mainly as curative of medical conditions (Smith and Puckzo 2014: 13). American spa clients expect the spa to be closely similar to a beauty salon (Smith and Puckzo 2014: 13), which is dissimilar. In America, spa clients perceive the spa visit as a compensation after hard work (Bhardwaj and Kumar 2013). Generally and mostly the spa is perceived as being for rich, beautiful individuals and as costly, whereas the spa is really for anyone who wants to stay healthy (Smith and Puckzo 2014: 51). It is proved that clients indeed perceive the spa services as being costly, as Intellegent.Spas (2014: 74) stated that 19 percent of South African spa clients seek value for money deals, more clients are taking advantage of promotions and choosing value-added packages rather than normal packages.

Understanding client's perceptions and expectations of the spa service attributes is necessary (Sparks, 2007). Thus, it is important to understand how clients evaluate various spa benefits available in the market place (Kim et al. 2010).

Femininity is represented as being associated with the spa in a way that produces a differentiation from 'masculine' in spa marketing (Anderssen 2015). Photographs in spa advertisements often feature female models only, which could project an image that the spa is exclusively for females, which is not true (Tsai, Suh and Fong 2012). Intellegent.Spas (2014: 35) argued that in South Africa 30 percent of the spa clients are males. According to Intellegent.Spas (2014: 55), 22 percent of the hotel spas in South Africa provide a gender-shared relaxation area and sauna, which might have resulted in males being reluctant to visit the spas, and those who are interested might worry about how other clients will perceive and judge them (Tsai, Suh and Fong 2012). In the hotel spas that cater mostly for business travellers, client gender is almost the same, in fact, male clients may even outnumber female clients.

According to Smith and Puckzo (2014: 125) the spa interior design also needs to appeal to men as much as it does to women. The spa needs to have areas dedicated to men (Sinclair 2011) as men also want to enjoy their grooming experience in a more masculine,

rugged environment rather than in the traditionally sweet-smelling spa aroma that is generally pleasant to women. Despite the spa environment concerning men, the spa industry is getting more males who are interested in spa services (Intellegent.Spas 2014: 73; Okech 2014: 72; Smith and Puckzo 2014: 125). Intellegent.Spas (2014: 73) stated that in South Africa most of the spas recognise an increased male grooming awareness. This is purely based on their purchase behaviour, as they purchase mostly facial, slimming and anti-aging products. It is therefore imperative for the spa industry to understand the needs of male clients as the spa industry is now seeing an increase in male clientele. Thus, this study will contribute to the achievement of male clients' expectations, perception and their specific experience in relation to the spa.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present the research methodology to answer the following research questions;

1. What are the treatments and services currently offered in hotel spas in Durban?
2. What are clients' expectations from services offered in hotel spas in Durban?
3. What experience do clients get from hotel spas in Durban?
4. How does client expectations and experience contribute to their satisfaction?

The research paradigm, design, approach, sampling design, research instruments and ethical considerations are described within this chapter.

3.2 Research paradigm

Research paradigms are divided into three philosophically distinct categories as positivism, interpretivism and critical postmodernism (Khan 2008). Positivism is considered ideal for this study because positivism adheres to the view that only “factual” knowledge gained through observation, including measurement, is trustworthy. In positivist studies the role of the researcher is limited to data collection and interpretation through an objective approach and the research findings are usually observable and quantifiable. It has been noted that “as a philosophy, positivism is in accordance with the empiricist view that knowledge stems from human experience” (Khan 2008).

Moreover, in positivist studies, the researcher is independent from the study and there are no provisions for human interests within the study. In other words, studies with positivist paradigms are based purely on facts and consider the world to be external and objective (Punch , Cronholm and Hjalmarsson 2011).

3.3 Research approach

The research approach that was used for this study is a mixed method approach. According to Hesse-Biber (2010) the mixed method approach employs both quantitative and qualitative methods to answer a research question. This combination of methods involves the collection, analysis, and integration of quantitative and qualitative data in a single study. Punch (2011: 290), Cronholm and Hjalmarsson (2011: 87) articulated the mixed method approach as one that preserves the strengths and reduces the weaknesses in both approaches. Creswell (2015: 14) asserts that it is not enough to use only qualitative or quantitative approaches in order to gain more information and understand the problem in detail. Maree (2016: 313) states that mixed method research enables the researcher to understand a research problem completely.

This research approach is a suitable approach for this study as this study intends to understand what clients expect from a hotel spa. The qualitative aspect of this method will explore details of a problem and the quantitative aspect will validate the qualitative findings. Observations were noted in a checklist form for spa attributes.

3.4 Research design

Khan (2008) defined a research design as the blue print of any research study. One of the main steps in formulating a research design is the selection of an appropriate methodology. The research design forms the operational framework, within which the researcher will accomplish the intended study.

The research design that was used in this study was the explanatory sequential design. According to Maree (2010: 266) explanatory sequential design is best suited for this study as this study aims to understand the problem holistically and in details. This design firstly paints the picture of the problem through the quantitative aspect.

To achieve the aims and objectives of this study, a cross sectional design was used to collect qualitative data. According to Hulley et al., (2007) a cross-sectional study involves

data collection during a demarcated period. The advantage of a cross sectional study design is that the researcher does not need to wait for the outcome to occur, therefore this design is fast and cost effective.

Quantitative data was collected using a SERVQUAL questionnaire and qualitative data was collected using interviews. Quantitative data was collected first followed by qualitative data collection. Qualitative was validated using pilot study. Therefore, the qualitative results help explain results obtained from the first phase or quantitative aspect. A spa attributes checklist was used to collect data for observational data.

3.5 Study site

The study setting is “the environment in which the research study takes place and can be a natural or controlled environment. Natural settings are real-life study environments without any changes made for the purpose of the study” (Burns and Grove 2005: 325).

The research was conducted in eThekweni Municipality, which is also referred to as Durban Metro. The eThekweni Municipality area has many hotels and spas, however there are few hotel spas. Most of the hotel spas are in the central business district (CBD). The hotels ranged from no stars to five star rated. This study was conducted in a natural setting in which the researcher did not manipulate or change the environment for the study. The location of the hotel spas involved in this study varies from Northern, Southern, Eastern and Western regions within eThekweni Municipality. Participating hotel spas were coded as follows to ensure anonymity: Spa A, Spa B, Spa C, Spa D, and Spa E, and clients that participated in this study were coded as participants 1, 2, 3 etc. described further under sampling.

3.6 Sampling

Maree (2016) stated that the sampling process in cross-sectional design is purposive, rather than random, which perfectly fitted the sampling method of this study.

3.6.1 Target Population

A population is the entire set of subjects that meet the inclusion and exclusion criteria of the study (Burns and Grove, 2007). The researcher chose these hotels within the eThekwin Municipality in the belief that they would provide valuable information as they were active and convenient to reach. The study was conducted in five eThekwin hotel spas, which were chosen as they would cover five regions of eThekwin. Specific inclusion and exclusion criteria were set as follows to outline the population. The spas were sampled first, followed by the clients who visit the spas and then the managers of the spas.

Inclusion criteria for clients

To be included in the population, clients had to meet the following criteria:

- Attended a spa based in a hotel
- Frequently visited hotel spas on a monthly basis
- Be able to read, speak and fully comprehend English
- Be over the age of 19 years

Exclusion criteria

Clients were excluded on the basis of the following criteria:

- Attended other spa types such as, day spa, club spa, dental and medical spa other than hotel spa.
- Participants' of a pilot study

3.6.2 Population size

The population consisted of all the clients (n=120) who visited the conveniently selected sample of spas.

3.6.3 Sample and sampling techniques

Maree (2016: 79) had defined a sample as part of a whole group selected by the researcher to participate in a study. Sampling is a process of selecting a portion of the population that will represent the entire population or a subset of subjects from the population of interest (Chandramohan 2013). A purposive sampling method was used to select the district and the hotels and convenience sampling was used to select the participants.

The hotel spas were purposely selected for the study, and the sample for this study included a total of 120 hotel spa clients. Clients were recruited through convenience sampling. Convenience sampling is a type of nonprobability sampling where members of the target population that meet certain practical criteria, such as easy accessibility, geographical proximity, availability at a given time, or the willingness to participate are included for the purpose of the study. All clients from within the selected spa that met the inclusion criteria were invited to participate in the study.

According to World Health Organisation (2016) requirements for a qualitative sample size, a total of 10+5 participants is adequate to collect qualitative data. For the purpose of this study a total of 15 hotel spa clients were also interviewed (Appendix D) and a total of 120 hotel spa clients completed a questionnaire (Appendix E). Clients were conveniently approached in the spa premises. Therefore, it was convenient for the researcher to meet participants.

3.7 Research instruments

3.7.1 Data collection instruments

Data collection is to gather information to address the question being asked in the study (Creswell and Clark 2011: 171). There are different types of tools to use in a mixed method study. For the purpose of this study the following were relevant to this study; recording the data obtained from semi structured interviews using a recorder and a

questionnaire (Creswell and Clark 2011: 171). The questionnaire measures service quality that a client expects (Pena et al. 2013).

Qualitative data was collected using a face-to-face semi-structured interview schedule (Appendix D). According to Maree (2016: 93) semi-structured interviews include open ended questions that are posed by the researcher and probed if necessary. Interviews were recorded using an Olympus Digital voice recorder VN-8500PC, to obtain an accurate record of the information to support the written notes.

Self-administered questionnaires were used to collect quantitative data (Appendix F). Maree (2016) confirmed that a questionnaire is important as it is an instrument to generate data. Although the participants completed questionnaires on their own, the researcher was available to assist if any queries arose. The questionnaire consisted of subsections described as A and B. The following themes were covered in the questionnaire:

Subsection A: In this section closed ended questions were used to ask about demographic details such as age, gender, race and occupation.

Subsection B: In this section closed ended questions were used to obtain the views of clients with regard to what they expected and what they actually received from the spa and spa services, using a five level Likert scale.

A Likert scale provides an ordinal measure of a respondent's attitude (Maree 2016: 186). The most common use of a Likert scale is asking respondents whether they agree or disagree with a statement. An example of four common response categories is, strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree. According to Maree (2016: 186), scales are intended to help the researcher discover and measure strength of feelings and attitude.

3.7.2 Data quality control

For data quality control, validity was observed. Validity can be defined as the degree to which a tool measures the concept (Alén, Fraiz and Rufín 2006: 76). Also the extent to

which the instrument measures what it is supposed to measure (Maree 2016: 239). In this study, a pilot study as described below was conducted to ensure validity.

Reliability of an instrument makes reference to the consistency of the results obtained in the use of the instrument, such as a questionnaire (Chandramohan 2013). It ensures that a measuring tool delivers the same results in successive uses with the same object or participant and in similar states (Alén, Fraiz and Rufin 2006: 77). In this study reliability was ensured as only the researcher conducted the main study and pilot study.

A pilot study is a small scale study to test the validity and reliability of the instrument that will be used in a major study (Arain et al. 2010). It identifies difficulties in interpretation and understanding of the questions, ensuring the validity, accuracy, reliability and ethical standards that should be inherent in the questionnaire (Chandramohan 2013). A pilot study was conducted on an expert group which included therapists, spa managers and lecturers. Expert group was chosen as they have intense understanding of the field. There were five participants for the pilot study and they were not included in the sample of the main study. There were no changes.

3.8 Ethical considerations

According to Maree (2016: 44) ethical consideration is an aspect of the protection of identity of participants. Creswell and Clark (2011: 179) agree that ethical issues limit the kinds of problems investigated by the social scientist and the methods used to obtain valid and reliable data. Informed consent is the major ethical issue in conducting research, "it means that a person knowingly, voluntarily and intelligently and in a clear and manifest way, gives his consent" (Marianna 2011).

An ethical approval letter (Appendix H) was received by the researcher to be able to conduct a study, thereafter gate keeper's letters were submitted and collected from all the spas that agreed to participate in the study. Informed consent was obtained from all participants (Appendix A). An individual had a right to voluntarily participate in the study, without any risk of penalty and was free to withdraw from the study at any time.

Participants were given adequate time to complete the questionnaire in their space. The information provided to the participants contained both the researcher's and the supervisor's contact details, should the participants have any areas that needed clarity (Appendix B). Confidentiality was maintained, as interview and questions were not asking or probing client's or spa's name and information. Only the researcher, supervisor and statistician had access to raw data and only for research purposes. To ensure anonymity the researcher used pseudonyms.

3.9 Data collection procedure

The process of data collection commenced only once the researcher had obtained approval to conduct the research from the Durban University of Technology Institutional Research Ethics Committee (IREC) (Appendix H). A pack comprising of the questionnaire (Appendix F), a letter of information (Appendix B) and a consent form (Appendix A) was hand delivered by the researcher during the recruitment process to the spa for all interested clients.

Participants were approached in the spa and, if interested, the procedure of data collection was explained to each client on the first day the researcher recruited the participant. A list of clients' names who expressed interest to participate in the study including their contact details was generated for purposes of communicating with clients at a later stage and to make interview arrangements and questionnaire collection.

Interviews were held in various venues which were determined by clients based on availability. Questionnaires and consent forms were collected by the researcher on the day of the interview.

3.10 Data analysis

Data analysis consists of examining the data to address the research question or hypothesis (Creswell and Clark, 2011). Mixed analysis is the term used for analysing data in mixed method research (Onwuegbuzie and Combs, 2011). Explanatory sequential

mixed analysis was conducted, where the quantitative component was analysed first, which then drives or informs the subsequent qualitative analysis component and this is called sequential quantitative-qualitative analysis (Onwuegbuzie and Combs, 2011, Creswell and Clark, 2011). The results are presented in the form of graphs, cross tabulations and other figures for the qualitative data that was collected. Inferential techniques included the use of correlations and chi square test values; which were interpreted using the p-values.

3.10.1 Quantitative – Statistical Analysis

Analysis of data from closed ended questions was undertaken using version 24.0 of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The adequacy of statements measuring each of the constructs was measured using Chi square test. The probability was set at p less than 0.05. The Chi-Square was used to calculate differences between paired samples.

3.10.2 Qualitative – Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis was done using NVIVO computer software to analyse qualitative data. Thematic analysis is a qualitative method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (theme) from collected data (Braun and Clarke, 2006). This is the most appropriate method for this study as the researcher needs to categorise the results, and this method organises and describes data in rich details.

3.10.3 Observation – Check list

A checklist was used to obtain information regarding tangible and intangible factors the spa has and include facilities, services and attribute and water treatment (Appendix F). The data was described and correlated with the other data.

3.11 Data management and storage

Data was reserved in the possession of the researcher and will be discarded by DUT after five years by shredding the documents. The questionnaires, voice recordings and transcriptions were kept in an electronic format and also stored in a locked cabinet in the Durban University of Technology office, in the Department of Somatology.

3.12 Summary

This chapter provided an overview of the research methodology used to guide the study. To gather both quantitative and qualitative data, a mixed method approach was suitable for this study, to measure client's satisfaction in eThekweni Municipality hotel spas.

A questionnaire was selected to measure customer expectations of service quality (Pena et al. 2013). It was found to be adequate in measuring the constructs studied in the current study. Face to face scheduled interviews were used to collect qualitative data. The data is presented in the chapter that follows.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the data in the form of figures, tables and narratives. The response rates and profile of respondents are the first parts presented. The questionnaire was the first tool that was used to collect quantitative data and was distributed to 120 participants. A scheduled interview was a second tool used to collect qualitative data, and a spa attribute checklist was an observation tool. The results will be attempting to respond to the following research objectives: to explore treatments and other services offered by a spa facility, to determine the expectations of clients who utilise hotel spas, to determine the experiences of clients who utilise hotel spas and to compare clients' expectations to current offerings of the selected hotel spas.

4.2 Response rate

A total of 120 questionnaires were administered. A total of 120 questionnaires from five hotel spas in eThekwin Municipality were returned, making up a return rate of 100%. The sample was drawn in different regions of eThekwin Municipality.

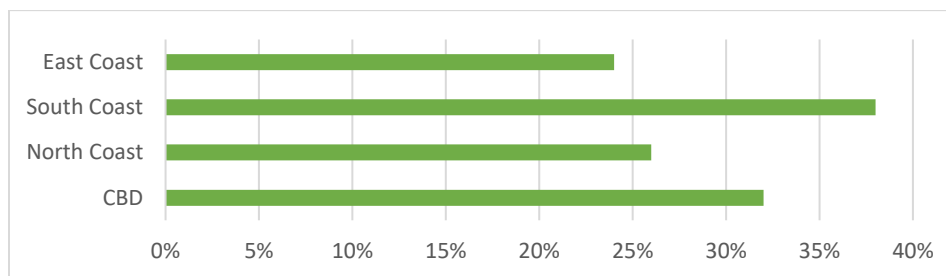


Figure 4.1 Percentage of participants by eThekwin region category

As shown in the Figure 4.1, 38 percent of participants were from South Coast, 32 percent from the CBD, 26 percent from the North Coast and 24 percent from the East Coast regions of eThekwin Municipality. There was no significant differences regarding the areas from where respondents were recognised ($p = 0.261$).

4.3 Data analysis

Data was analysed to determine demographic profile of participants with spa therapies associated with a hotel spa.

4.3.1 Demographic profile of participants

Participant's age ranged from age 20 to age 59 years of age were included. Table 4.1 provides detail of participant profiles based on age and race. The large majority of respondents were females (80%). The study revealed that most of the clients that are interested in the hotel spa range between 29 years and 39 of age, followed by those in age between 40 years and 50 years of age.

Table 4.1: Overall gender distribution of participants by age and race distribution

Age (years)	Female	Male	Total	Percentage (%)
20 - 29	27	5	32	26
30 - 39	38	4	42	35
40 - 49	24	6	30	25
50 - 59	11	5	16	13
Total	100	20	120	100
Race		Total Number		Total Percentage (%)
Indian		34		28
White		33		26
African		33		26%
Coloured		20		20%
Total		120		100%

In Table 4.1 it was shown that the majority of participants were between 30 and 39 years of age (35.0%) and were female (83%). There were no significant differences by race group ($p = 0.615$).

4.3.2 Spa therapy or treatment/s associated with a hotel spa by participant age.

As shown in Table 4.2, the majority of clients (54%) associated massage and reflexology treatments with the hotel spa. There were no significant associations between spa treatments and age ($p = 0.118$).

Table 4.2: Associated spa therapy by hotel spa and age

	Age				Total Percentage (%)	P value
	20 – 29 N=32	30 – 39 N=42	40 – 49 N=30	50 – 59 N=16		
Massages	13%	15%	15%	2%	45%	0.621
Reflexology	0%	0%	0%	1%	1%	0.621
Both of the above	15%	20%	14%	5%	54%	0.619
Total	18%	25%	21%	8%	100%	-

4.3.3 Client's expectations and experience

Clients go to spas for several reasons, therefore the spa needs to consider other aspects of service more than physical touch. There are tangible and intangible factors that are expected by clients to be available in spas which contribute greatly to the spa experience.

Figure 4.2 shows the responses with regards to client's expectations of the spa and their actual experiences

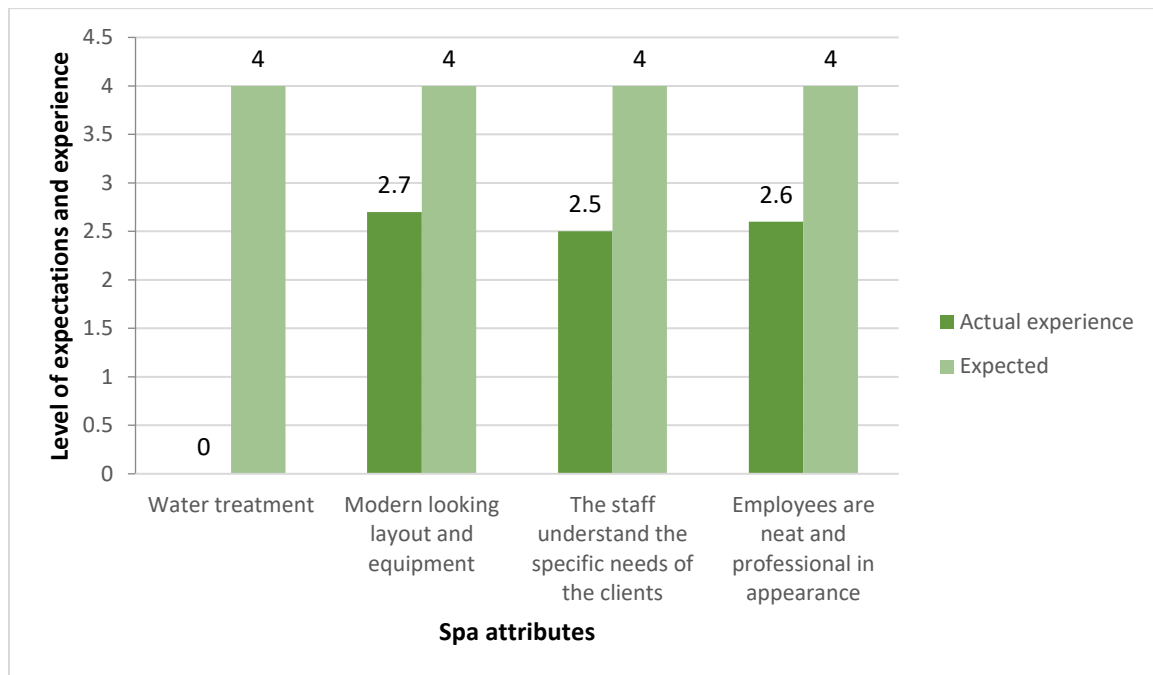


Figure 4.2 Client's expectations versus experience

Observing the four attributes water treatments, morden looking layout and equipment, the staff understanding the specific needs of the clients and employee's neatness and professional appearance, it is shown in Figure 4.2 that none of client's expectations were fully met on the rating from 1 to 4 on the Likert scale. Most of them were about 50 percent met, and with water treatments, none of the client expectations were met.

Table 4.3 Strongly agreed responses to questions on client's expectations and strongly disagreed responses to questions on client's experience by age category.

Attributes	Numbers by Age category															
	20 – 29, N=32				30 – 39, N=42				40 – 49, N =30				50-59, N=16			
	Expectations		Experience		Expectations		Experience		Expectations		Experience		Expectations		Experience	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Modern looking layout and equipment	32	100	2	6	42	100	2	5	30	100	2	7	16	100	1	6
Physical facilities that are visually appealing	32	100	1	3	42	100	1	2	30	100	1	3	16	100	1	6
Employees are neat and professional in appearance	32	100	2	6	42	100	2	4	30	100	2	7	16	100	1	6
Material associated with the spa such as pamphlet informative	32	100	1	3	42	100	1	2	30	100	1	3	16	100	1	6
When an employee promises to do something by certain time, they do so	32	100	2	9	42	100	5	11	30	100	2	7	16	100	0	6
When a client has a problem, the spa shows a sincere interest in solving it	32	100	2	6	42	100	2	5	30	100	2	7	16	100	1	6
Performing the service right the first time e.g. proving quotes	32	100	1	3	42	100	2	5	30	100	1	3	16	100	1	6
Providing the advice related to the service	32	100	1	3	42	100	3	7	30	100	1	3	16	100	1	6
Inform clients exactly when the service will be offered	32	100	1	3	42	100	1	2	30	100	1	3	16	100	1	6
All staff are always willing to help clients politely	32	100	1	3	42	100	1	2	30	100	1	3	16	100	0	6
All staff are never too busy to respond to customer request	32	100	2	6	42	100	2	4	30	100	1	3	16	100	1	6
The spa gives prompt service to clients	32	100	1	3	42	100	1	2	30	100	1	3	16	100	1	6
The behaviour of staff instils confidence in clients	32	100	2	6	42	100	2	4	30	100	1	7	16	100	1	6
A client feels safe in their relationship with the spa	32	100	1	3	42	100	2	4	30	100	1	3	16	100	1	6
Staff are consistently courteous with clients	32	100	2	6	42	100	3	7	30	100	2	7	16	100	1	6
Staff have knowledge to answer clients' questions	32	100	2	6	42	100	2	4	30	100	2	7	16	100	1	6
Spa gives clients individual attention as requested	32	100	1	6	42	100	2	4	30	100	2	7	16	100	0	6
Staff give clients personal attention	32	100	2	6	42	100	3	7	30	100	1	7	16	100	1	6
The operating hours are convenient to clients	32	100	1	3	42	100	1	4	30	100	1	3	16	100	1	6
The spa is willing to accommodate the clients requests where applicable	32	100	2	6	42	100	2	7	30	100	2	7	16	100	0	6
Total	100%		N = 30 47%		100%		N = 40 95%		100%		N = 28 93%		100%		N = 16 100%	

Table 4.3 shows strongly agree responses to questions about the client's expectations of the spa that they visited by age. Almost all clients had high expectations from the hotel spas in all spa attributes categories.

Clients in the 30 to 39 age category had highest expectations of 35 percent, followed by the 20 to 29 age category of 26 percent, followed by the 40 to 49 age category of 25 percent and the 50 to 59 age category of 13 percent (p value - 0.021*).

The results indicate that there is a gap between client's expectations and experience. The spas need to devise methods to observe and understand client's motives to visit the spa and exact expectations of experience. The table indicate that out of 16 clients on age category 50 – 59 years of age, spa did not fulfil the four spa attributes which follows; when an employee promises to do something by certain time they do so, all staff are always willing to help politely, spa gives clients individual attention, the spa is willing accommodate the client's requests whew applicable. The results indicate that in all age categories there was a percentage reduction in the clients' perceived experience when compared to clients' expectations.

4.3.4 Qualitative: results from the Interviews

The respondents generally believed that good quality service, professionalism, psychological and emotional needs, friendliness, punctuality, full attention to client, inviting and tranquil environment, personal touch and therapist with good sound of knowledge were important to create ambience and an environment for a good spa experience. Clients suggested improvement of management skills; therapist skills and improvement of service quality.

It was discovered that the combination and balance of these qualities were considered important to a client or when choosing a spa. Participants had various opinions and experiences that are illustrated in Table 4.4 below:

Table 4.4 Qualitative responses of participants regarding spa experience.

Some of the participant's responses is listed below until saturation was reached.

Participants	Experience
A	<i>"A spa can be a room or two but deliver exceptional experience; it doesn't have to be in a magnificent setting". She also stated that they do not get consistency in service quality hence, they end up requesting particular therapist/s to interact with.</i>
B	<i>"Within the spa industry we deal with different stereotypes and things that are not supposed to be seen by us as clients which affect our experience such as: management not taking care or respecting staff, disgruntlement of staff, labour issues etc. all that has a great impact to our experience".</i>
C	<i>"Owners and management do not know the field and to even deliver services, and they sell it as if they do, using uneducated young ladies, immigrants and undergraduate therapists."</i>
D	<i>"bad service, cheap labour, psychological sales, and a lot of business owners that are taking chances in spa industry"</i>
E	<i>"It all boils down to the capacity of the therapist who attends to you- that is the key. The most appealing environment for example doesn't translate into most magnificent experience, window dressing cannot hide a bad therapy"</i>
F	<i>if staff is well trained and courteous, it makes the experience even more special"</i>
G	<i>"these qualities are part of the solution to the client as clients cannot take care of themselves, hence they come to spas to be taken care of by experts"</i>
H	<i>"Surely there is a need for a control board in the field....so not anyone can start a spa business when they feel like"</i>
I	<i>"I like going to spas and pamper myself as often as I need...the problem is time. Also when you get to the spa sometimes you have to wait because the room is still busy or a previous clients is late or your therapist is late which is irritating when you booked in advance"</i>
J	<i>"Communication in spas is very poor. They promise to contact you about availability and never get back to you"</i>

The majority (80%) of participants stated that they went to spas for different reasons. These included reducing body pains and aches, which fall under physical needs, but also for psychological and emotional needs like stress, anxiety, to feel good mentally and to be taken care of. All of the participants mentioned that they also wanted psychological relief other than just physical assistance. About 70 percent of clients stated that taking care of someone physically is beyond touching them, but personality and attitude of the attendants contribute greatly. This is achieved when a therapist gives a client full undivided attention. Interaction with the spa, the personality, and the easy to talk to therapist were what participants prioritized. Also it made one feel that it was their “me time” in this busy life. Clients tended to pay more attention to the details of the spa service than to what an advert portrayed, as most spas practised false marketing strategies.

All participants believed that they should leave the spa feeling better, therefore they wanted to be physically medicated, by feeling their body part being worked on with skills that showed understanding of physiology and anatomy. Hence, a therapist with a good sound knowledge of the services was the main factor clients decided by if they were coming back to the same spa in future. “Once I get a therapist that knows their story, I became regular to that spa and requested the same therapist to do my treatments” said participant E.

A large number of respondents (90%) reported that cleanliness, good quality towels, aroma, nice decorations, garden, water feature were all qualities clients expected a spa should have. About 20 percent indicated that items that a client required in a room like clothes hangers, jewellery holders, sleepers, refreshments or water, different size pillows, adjustable beds indicated that a spa was client focused and had a personal touch to fit client needs. Inviting, tranquil environment and personal touches were mentioned as encouraging relaxation and a sense of departing from the exertions of one’s profession and life stress. About 50 percent of clients believed that these qualities made them feel that their hard earned money was well spent with good quality service as a spa in essence is an escape. The following are some client’s quotations:

“You can tell if the spa is client focused or not, I see by their therapy rooms if they provide my needs like where I put my clothes after undressing, comfortability and environment all together” Participant F.

“A spa should be clean, inviting and use good quality material and products” Participant G.

“I need to feel that spa services are worth my hard earned money when I leave the spa door, if not I do not come back” Participant B.

4.3.5 Observation of the Spa amenities

Table 4.5 shows the compliance of the observed spa in terms of the basic amenities. Five spas were observed for the availability of basic services as listed in Table 4.5. **Keys:** X = Not available, √ = Available

Table 4.5 Availability of spa attributes in hotel spas (total % reflects the proportion of observed spas that had necessary features)

	Reception	Staff room	Kitchen	Administrative space	Decoration or theme	Drinks	Packages	Adequate parking space	Swimming pool	Quiet area	Appropriate music	Natural surroundings	Convenient operating hours	Trustworthy products	Various treatments	Changing facilities	Gym	Modern equipment & facilities	Hydrotherapy	Healthy food catering	Clear signs	Private treatment rooms with shower facilities	Rest and relaxation area	Samples/homecare products	blitz/scotch shower	Swiss/vichy shower	Kneipp therapy
Spa 1	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	X	√	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Spa 2	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	X	√	√	X	√	√	X	X	X	X	X	X
Spa 3	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	X	X	√	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Spa 4	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	X	X	X	X	X	√	X	X	X	X	X	X
Spa 5	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	X	X	√	X	√	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Total %	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	40	40	40	40	40	40	0	0	0	0	0	0

Table 4.5 shows in detail spas and their attributes, it is shown that the majority of the spas lacked basic amenities. Bed sizes were small in all the spas, which means not all clients are comfortable during therapy sessions. Bed linen was not of a good quality since they had aged. Treatment rooms were small leaving insufficient space for the bed and one person to move around. The rooms were packed with furniture with less space for a client to move around. Cleanliness and hygiene needed improvement. Decoration of the room together with furniture arrangement did not appear clean or appealing. Spa employees, mainly therapists were not very well groomed with poor attention to hair styles, make up, artificial nails, uniform quality, attitude and professionalism. Some of the responses by clients are listed below:

“Spa should be the place where they possess modern equipment” Participant C

“Most spas I have been to are not investing in good quality towels and staff uniform”
Participant D

“Therapist’s appearance is not appealing, they are very clean with poorly applied make up and messy hair styles” Participant D

“Treatment rooms are too small, you cannot even take a picture of the whole room...there is no space to move other than to be in bed” Participant E

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings of the study presented in Chapter four. A quick discussion of the response rate is presented followed by a discussion on clients' spa experiences and expectations with relevance to the study objectives, followed by the chapter summary.

5.2. Quantitative Analysis

5.2.1 Clients' expectations from hotel spas

This study indicates that clients do not go to spas due to physical needs only, but also for emotional and psychological needs (Smith and Puckzo 2014: 8). Spa treatments generate good emotions which provide a sense of involvement, self-discovery and self-development which can be a client's motive for the spa visit.

The results of this study indicate that clients had a high level of expectations that were not met in spas, which is in agreement with the study by Keri et al. (2007) and Liavoshka (2015). However, the spa can devise methods to harmonise the spa environment with client's expectations (Keri, Ottenbacher and Harrington 2007). It is clear that hotels have transformed support amenities to make a profit. It is fundamental for the spa managers and therapists to fully understand the ever-changing desires of clients to be able to meet their needs and expectations (Van Niekerk, 2014). It must be noted that due to the scarcity of research on this topic, it is not possible to compare the findings of this study to a baseline.

5.3 Qualitative Analysis

The results are discussed under the themes that emerged from the interviews as well as the outcomes from the questionnaires and observations of spa amenities.

5.3.1 Clients experiences from hotel spas

Clients can identify how the staff is treated by the management, as they spend much time in treatment rooms and some clients prefer to talk during their treatment sessions. Once a therapist is not happy or satisfied with spa management or is disgruntled, service quality lowers. Hodari, Waldthausen and Sturman (2014) stated that hotel management lack a full understanding of the spa business and clients' needs but nevertheless offer spa services.

Therapists

Clients experienced different quality of service from different therapists which led them to request a specific therapist once they find one they are happy and comfortable with. Liavoshka (2015) found that the therapist's skills and attitude towards clients had an impact on their experiences. Clients were aware of and consider the therapist's qualification as equally important as experiences and skills. Liavoshka (2015) suggested that spa staff required interval or refresher trainings to keep up with service quality.

Environment

Ideally, the physical environment should support the needs and preferences of not only the customer, but also the needs and preferences of employees (Gemmell et al., 2013: 148). Bitner (1992: 58) was one of the first marketing specialists to discover the importance of physical setting and how it affects behaviour, degree of satisfaction, and in turn loyalty. The most appealing environment does not translate into a good experience. Spa environments can be inductive, but the client will determine the best fit for their outcomes. A poor experience may be met due to lack of tangible important factors even if there are resources to meet client's needs. These findings agree with Jean (2016) that clients expect good quality service from the moment they get in touch with the spa until the moment they leave.

Time

The findings indicates that therapists or spa employees do not meet clients' needs in the time promised because the respondents indicated that they did not like waiting too long before the treatment started. This is similar to the findings of other studies (Lo, Wu and Tsai 2015: 172). Clients indicated that they liked to go to spas, but they did not have the time to do so. Therefore, attending to clients' needs timeously will greatly contribute to their perception about the spa versus time. Understanding how consumers utilize their time may result in obtaining a deeper insight into an understanding of consumers (Van Niekerk, 2014). Clients consider all these factors during the decision-making process, thus the spa industry should carefully consider time.

Communication

Psychological factors contribute to an interaction between a client and service provider. The results indicate that clients were not communicating well with the spa staff. Effective communication gives the client the sense of being taken care of (Lo et al., 2015, Lo et al., 2013, Kucukusta and Guillet, 2014). Clients were not treated politely and with the respect that they expected as clients.

Analysing quantitative results, shows that the amenities check list outcome was expected. The observations of the spa amenities matched the client's dissatisfactions with the spas that they visited. It is noted that tangible attributes of the spa are important to clients. However, Lo et al. (2013) and Kucukusta and Guillet 2014 found that spa tangible attributes were the least significant factor in influencing spa clients. However, the same authors stated that they should not be neglected as customers are found to be more emotionally impressed by spas with a localized theme and elements. In addition, as noted by Pehlivanlu (2012) feature design complementing the spa's theme, the use of colour, music, lighting, natural materials, landscapes, and architectural styles which appeal to the eye, hearing, smell, and touch, help to create a place for quiet escape and seclusion which is highly perceived and expected by clients.

5.4 Treatments and services currently offered in hotel spas

Most clients associated the spa with massage and reflexology treatments only. A spa should offer a variety of therapy and treatments. However, the majority of spas do not qualify to be called spas based on the services that they offer. The study shows that clients are not familiar with all the services that the spa should have as well. None of the clients chose water treatments as a feature they associate with a spa, which is the main element according to the definition of a spa.

This study indicated that spas mainly focused on manual treatments which can be offered in beauty salons as well, whereas clients expected a good service and courtesy from entrance to exiting the spa. Not all clients were more concerned about the physical touch experience.

This finding supports the conclusion of the report by Intellegent.Spas (2014: 15), that in South Africa there are many service providers that categorize their businesses as a spa, yet they do not qualify. This has led to clients perceiving a spa as a massage and reflexology only facility other than one offering the main treatments and services a spa is supposed to offer.

Since services are intangible, the physical environment is very influential in communicating an image and shaping customers' expectations. Moreover, the 'environment' in which the service is delivered becomes part of the service. The physical setting influences the customer's 'ultimate satisfaction' with the service.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter provides the conclusions drawn from the findings of the study, recommendations, limitations and suggestions for possible directions for future studies.

6.2 Conclusion

The current study has revealed that hotel spas in the eThekweni Municipality do not meet clients' expectations and perceptions and they do not provide the level of experience clients expect. The lack of some spa attributes has resulted in an inability to meet clients' expectations, which are beyond a spa employee's capabilities. If all spas have all the attributes that are listed in the spa attribute check list, all clients' expectations would be met, especially tangible factors, that have a great impact on client's experience, according to this study.

This study indicated that therapists are not professional, well skilled and have a bad attitude towards clients. This can be improved by high-quality education and training.

6.3 Limitations

This study was limited by the number of spas that were willing to participate in the study. It was a challenge to obtain gatekeeper permission from one of the big spa franchises. Inadequate time between a client's arrival and the start of their session limited the quality and depth of the interviews.

6.4 Recommendations

A clear definition of the word spa is not yet well understood. A number of dissatisfactions have been identified and solutions will require spa owners and researchers to work hand in hand to find updates. Although most of the challenges can be controlled by the spa, there are a number of actions that will need to be taken by the spa directors themselves. Some of the solutions will require interventions by higher management structures like wellness board authorities.

6.5 Scope of further research

Further studies could focus on a broader population nationwide, not just in eThekweni Municipality. There is a need to include all types of spas in general and different hotel star levels. The specific teaching, learning, skills and techniques of therapists need to be established by further studies.

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APPENDIX A

CONSENT

Statement of Agreement to Participate in the Research Study:

- I hereby confirm that I have been informed by the researcher, _____ (name of researcher), about the nature, conduct, benefits and risk of this study – Research Clearance Number: _____
- I have also received, read, and understood the above written information (Participant Letter of Information) regarding the study.
- I am aware that the results of the study, including personal details regarding my sex, age, date of birth, initials and diagnosis will be anonymously processed into a study report
- In view of the requirements of research, I agree that the data collected during this study can be processed in a computerised system by the researcher
- I may, at any stage, without prejudice, withdraw my consent and participation in the study. I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and (of my own free will) declare myself prepared to participate in the study
- I understand that significant new findings developed during the course of this research which may relate to my participation will be made available to me.

Full Name of Participant

Date

Time

Signature _____

Full Name of Researcher

Date

I, _____ (name of researcher) herewith confirm that the above participant has been fully informed about the nature, conduct and risks of the above study.



APPENDIX B

LETTER OF INFORMATION

Dear Sir/Madam

Thank you for considering participation in my research

Title of the Research Study: Client's expectations and perceptions of Hotel Spas and their services in eThekweni

Researcher: Sinethemba Khathi

Supervisor: Professor Threethambal Puckree

Co-supervisor: Mrs Sharl Fynn-Wagner

Brief introduction and Purpose of the study:

The spa industry is one of the fastest growing segments within the tourism industry, thereby helping to generate a significant amount of revenue in hospitality and tourism. Spas have emerged as profit centres capable of impacting on the income of hotels. Increasing numbers of hoteliers have come to recognise the growth and popularity of the spa market in hotels. The purpose of this study is to explore client's expectations and perceptions of Hotel Spas and their services in eThekweni. By exploring client's essentials and expectations, we will be able to provide client's needs, and meet their expectations. This information could then aid in institutions and spa/hotel industry.

Risk or Discomforts to the Participant: There will be no risks or discomfort to you should you choose to participate. The information obtained will not be shared with the spa that you go to. All responses will be coded to protect confidentiality and will be discussed as a whole rather than for individual responses.

Benefits: By participating you will allow an increase in the knowledge of client's expectations and perceptions of Hotel Spas and their services in eThekweni

Reason/s why the Participant may be withdrawn from the study: Should you decide that you would like to withdraw from the study after agreeing to participate you are free to do so, without negative repercussions.

Remuneration: There will be no remuneration for your participation

Costs of the study: There will be no cost to you should you agree to participate

Confidentiality: All completed questionnaires will be confidential. Only the researcher and the research supervisors will have access to the questionnaires. The information will be coded to maintain confidentiality. The results of the study will be made available in the Durban University of Technology library in the form of dissertation. Spas will only receive the information regarding this study after all the data has collectively been analysed, meaning that your individual data will not be available to them

Person to contact in the event of any Problems or Queries:

Please contact the researcher (0733 776 772)/khathisinethemba@yahoo.com, my supervisor (031 3732976)/puckreet@dut.ac.za or the institutional Research Ethics administrator on 031 373 2900/lavishad@dut.ac.za.

Yours sincerely,

Sinethemba Khathi

APPENDIX C

LETTER OF PERMISSION TO THE SPA OWNERS/ MANAGEMENT

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: Permission to interview hotel spa clients in eThekweni

I am a student at the Durban University of Technology registered for a Master's Degree of Technology in Somatology. My research is titled: Client's expectations and perceptions of Hotel Spas and their services in eThekweni.

Brief introduction and Purpose of the study:

The purpose of this study is to explore client's expectations and perceptions of Hotel Spas and their services in eThekweni. By exploring client's essentials and expectations, we will be able to provide client's needs, and meet their expectations. This information could then aid in institutions and spa/hotel industry.

I would like permission to conduct this study at your spa. There will be no cost incurred to you should your clients agree to clients partake in my study. Their participation will be voluntary and refusal to participate will not result in adverse consequences to either the company or client. Interview appointment will be made between participant and a researcher.

Should a client wish to partake, their participation will be confidential, the information obtained from them will be confidential and will be coded and pooled with that of other clients participating. This will ensure confidentiality and anonymity to your spa. Should you allow me to conduct my research at your spa, your spa name will not appear in any of the data collected and analysed, therefore your individual data will not be identified to you.

Procedures:

Once permission has been obtained from the spa owner to conduct the study, a suitable time will be arranged for the researcher to visit the spa to live an advertisement in the reception desk. Those wanting to participate will contact a researcher directly, they will get informed consent form, the questionnaire to be completed and set date for interview. Questionnaire will be administered and collected on a date of interview session. Participant's names and other identifiers will not be placed on the questionnaires. Separate ballot boxes will be used to store the letter of information, informed consent and the questionnaire to ensure confidentiality.

Confidentiality:

All information (company name as well as the individual client's name) is confidential and the results will be used for research purposes only. Therefore the spa chosen to participate in the

study will remain anonymous and confidential. Please do not hesitate to ask any questions on any aspect of this study.

Risk/Discomfort and Cost:

There is no risk/discomfort or cost involved from your company or client as a result of your collective participation in the study

Benefits:

Your full co-operation in participating will allow an increase in the expanding knowledge of Client's expectations and perceptions of Hotel Spas and their services in eThekweni and thus improve service quality in the industry.

Persons to contact with problems or questions

Should you have any questions that you want answered by an independent source, you can contact my supervisors on the above number. If you are not satisfied with any aspect of this study, feel free to forward any concerns to the Durban University of Technology Research and Ethics Committee.

Please complete below:

I agree / do not agree to allow Miss S. Khathi to conduct her research at

..... spa.

Full Name

Signature

Date

Yours sincerely,

Miss. S Khathi
B. Tech: Somatology

Mrs. Wagner
MSocSci: Health Promotion

Professor Puckree
Ph.D

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. What type of services do you expect from a spa?
2. What do you expect from your spa experience?
3. What type of qualities do you think a spa should have?
 - Why do you think spas should have these qualities?
 - Why are these qualities important?
4. Do you expect a spa to look or feel a certain way?
 - How?
5. Is the service that you receive when you are at a spa important to your spa experience?
 - How so?
6. What are the factors that help you choose a spa?
7. Do you provide feedback about the spa?
8. Do you get consistent quality at the spa?
9. What do you look for from the time you enter a spa to the time you leave a spa?
10. What makes you change the spas that you visit?

APPENDIX E

QUESTIONNAIRE

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC

Please tick ☒ the most appropriate box

1. How old are you?
20 – 29 ☐ 30 – 39 ☐ 40 – 49 ☐ 50 – 59 ☐
2. What is your gender? Male ☐ Female ☐ Other ☐
3. What is your race group?
African ☐ Coloured ☐ Indian ☐ White ☐
If other was selected, please specify:.....
4. What is your occupation?.....
5. What spa therapy or treatment/s do you associate a hotel spa with?
Massages ☐ Facials ☐ Manicures ☐ Pedicure ☐ Body wraps ☐

Reflexology ☐ Nail treatment ☐ Detox ☐ All the above ☐ Other ☐
Specify:.....
6. What treatment/s would you say is your most preferred?
Massages ☐ Facials ☐ Manicures ☐ Pedicure ☐ Body wraps ☐

Reflexology ☐ Nail treatment ☐ Detox ☐ All the above ☐ Other ☐
If you have selected other, please specify:.....
7. On average, how many times per month do you visit a spa?
Once ☐ Twice ☐ Thrice ☐ Other ☐
If you have selected other, please specify:.....
8. Do you only book for spa treatments during overnight stays at the hotel?
Yes ☐ No ☐

SECTION B: Please rate the following statements based on what you expect and what you actually received
1=strongly disagree, 5= strongly agree

NB. Kindly ignore the superscripted (small) numbers, it is for statistical purposes

NB. Kindly ignore the superscripted (small) numbers, it is for statistical purposes		ANSWER BOTH A AND B CATEGORY										
		A					B					
		This is what you EXPECT					This is what you ACTUALLY RECEIVED					
Tangible	1.1	Modern looking layout and equipment	1 ⁰	2 ¹	3 ²	4 ³	5 ⁴	1 ⁰	2 ¹	3 ²	4 ³	5 ⁴
	1.2	Physical facilities that are visually appealing	1 ⁰	2 ¹	3 ²	4 ³	5 ⁴	1 ⁰	2 ¹	3 ²	4 ³	5 ⁴
	1.3	Employees are neat and professional in appearance	1 ⁰	2 ¹	3 ²	4 ³	5 ⁴	1 ⁰	2 ¹	3 ²	4 ³	5 ⁴
	1.4	Material associated with the spa such as pamphlet informative	1 ⁰	2 ¹	3 ²	4 ³	5 ⁴	1 ⁰	2 ¹	3 ²	4 ³	5 ⁴
Reliability	2.1	When an employee promises to do something by certain time, they do so	1 ⁰	2 ¹	3 ²	4 ³	5 ⁴	1 ⁰	2 ¹	3 ²	4 ³	5 ⁴
	2.2	When a client has a problem, the spa shows a sincere interest in solving it	1 ⁰	2 ¹	3 ²	4 ³	5 ⁴	1 ⁰	2 ¹	3 ²	4 ³	5 ⁴
	2.3	Performing the service right the first time e.g. attending query, and proving quotes etc.	1 ⁰	2 ¹	3 ²	4 ³	5 ⁴	1 ⁰	2 ¹	3 ²	4 ³	5 ⁴
	2.4	Providing the advice related to the service	1 ⁰	2 ¹	3 ²	4 ³	5 ⁴	1 ⁰	2 ¹	3 ²	4 ³	5 ⁴
Responsiveness	3.1	Inform clients exactly when the service will be offered	1 ⁰	2 ¹	3 ²	4 ³	5 ⁴	1 ⁰	2 ¹	3 ²	4 ³	5 ⁴
	3.2	All staff are always willing to help clients politely	1 ⁰	2 ¹	3 ²	4 ³	5 ⁴	1 ⁰	2 ¹	3 ²	4 ³	5 ⁴
	3.3	All staff are never too busy to respond to customer request	1 ⁰	2 ¹	3 ²	4 ³	5 ⁴	1 ⁰	2 ¹	3 ²	4 ³	5 ⁴
	3.4.	The spa gives prompt service to clients	1 ⁰	2 ¹	3 ²	4 ³	5 ⁴	1 ⁰	2 ¹	3 ²	4 ³	5 ⁴
Assurance	4.1	The behaviour of staff instils confidence in clients	1 ⁰	2 ¹	3 ²	4 ³	5 ⁴	1 ⁰	2 ¹	3 ²	4 ³	5 ⁴
	4.2	A client feels safe in their relationship with the spa	1 ⁰	2 ¹	3 ²	4 ³	5 ⁴	1 ⁰	2 ¹	3 ²	4 ³	5 ⁴
	4.3	Staff are consistently courteous with clients	1 ⁰	2 ¹	3 ²	4 ³	5 ⁴	1 ⁰	2 ¹	3 ²	4 ³	5 ⁴
	4.4	Staff have knowledge to answer clients' questions	1 ⁰	2 ¹	3 ²	4 ³	5 ⁴	1 ⁰	2 ¹	3 ²	4 ³	5 ⁴
Empathy	5.1	Spa gives clients individual attention as requested	1 ⁰	2 ¹	3 ²	4 ³	5 ⁴	1 ⁰	2 ¹	3 ²	4 ³	5 ⁴
	5.2	Staff give clients personal attention	1 ⁰	2 ¹	3 ²	4 ³	5 ⁴	1 ⁰	2 ¹	3 ²	4 ³	5 ⁴
	5.3	The operating hours are convenient to clients	1 ⁰	2 ¹	3 ²	4 ³	5 ⁴	1 ⁰	2 ¹	3 ²	4 ³	5 ⁴
	5.4	The spa is willing to accommodate the clients requests where applicable	1 ⁰	2 ¹	3 ²	4 ³	5 ⁴	1 ⁰	2 ¹	3 ²	4 ³	5 ⁴

APPENDIX F

SPA ATTRIBUTE CHECK LIST

Hotel		Contact number		
Spa		Date		
		Yes	No	Comment
1.	Facilities			
1.1	Reception			
1.2	Staff room/break room			
1.3	Kitchen			
1.4	Private treatment rooms with shower facilities			
1.5	Rest and relaxation area			
1.6	Changing facilities with lockers			
1.7	Fitness facility or gym			
1.8	Retail space			
1.9	Administrative space			
1.10	The equipment & facilities are modern			
1.11	Parking space is adequate			
1.12	All signs in the spa are clear			
1.13	Size of bed			
1.14	Quality of linen			
1.15	Size of treatment rooms			
2.	Service and attributes			
2.1	The music and sound used is appropriate			
2.2	Complimentary or samples homecare products			
2.3	Healthy food catering			

2.4	Bath robes, towels and slippers			
2.5	Drinks			
2.6	Cleanliness and hygiene			
2.7	Quiet area			
2.8	Decoration or theme			
2.9	Natural surroundings			
2.10	The environment of the spa is safe.			
2.11	The spa has convenient operating hours			
2.12	The spa offers a good variety of treatments			
2.13	The employees are well groomed			
2.14	The products used are of trustworthy brands			
2.15	Packages			
2.16	Discounts			
2.17	Signature treatments			
2.18	Loyalty program			
3.	Water treatments			
3.1	Hydrotherapy bath			
3.2	Floatation			
3.3	Blitz/Scotch shower			
3.4	Swiss/Vichy shower			
3.5	Kneipp therapy			
3.6	Steam treatments			
3.7	Swimming pool			

(Harrison and Scott 2006: 20, Lo 2015: 167, Kucukusta 2013: 566, Boonyarit 2011: 75)

APPENDIX G

Benefits:

Your full co-operation in participating will allow an increase in the expanding knowledge of Client's expectations and perceptions of Hotel Spas and their services in eThekweni and thus improve service quality in the industry.

Persons to contact with problems or questions

Should you have any questions that you want answered by an independent source, you can contact my supervisors on the above number. If you are not satisfied with any aspect of this study, feel free to forward any concerns to the Durban University of Technology Research and Ethics Committee.

Please complete below:

I agree / ~~do not agree~~ to allow Miss S. Khathi to conduct her research at
Sandawana Spa

Claire Ramble

Full Name

Yours sincerely,



Signature

31 October 2016

Date

Miss. S Khathi
B. Tech: Somatology

Mrs. Wagner
MSocSci: Health Promotion

Professor Puckree
Ph.D

APPENDIX H

Benefits:

Your full co-operation in participating will allow an increase in the expanding knowledge of Client's expectations and perceptions of Hotel Spas and their services in eThekweni and thus improve service quality in the industry.

Persons to contact with problems or questions

Should you have any questions that you want answered by an independent source, you can contact my supervisors on the above number. If you are not satisfied with any aspect of this study, feel free to forward any concerns to the Durban University of Technology Research and Ethics Committee.

Please complete below:

I agree / ~~do not agree~~ to allow Miss S. Khathi to conduct her research at

RIVERSIDE SPA..... spa.

Thandeka Sandile



04/10/16

Full Name

Signature

Date

Yours sincerely,

Miss. S Khathi
B. Tech: Somatology

Mrs. Wagner
MSocSci: Health Promotion

Professor Puckree
Ph.D

APPENDIX I

Benefits:

Your full co-operation in participating will allow an increase in the expanding knowledge of Client's expectations and perceptions of Hotel Spas and their services in eThekweni and thus improve service quality in the industry.

Persons to contact with problems or questions

Should you have any questions that you want answered by an independent source, you can contact my supervisors on the above number. If you are not satisfied with any aspect of this study, feel free to forward any concerns to the Durban University of Technology Research and Ethics Committee.

Please complete below:

I agree / do not agree to allow Miss S. Khathi to conduct her research at

FLOR DE US (DURBAN NORTH) spa.

SIMONE PATHEAL

Full Name



Signature

27/09/2016

Date

Yours sincerely,

Miss. S Khathi
B. Tech: Somatology

Mrs. Wagner
MSocSci: Health Promotion

Professor Puckree
Ph.D

APPENDIX J

Benefits:

Your full co-operation in participating will allow an increase in the expanding knowledge of Client's expectations and perceptions of Hotel Spas and their services in eThekweni and thus improve service quality in the industry.

Persons to contact with problems or questions

Should you have any questions that you want answered by an independent source, you can contact my supervisors on the above number. If you are not satisfied with any aspect of this study, feel free to forward any concerns to the Durban University of Technology Research and Ethics Committee.

Please complete below:

I agree / ~~do not agree~~ to allow Miss S. Khathi to conduct research at
..... FIEN DE LIS CMT spa.

SIMONE PATHE

Full Name

Yours sincerely,


Signature

27/09/2016
Date

Miss. S Khathi
B. Tech: Somatology

Mrs. Wagner
MSocSci: Health Promotion

Professor Puckree
Ph.D

APPENDIX K

Benefits:

Your full co-operation in participating will allow an increase in the expanding knowledge of Client's expectations and perceptions of Hotel Spas and their services in eThekweni and thus improve service quality in the industry.

Persons to contact with problems or questions

Should you have any questions that you want answered by an independent source, you can contact my supervisors on the above number. If you are not satisfied with any aspect of this study, feel free to forward any concerns to the Durban University of Technology Research and Ethics Committee.

Please complete below:

I agree / do not agree to allow Miss S. Khathi to conduct research at

The Bali Grand Lodge Spa spa.

Garth Bogle

Full Name

Signature

Date

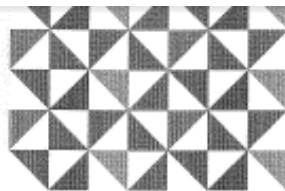
Yours sincerely,

Miss. S Khathi
B. Tech: Somatology

Mrs. Wagner
MSocSci: Health Promotion

Professor Puckree
Ph.D

APPENDIX L



Durban University of Technology

P O Box 1334, Durban, South Africa, 4001

Tel: 031 373 2375

Email: lavishad@dut.ac.za

http://www.dut.ac.za/research/institutional_research_ethics

www.dut.ac.za

13 March 2017

IREC Reference Number: **REC 92/16**

Ms S Khathi
82 Mambambo Road
Cato Manor Housing
Shayamoya
4091

Dear Ms Khathi

Client's expectations, perception and experience of hotel spas and their services in eThekwin Municipality

The Institutional Research Ethics Committee acknowledges receipt of your final data collection tool for review.

We are pleased to inform you that the questionnaire has been approved. Kindly ensure that participants used for the pilot study are not part of the main study.

In addition, the IREC acknowledges receipt of your gatekeeper permission letters.

Please note that FULL APPROVAL is granted to your research proposal. You may proceed with data collection.

Yours Sincerely,



Professor J K Adam
Chairperson: IREC

