

"Predicting Behavioral Intentions of Chinese Tourists in Chiang Mai Spas: An SEM Analysis of Experiential Marketing and Service Quality"

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ABSTRACT

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This study investigates the impact of experiential marketing and service quality on customer satisfaction and behavioral intention among Chinese tourists visiting spa establishments in Chiang Mai, Thailand, using structural equation modeling (SEM). Data collected from 420 Chinese tourists through a self-administered survey were analyzed using AMOS v. 26. The results indicate that both experiential marketing and service quality significantly influence customer satisfaction and behavioral intentions. Notably, experiential marketing ($\beta = 0.210$, $p = 0.057$) and service quality ($\beta = 0.360$,

$p = 0.001$) have a significant positive impact on customer satisfaction, which in turn strongly affects behavioral intentions ($\beta = 0.635$, $p = 0.000$). These findings underscore the importance of crafting engaging experiential marketing initiatives and providing superior service quality to enhance customer satisfaction and foster positive behavioral intentions among Chinese tourists in Chiang Mai's spa industry. The study contributes to the understanding of Chinese tourist behavior in the spa industry and provides practical valuable insights for spa managers seeking to improve customer experiences and promote repeat business.

Keywords: Experiential Marketing, Service Quality, Behavior Intention, Spa Establishments.

Introduction

The tourism industry is a dynamic and ever-evolving sector, with tourist behavior constantly shifting in response to global trends and technological advancements. Understanding these evolving behaviors is crucial for tourism businesses, particularly in destinations like Chiang Mai, Thailand, where the spa industry has witnessed substantial growth and is a significant contributor to the local economy. Currently, many consumers are more interested in and concerned about their physical and mental health due to the fast-paced and long working hours, which results in fatigue. Moreover, consumers today have to face various health-damaging pollutions, along with the advancement of medical science and the ease of access to various health information sources, making consumers more knowledgeable and taking care of their health (Murray et al., 2017). Therefore, there are preventative and health-promoting activities, such as spa treatments, massages, exercise programs, and healthy food consumption. Thai spa is unique in providing holistic health care services by using science, art, and massage techniques to relax the body and mind as the main elements. It has also laid the foundation of Thai culture and combined the lifestyles of each locality, resulting in the uniqueness of Thai spas in different regions. Therefore, it is popular with Thai and foreign tourists, especially Chinese, Taiwanese, and Korean tourists, including European tourists (Marketeer online, 2020). In 2024, it is expected that foreign tourists, especially Chinese tourists,

will be number one in traveling to Thailand, possibly numbering approximately 5.2 million people. An increase from 2023 with 3.5 million people because the pace of recovery of Chinese tourists visiting Thailand should have the potential to continue accelerating if compared to before COVID-19, which had approximately 11 million people namely, Bangkok, Chiang Mai, Phuket, and Chonburi are the main tourist provinces and popular tourist destinations for Chinese people. A survey of Chinese tourists' travel activities found that 47 % of Chinese tourists travel to visit Exhibitions/Performances, 46% to Bars, and 34 % to SPAs/Massages. (Kasikorn research center, 2024). The spa industry in Chiang Mai faces fierce competition, and attracting and retaining customers, especially from the burgeoning Chinese tourist market, is vital for success. Chinese tourists' preference for spa services. Because of their popularity, spa establishments in Chiang Mai are in a highly competitive market environment, so building loyalty among tourists is key for a health destination's success, not just for business, but also for ensuring responsible practices. (Zhang, et al., 2023). The realization of high-quality international health tourism in Chiang Mai necessitates the development of a distinct Lanna spa service model. Establishing exceptional standards that embody a unique Lanna identity and achieve international recognition will foster greater satisfaction, interest, and appeal among service recipients. This, in turn, will build confidence domestically and abroad, leading to repeat patronage. Additionally, it is imperative to develop distinctive products with a Lanna identity.

While research has explored the relationship between experiential marketing, service quality, customer satisfaction, and behavioral intention, there remains a gap in understanding the complex interplay of these factors specifically within the context of Chiang Mai's spa industry. Moreover, limited research has employed robust methodologies like Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to analyze these relationships comprehensively.

This study addresses this gap by utilizing SEM to investigate the impact of experiential marketing and service quality on customer satisfaction and behavioral intention among Chinese tourists visiting spa establishments in Chiang Mai. By empirically testing a hypothesized model, this research aims to provide valuable insights for spa managers to develop effective strategies to enhance customer experience, satisfaction, and loyalty. The findings contribute to both the theoretical understanding of tourist behavior and the practical application of marketing strategies within the spa industry.

Objectives

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship factors affecting and its associated consequences which have the specific objectives as follows:

1. To study the importance level of experiential marketing, service quality, and customer satisfaction toward behavior intention of Chinese tourist who the using service spa establishments in Chiang Mai province.
2. To investigate the influence of experiential marketing, service quality, and customer satisfaction toward behavior intention of Chinese tourist who the using service spa establishments in Chiang Mai province.

Based on previous explanation, this research is aimed to find out the

1. Relationship experiential marketing on behavior intention through customer satisfaction.
2. Relationship service quality on behavior intention through customer satisfaction.
3. Consumer satisfaction with behavior intention.

Literature Review

1. Experiential Marketing

Experiential marketing, as defined by Pine and Gilmore (1998), focuses on creating memorable experiences for customers by using services and goods as props to engage them on an emotional and logical level. Schmitt (1999a; 1999b) further emphasized the strategic use of experiential modules to design customer interactions, including sensory, affective, cognitive, physical, and social experiences.

Kartajaya (2010) highlighted the role of experiential marketing in creating loyal customers through positive experiences and favorable perceptions of services and products.

Previous studies have provided evidence of the positive impact of experiential marketing on customer satisfaction and behavioral intention. Sanjaya et al. (2022) found that experiential marketing positively influences both satisfaction and behavioral intention, particularly in aspects like food and beverage display and waiter service. Satchapappichit et al. (2022) demonstrated the direct and indirect influence of experiential marketing on repeat service intention, mediated by consumer response behavior.

However, there is a lack of research specifically investigating the role of experiential marketing within the context of Chiang Mai's spa industry and its impact on Chinese tourists' behavioral intentions. This study aims to fill this gap by examining the influence of experiential marketing on Chinese tourists' satisfaction and their intention to revisit or recommend spas in Chiang Mai.

2. Service Quality

Service quality is a critical factor in the hospitality sector, influencing customer satisfaction and loyalty. Kleisari and Markaki (2019) emphasized the importance of service quality for organizational function and survival in a competitive market. The concept of service quality is often viewed from the customer's perspective, involving the comparison of expected service with the actual service received. The SERVQUAL model, developed by Parasuraman et al. (1985; 1990), provides a framework for assessing service quality based on dimensions such as reliability, assurance, tangibles, empathy, and responsiveness.

Several studies have confirmed the positive relationship between service quality, customer satisfaction, and behavioral intentions. González et al. (2007) demonstrated the importance of service quality in the spa industry for customer satisfaction and behavioral intentions. Dagger et al. (2007) developed a hierarchical model to assess service quality in healthcare, highlighting its role in patient satisfaction and behavioral intentions.

Despite these findings, limited research has examined the specific impact of service quality on Chinese tourists' behavioral intentions within the Chiang Mai spa industry. This study aims to contribute to this area by investigating the influence of service quality on Chinese tourists' satisfaction and their intention to revisit or recommend spas in Chiang Mai.

3. Customer Satisfaction and Behavioral Intention

Customer satisfaction is a crucial determinant of behavioral intention, influencing repeat patronage and positive word-of-mouth recommendations. Satisfied customers are more likely to have higher consumption levels, stronger repurchase intentions, and greater willingness to recommend products or services. Numerous studies have established customer satisfaction as a significant predictor of behavioral intentions in various contexts, including tourism and hospitality.

González and Brea (2005) specifically demonstrated the positive influence of customer satisfaction on behavioral intentions in Spanish health spas. Sun (2023) highlighted the importance of satisfaction in predicting customer intention, particularly in usage behavior and recommendation intention. Clemen et al. (2020) found that customer satisfaction plays a mediating role between service quality and behavioral intention, as well as between perceived value and behavioral intention.

However, the specific relationship between customer satisfaction and behavioral intention among Chinese tourists in Chiang Mai's spa industry remains under-researched. This study aims to address this gap by examining the mediating role of customer satisfaction in the relationship between experiential marketing, service quality, and behavioral intention.

H3: Relationship customer satisfaction on behavior intention.

4. Relationship experiential marketing on behavior intention through customer satisfaction.

Pine & Gilmore (1998) explains that experiential marketing emerges when a business creates a stage with services and uses goods as props for customers. When services are intangible and products are tangible, experiences are memorable. Moreover, four main elements of experiential marketing were developed: (1) an emphasis on consumer experiences; (2) a concentration on purchase as a holistic experience; (3) an assumption that consumers are logical and emotional beings; and (4) a knowledge that methods and instruments are assorted. The concept of strategic experience modules (SEMs) that administrators can use to develop suitable kinds of customer interactions for their customers was suggested by Schmitt (1999a; 1999b). In experiential marketing, the experiential modules to be handled include sensory experiences (sense), affective experiences (feel), imaginative cognitive experiences (think), physical experiences, activities and lifestyles (ACT), and perceptions of life experiences arising from a reference community or culture (relate). Thus, why can be supposed that experiential marketing aims to build experiences having holistic integration at the same time.

According to Kartajaya (2010) explain that experiential marketing is a marketing strategy that falls under the customer experience management umbrella and aims to create loyal consumers. It is carried out by evoking pleasant feelings in customers via positive experiences and a favorable effect on their services and products. The study looked at causal connections between various experiences and the three dependent variables of satisfaction return intention, and word of mouth (WOM) among US citizens who had visited a tourist destination in the previous six months. Based on previous studies, and in research of Sanjaya, Rumini, Lasmini, Sarjana, & Marheni (2022) found that experiential marketing has a positive influence on satisfaction, while experiential marketing has a positive influence on behavioral intention. This study has important implications related to aspects that affect visitor satisfaction, such as food and beverage display and waiter service, making visitors willing to spread word of mouth, talk about the customer experience during the visit and invite friends to come back again. While (Satchapappichit, Mookda & Khamkhong, 2022) found that experiential marketing has a direct influence on repeat service intention and an indirect influence through consumer response behavior, and consumer response behavior has a direct influence on consumer repeat service intention. Therefore, spa operators adopt and use experiential marketing to generate consumer response behavior and make consumers come back to use the service.

H1: Relationship experiential marketing on customer satisfaction.

H4: Relationship experiential marketing on behavior intention.

5. Relationship service quality on behavior intention through customer satisfaction

Service quality (SQ) is strategically important in the hospitality sector from both the company's and customers' viewpoints. Hence, it is crucial for every organization's function and survival in such a competitive era (Kleisari & Markaki, 2019). Service quality is an issue that receives a lot of attention and importance. Service quality is a complex matter that depends on the perspective or viewpoint of consumers, commonly called "customers" (Harriet, Arthur, Komunda & Mugizi, 2024). Service quality is the concept and practice of evaluating service recipients by comparing the expected service with the service provider's actual service (perception service). The service provider can provide services consistent with the service recipient's needs or create a service that is at a higher level than the service recipient expects. The concepts and development of the SERVQUAL model of Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry (1985; 1990) came from research on factors influencing the creation of service quality consists of 5 main dimensions such as (1) Reliability (2) Assurance (3) Tangible (4) Empathy and (5) Responsiveness (Zeithaml, Parasuraman, & Berry, 1990; Lovelock, 1996).

In the literature concerning the spa establishments, González et al. (2007) demonstrate the importance of service quality on customer satisfaction as well as on behavior intentions, and the authors also demonstrate a significant causal relationship between service quality and satisfaction. The authors also point out that a high level of service quality in the spa industry leads to a high level of customer satisfaction, which leads to favorable behavior intentions. Similarly, Dagger, Sweeney et al.

(2007) developed a hierarchical model to reflect service quality perceptions in the health care industry and found that health service quality has been identified as an important determinant of patient satisfaction and behavior intentions. According to Chea (2022) found that customer satisfaction has a direct impact on customer behavioral intention, while service quality and customer satisfaction act as mediators between service quality and behavioral intention. In addition, service quality also has a significant influence on customer satisfaction, and on the other hand, in the research of Puangniyom & Choibamroong (2021) found that spa service quality having a direct influence on satisfaction but not on customer loyalty. The authors also suggest that a high level of customer satisfaction results from a high level of perceived service quality.

H2: Relationship service quality on customer satisfaction.

H5: Relationship service quality on behavior intention.

Research Hypotheses

Based on the literature review, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H1: Experiential marketing has a positive effect on customer satisfaction.

H2: Service quality has a positive effect on customer satisfaction.

H3: Customer satisfaction has a positive effect on behavioral intention.

H4: Experiential marketing has a positive effect on behavioral intention.

H5: Service quality has a positive effect on behavioral intention.

Conceptual Framework

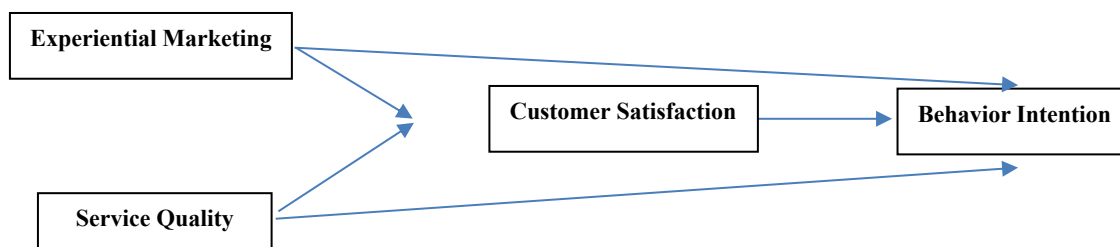


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

Research Methodology

This study employs a quantitative research design using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to examine the complex relationships between experiential marketing, service quality, customer satisfaction, and behavioral intention of Chinese tourists visiting spa establishments in Chiang Mai, Thailand. SEM is chosen for its ability to test multiple and interrelated dependence relationships simultaneously, making it suitable for analyzing the hypothesized model.

1. Population and Samples

The study acknowledges the limitations of the accidental sampling method used. While this non-probability sampling technique may introduce bias, it was selected due to the challenges in obtaining a representative sample of Chinese tourists visiting various spa establishments in Chiang Mai. Despite its limitations, accidental sampling is commonly used in tourism research when access to the target population is restricted. To mitigate potential bias, the study ensured a large sample size of 420 respondents, exceeding the minimum requirement for SEM analysis. This larger sample size helps

improve the generalizability of findings and reduces the standard error, enhancing the accuracy of statistical estimations. To meet the requirements of Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), the researcher ensured the sample size was large enough, following Hair et al. (2010), who recommend a sample size of at least 400 to minimize the standard error and improve statistical accuracy.

2. Research Instrument

The data were collected using a self-administered questionnaire developed for this study. Responses to all items, except demographic questions, were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly agree" (5) to "strongly disagree" (1). All items, except demographic questions, were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree."

The questionnaire was developed based on established scales and theories, ensuring content validity. The questions related to experiential marketing experiential marketing framework, measuring various dimensions of customer experience were adapted from Schmitt's studies (1999a; 1999b), while the service quality measurements the SERVQUAL model by Parasuraman et al. (1990), assessing dimensions such as reliability, assurance, tangibles, empathy, and responsiveness were based on the framework developed by Zeithaml, Parasuraman, and Berry (1990). Items related to customer satisfaction and behavioral intention were derived from prior studies and items were derived from prior studies measuring these constructions in the tourism and hospitality context. This comprehensive instrument was designed to capture the variables necessary for the SEM analysis effectively.

To ensure the reliability and validity of the questionnaire, a pilot test was conducted with a small sample of Chinese tourists. Based on the pilot test results, minor revisions were made to improve clarity and address any potential issues.

3. Data Collection

The data collection process involved distributing the questionnaires directly to the target respondents. The study utilized a self-administered survey to ensure convenience and efficiency in obtaining responses from Chinese tourists at spa establishments in Chiang Mai. The researchers adhered to the criteria for SEM, ensuring the sample size was sufficient to provide reliable statistical estimations. As noted by Hair et al. (2010), a larger sample size is crucial for reducing standard errors and avoiding technical issues in SEM. The selection of 420 respondents aligned with these requirements and ensured consistency with population parameters.

4. Data Analysis

For data analysis, the researcher uses AMOS v.26 software to conduct SEM analysis to examine the relationships among experiential marketing, service quality, customer satisfaction, and behavioral intention. SEM was chosen for its ability to estimate multiple and interrelated dependence relationships simultaneously. The analysis followed Hair et al.'s (2010) guidelines, emphasizing the importance of using a sufficient sample size to ensure accurate estimation of statistical parameters. The study also accounted for potential biases arising from the sampling technique by adopting robust statistical methods to validate the findings.

The analysis process involved two main steps 1. **Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA):** CFA was performed to assess the measurement model and ensure the reliability and validity of the constructs. Model fit indices such as the Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI), and Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) were used to evaluate the model fit. Items with low factor loadings or those negatively impacting model fit were removed. 2. **Structural Model Analysis:** After confirming the measurement model, the structural model was analyzed to test the hypothesized relationships between the constructs.

Standardized path coefficients and their significance levels were examined to determine the strength and direction of the relationships. Model fit indices were again used to assess the overall fit of the structural model.

Results

1. Descriptive Statistics

A total of 400 valid responses were collected from Chinese tourists who had experienced spa services in Chiang Mai. The majority of respondents were female (83%), aged between 35 and 39 years old (41%), employed in private business/business owner roles (59%), and held a bachelor's degree (65%). Most respondents reported a monthly income ranging from 180,001 to 200,000 Thai Baht and visited the spa with friends and family (69.27%).

2. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

CFA was conducted to assess the measurement model and ensure the reliability and validity of the constructions. The results indicated that all constructions (experiential marketing, service quality, customer satisfaction, and behavioral intention) exhibited good reliability and validity.

Experiential marketing. Based on AMOS output in Table 1, it can be seen that standardized loading factors value from each observed variables are ≥ 0.50 , which means these all of observed variables are valid and significant statistically. Based on Hair, Joseph, Black, Babin, and Andersen (2010), the good reliability is if the Construct Reliability (CR) $0.97 \geq 0.70$ and Variance Extracted (VE) is $0.83 \geq 0.50$. From the output calculation in Table 1 below, all of the dimensions have good reliability (X1, X2, X3, X4, X5). The measurement equations for observed overall t-value produced for each observed variables are ≥ 1.96 which means that all of items are significant statistically with 5% level of significance.

Table 1
Validity and Reliability of Experiential marketing

Indicator	Standard loading factor (SLF) ≥ 0.5	t-value	Standard error	CR ≥ 0.70	AVE ≥ 0.50	Remark
Experiential Marketing				0.97	0.85	Reliable
X ₁	0.88	14.76	0.38			Valid
X ₂	0.82	13.60	0.38			Valid
X ₃	0.93	13.13	0.38			Valid
X ₄	0.91	15.46	0.44			Valid
X ₅	0.89	16.42	0.35			Valid

Note. Source: Questionnaire, processed by AMOS v. 26.

All observed variables had standardized loading factors ≥ 0.50 , indicating good validity. The construct reliability (CR) was 0.97, and the average variance extracted (AVE) was 0.85, exceeding the recommended thresholds of 0.70 and 0.50, respectively. All t-values were significant ($p < 0.05$).

Service quality. The output calculation on Table 3 below shows that all of the dimensions have good reliability (X₆, X₇, X₈, X₉, X₁₀). The measurement equations for observed overall t-value produced for each observed variable is 1.96 which means that all of items are significant statistically with 5% level of significance.

Table 2
Validity and Reliability of Service Quality

Indicator	Standard loading factor (SLF) ≥ 0.5	t-value	Standard error	CR ≥ 0.70	AVE ≥ 0.50	Remark
Perceived service quality				0.98	0.91	Reliable
X ₆	0.84	12.50	0.47			Valid
X ₇	0.85	15.82	0.44			Valid
X ₈	0.96	16.42	0.40			Valid
X ₉	0.94	15.91	0.45			Valid
X ₁₀	0.89	16.42	0.33			Valid

Note. Source: Questionnaire, processed by AMOS v. 26.

Service Quality: The CR was 0.98, and the AVE was 0.91, demonstrating good reliability. All observed variables had standardized loading factors ≥ 0.50 and significant t-values ($p < 0.05$).

The output calculation on Table 4 below shows that all of the dimensions have good reliability (Y₁, Y₂, Y₃). The measurement equations for observed overall t-value produced for each observed variable is 1.96 which means that all of items are significant statistically with 5% level of significance.

Table 3
Validity and Reliability of Customer Satisfaction

Indicator	Standard loading factor (SLF) ≥ 0.5	t-value	Standard error	CR ≥ 0.70	AVE ≥ 0.50	Remark
Customer satisfaction				0.97	0.91	Reliable
Y ₁	0.89	14.82	0.33			Valid
Y ₂	0.96	19.18	0.26			Valid
Y ₃	0.90	15.28	0.30			Valid

Note. Source: Questionnaire, processed by AMOS v. 26.

Customer Satisfaction: The CR was 0.97, and the AVE was 0.91, indicating good reliability. All observed variables had standardized loading factors ≥ 0.50 and significant t-values ($p < 0.05$).

Table 4

Validity and Reliability of Behavior intention

Behavior intention. The output calculation on Table 3 below shows that all of the dimensions have good reliability (Y₄, Y₅, Y₆). The measurement equations for observed overall t-value produced for each observed variable is 1.96 which means that all of items are significant statistically with 5% level of significance.

Indicator	Standard loading factor (SLF) ≥ 0.5	t-value	Standard error	CR ≥ 0.70	AVE ≥ 0.50	Remark
Behavior intention				0.97	0.86	Reliable
Y ₄	0.85	15.84	0.29			Valid
Y ₅	0.88	16.06	0.35			Valid
Y ₆	0.97	18.11	0.32			Valid

Note. Source: Questionnaire, processed by AMOS v. 26.

Behavioral Intention: The CR was 0.97, and the AVE was 0.86, demonstrating good reliability. All observed variables had standardized loading factors ≥ 0.50 and significant t-values ($p < 0.05$).

Measurement Model

Prior to the consideration of the structural link, the construct validity of the research instrument was estimated by evaluating the fit of the individual as well as the overall model. The assessment was done by using AMOS v. 26. The results of the examination pointed out a number of invalid indicators from each variable which leads to the unreliability of the initial model. Model revision, done by excluding the invalid items from each variable, was then conducted. The results of the revision suggested a good fit of the revised model, indicates the model to be both valid and reliable and thus grants the acceptability of the revised model to be used in this study.

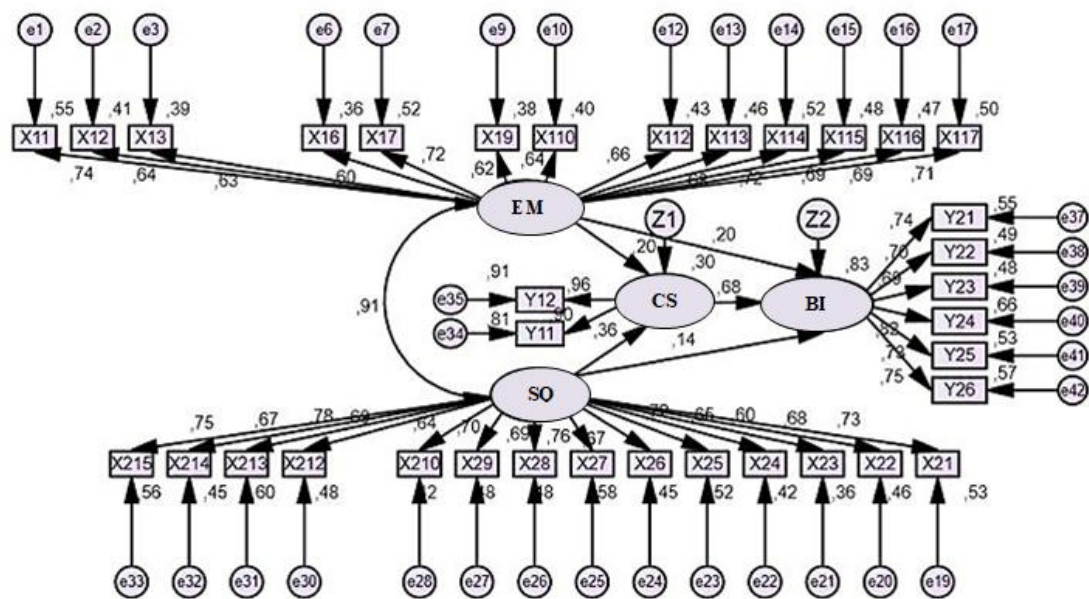


Figure 2 Standardized SEM Analysis Result

Structural Model Analysis

After doing the calculation and analysis of CFA, the next step researcher takes is an analysis of the structural model, consisting of: (1) model fit test; and (2) the analysis of causal relationships. Structural model fit test. From analysis below (see Table 5) can be seen that not all measurements of goodness of fit show good fit value and marginal fit. However, this model is qualified as a good model, because the main measurements used is RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation) value (Hair et al., 2010). In this model, RMSEA is exactly < 0.10 which is 0.076, shows that overall model is good fit or marginal fit and has good degree of precision.

Table 5

Fit Test (Goodness of Fit Structural Model)

Measurements GOF (goodness of fit)	Standard of measurement	Estimation result	Description
Measurement of absolute fit			
GFI (goodness of fit index)	GFI > 0.90	0.85	Marginal fit
RMSEA	< 0.074 RMSEA 0.088	0.081	Good fit
Measurement of absolute fit			
NNFI (non-normed fit index)	NNFI ≥ 0.90	0.98	Good fit

NFI (normed fit index)	NFI ≥ 0.90	0.98	Good fit
AGFI (adjusted goodness of fit index)	AGFI ≥ 0.90	0.82	Marginal fit
RFI (relative fit index)	RFI > 0.90	0.98	Good fit
IFI (incremental fit index)	IFI > 0.90	0.99	Good fit
CFI (comparative fit index)	CFI ≥ 0.90	0.99	Good fit

Note. Source: Questionnaire, processed by AMOS v. 26.

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)

The SEM analysis was conducted to test the hypothesized relationships between the constructions. The model fit indices indicated a good fit of the model to the data: $\chi^2 = 46.89$, $df = 36$, $\chi^2/df = 1.30$, $p\text{-value} = 0.11$, $GFI = 0.85$, $AGFI = 0.82$, $CFI = 0.99$, $RMR = 0.02$, $RMSEA = 0.081$. The standardized path coefficients and their significance levels are presented in Table 6.

Discussion

Based on the results of the discussion and analysis that has been done related to the influencing factors of behavior intention of Chinese tourists in spa establishments in Chiang Mai province through experiential marketing and service quality. The results of correlation and significance tests provide the empirical data that support all of the hypotheses proposed in this study (H1-H5), thus granting the acceptability of all of the hypotheses proposed (Table 6 and 7)

Table 6

Hypotheses Testing (a)

Hypothesis	Estimate	S.E	C.R	P-Value	Conclusion
H1: Experiential marketing $\rightarrow$ Customer satisfaction	0.210	0.228	1.921	0.057	Significant
H2: Service quality $\rightarrow$ Customer satisfaction	0.360	0.219	1.641	0.001	Significant
H3: Customer satisfaction $\rightarrow$ Behavior intention	0.635	0.066	9.692	0.000	Significant
H4: Experiential Marketing $\rightarrow$ Behavior intention	0.196	0.143	1.371	0.050	Significant
H5: Service quality $\rightarrow$ Behavior intention	0.135	0.136	1.996	0.019	Significant

Note. Source: Questionnaire, processed by AMOS v. 26.

Analysis of hypothesis testing is performed with a 5% significance level resulting in a t-value ± 1.96 . The hypothesis was accepted when the t-value obtained ≥ 1.96 , on the other side of the hypothesis will be rejected when the t-value obtained ≤ 1.96 . Based on this t-value, we can see that this model can support the data. The conclusion of hypothesis testing shows (see Table 7) that two hypotheses declined, they are:

Table 7

Hypotheses Testing (b)

Hypothesis	Description	Conclusion
H1	Relationship experiential marketing on customer satisfaction.	Hypothesis accepted
H2	Relationship service quality on customer satisfaction.	Hypothesis accepted
H3	Relationship customer satisfaction on behavior intention.	Hypothesis accepted

H4	Relationship experiential marketing on behavior intention.	Hypothesis accepted
H5	Relationship service quality on behavior intention.	Hypothesis accepted

Note. Source: Questionnaire, processed by AMOS v. 26.

The purpose of this study is to determine the relationship between experiential marketing and service quality to customer satisfaction and behavior intention of Chinese tourists in spa establishments in Chiang Mai province. The SEM analysis revealed that both experiential marketing and service quality significantly influence customer satisfaction, which in turn, positively affects behavioral intention. These findings aligned with previous research highlight the importance of customer experience and service quality in shaping customer satisfaction and loyalty. There are interesting points that can be discussed in the research results as follows:

1. Results of the test of the consistency of the causal model of experiential marketing, service quality, and customer satisfaction toward behavior intention of Chinese tourist who the using service spa establishments in Chiang Mai province show that the developed causal model is consistent with the empirical data, with the Goodness of fit following: $\chi^2 = 46.89$, $df = 36$, $\chi^2 / df = 1.30$, $p\text{-value} = 0.11$, $GFI = 0.85$, $AGFI = 0.82$, $CFI = 0.99$, $RMR = 0.02$, $RMSEA = 0.081$. From the above data, it can be seen that the $GFI = 0.85$ and $CFI = 0.99$ values are greater than 0.90. The chi-squared correlation value (χ^2 / df) is less than 2. $P\text{-value} > 0.05$, $RMSEA = 0.081$ and $RMR = 0.02$ values are less than 0.05 and approach 0 for all values. This shows that the causal model developed from the literature review in this study and the model obtained from empirical data are consistent with each other, indicating that the literature review and the development of the model from real data in this study are accurate and consistent with reality, which is consistent with the research results of Pratminingsih, Astuty, & Widyatami, K. (2018); Khan & Rahman (2014) and Platania et al. (2016) found that the causal model was consistent with the empirical data.

2. From the analysis of the influence of experiential marketing, service quality and customer satisfaction on behavior intention, it was found that;

Experiential marketing influences customer satisfaction and experiential marketing influences behavioral intention. Accept hypotheses 1 and 4. Experiential marketing is a strategy that emphasizes consumers, sees consumers as rational, has feelings and is a strategy that creates satisfaction in terms of experience for consumers, making consumers intend to use the spa services and will use the services again on the next occasion. It can be said that experiential marketing must go sense experience, feel experience, think experience, actions experience and related experience that are linked to the intention to use the service. The results of the research are consistent with the research of Santos do Carmo, Marques, & Dias (2022). The results of the study showed that customer satisfaction was directly positively influenced by emotional and behavioral experiential marketing, while loyalty was directly positively influenced by emotional and behavioral experiences. The results of the study also indicated the existence of an indirect relationship between sensory experiences and emotional experiences, with loyalty having a mediating effect on satisfaction. In addition, Puangniyom & Choibamroong (2021) indicated that spa experience management had positively direct effects on customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. In previous studies by researchers, it was shown that customer experience management has also been shown to have a link to customer satisfaction. And Sanjaya, Rumini, Lasmini, Sarjana, & Marheni (2022) found that experiential marketing has a positive influence on satisfaction, while experiential marketing has a positive influence on behavioral intention. This study has important implications related to aspects that affect visitor satisfaction, such as food and beverage display and waiter service, making visitors willing to spread word of mouth, talk about the customer experience during the visit and invite friends to come back again. While Satchapappichit, Mookda & Khamkhong, (2022) found that experiential marketing has a direct influence on repeat service intention and an indirect influence through consumer response behavior, and consumer response behavior has a direct influence on consumer repeat service intention. Therefore, spa operators adopt and use experiential marketing to generate consumer response behavior and make consumers come back to use the service.

The results support H1 and H4, indicating that experiential marketing positively influences both customer satisfaction and behavioral intention. This suggests that spa establishments can enhance customer satisfaction and encourage repeat visits and recommendations by designing engaging and memorable experiences. The positive relationship between experiential marketing and customer satisfaction confirms the significance of creating engaging and memorable experiences for tourists. This supports the theoretical framework of Pine and Gilmore (1998) and Schmitt (1999a; 1999b), emphasizing the role of sensory, affective, cognitive, physical, and social experiences in shaping customer perceptions and behaviors. The findings also corroborate the work of Sanjaya et al. (2022) and Satchapappichit et al. (2022), who demonstrated the positive impact of experiential marketing on customer satisfaction and behavioral intentions in different contexts.

The factor of spa service quality is a factor that affects customer satisfaction and service quality also affects the behavior and intention of customers who have experience using spa services in Chiang Mai Province. Accept hypotheses 2 and 5, the research results found that service quality consists of reliability, assurance, tangible, empathy, and responsiveness, it is also an important factor in creating customer satisfaction, which causes customers to have behavior and intention leading to repeated use of the service in the future, which is consistent with the results of the research Karsana & Murhadi (2021), it was found that service quality has a significant positive effect on user satisfaction. Service quality has a significant positive effect on behavioral intention, and there is no positive effect on patient satisfaction on behavioral intention. Service quality has a positive effect on behavioral intention. Therefore, increasing patient behavioral intention can be achieved by improving service quality. According to indicate that Chea (2022) found that service quality and customer satisfaction act as mediators between service quality and behavioral intention. In addition, service quality also has a significant influence on customer satisfaction. In addition, a significant relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction in spas, hotels, and resorts was found in the research of many researchers (Sangsri, Ruanguttamanan, Wongkhae, 2021; Mohamad, Hasbollah, & Ab Ghaffar, 2022; Puangniyom & Choibamroong, 2021). The findings support H2 and H5, demonstrating that service quality has a significant positive impact on customer satisfaction and behavioral intention. This highlights the importance of delivering high-quality service to meet customer expectations and foster loyalty. The significant influence of service quality on customer satisfaction and behavioral intention underscores the importance of delivering excellent service to meet customer expectations. This aligns with the SERVQUAL model by Parasuraman et al. (1990), which emphasizes dimensions such as reliability, assurance, tangibles, empathy, and responsiveness in shaping service quality perceptions. The findings are consistent with previous studies by González et al. (2007) and Dagger et al. (2007), who highlighted the importance of service quality in driving customer satisfaction and behavioral intentions in the spa and healthcare industries.

The factor of customer satisfaction is a factor that affects the behavioral intention of customers who have experience using spa services in Chiang Mai Province. Accept hypotheses 3 from the research results, it was found that satisfaction is an important variable that can cause customers to have behavioral intentions leading to repeated use of the service on future occasions. Whether it is experiencing management in marketing or service quality management in spa establishments, it still has to through customer satisfaction as an important factor, consistent with the results of the research Sun (2023), it is shown that the proposed model has moderate power in explaining customer satisfaction, usage behavior, and recommendation intention. Finally, satisfaction is the most important predictor of customer intention and in research of Istiqomah & Fajri (2024) found that customer satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on behavioral intentions, consistent with numerous marketing studies accept that customer satisfaction is an important predictor of behavior intentions. In research of Chieochankitkan (2018) it indicated that customer satisfaction has a direct and positive influence on behavioral intention of customers visiting spa services, while the results of the research may lead to health spa establishments to be aware of the issues of service quality, service value, service interaction, customer satisfaction and behavioral intention to improve services to meet customer needs.

As hypothesized in H3, customer satisfaction plays a crucial role in shaping behavioral intention. Satisfied customers are more likely to return and recommend the spa to others. The strong positive effect of customer satisfaction on behavioral intention confirms its crucial role as a mediator between experiential marketing, service quality, and behavioral intention. This supports the findings of González and Brea (2005), Sun (2023), and Clemes et al. (2020), who emphasized the importance of customer satisfaction in predicting behavioral intentions in various tourism and hospitality settings.

These findings underscore the importance of both experiential marketing and service quality in driving customer satisfaction and behavioral intention in Chiang Mai's spa industry. Spa managers should prioritize creating unique and engaging experiences while ensuring the delivery of excellent service to attract and retain Chinese tourists. This study's findings are largely consistent with previous research on experiential marketing, service quality, customer satisfaction, and behavioral intention in tourism and hospitality. However, this study contributes to the literature by specifically focusing on the Chinese tourist segment in the context of Chiang Mai's spa industry, providing valuable insights into this growing market. While the study's findings generally aligned with expectations, one unexpected finding was the relatively weak direct effect of experiential marketing on behavioral intention. This suggests that while experiential marketing contributes to customer satisfaction, its influence on behavioral intention might be primarily indirect, mediated through customer satisfaction. This finding warrants further investigation into future research.

The causal influence model experiential marketing and service quality to customer satisfaction and behavior intention of Chinese tourists in spa establishments in Chiang Mai province has consistent with the empirical data, with the Goodness of fit following $\chi^2 = 46.89$, $df = 36$, $\chi^2 / df = 1.30$, $p\text{-value} = 0.11$, $GFI = 0.85$, $AGFI = 0.82$, $CFI = 0.99$, $RMR = 0.02$, $RMSEA = 0.081$. The results of the analysis of the influence of experiential marketing, service quality and customer satisfaction on behavioral intention found that experiential marketing, service quality and customer satisfaction have a direct influence on behavioral intention with statistical significance at the .01 level, while the results of the hypothesis testing of experiential marketing, service quality influences behavioral intention through customer satisfaction. There are two important things in this study that can provide input to the spa manager. First, this study provides empirical evidence that experiential marketing affects customer satisfaction that will ultimately create behavior intention conduce to customer loyalty so that it will provide positive recommendations. Secondly, this study also clarifies that the quality of service affects satisfaction and also will ultimately encourage behavior intention. To improve customer satisfaction or a spa establishment manager can improve their experiential marketing program by improving the performance of individual attributes of experiential marketing and service quality. This will increase the benefits customers receive from their experience using spa service. The satisfaction of tourists visiting the spa has a positive impact on the quality of service provided by the service staffs such as traditional health care wisdom includes massage, Thai spa Lanna identity, tok sen, yaam khang, and wi haek., thus providing loyalty to the customers in providing experience to the spa establishment.

This study has several limitations that need to be acknowledged that the use of accidental sampling may have introduced bias into the sample, limiting the generalizability of the findings. Future research could employ probability sampling techniques to obtain a more representative sample. The study focused on Chinese tourists, and the findings may not be directly applicable to other cultural groups. Future research could explore the influence of cultural factors on the relationships between the study variables and the reliance on self-reported data through questionnaires may be subject to social desirability bias and recall bias. Future research could incorporate multiple data sources, such as observational data or interviews, to enhance the validity of the findings. Potential threats to internal validity include the use of a cross-sectional design, which limits the ability to establish causality. Future research could employ longitudinal designs to examine the causal relationships over time. The study's focus on Chiang Mai's spa industry may limit the generalizability of findings to other destinations and tourism sectors. Future research could replicate the study in different contexts to enhance external validity.

Despite these limitations, this study contributes to the understanding of the factors influencing Chinese tourists' behavioral intentions in Chiang Mai's spa industry. The findings highlight the importance of both experiential marketing and service quality in shaping customer satisfaction and loyalty. Spa managers should prioritize creating unique and engaging experiences while ensuring the delivery of excellent service to attract and retain Chinese tourists. Future research should address the limitations of this study and explore the influence of other factors, such as cultural values and personal characteristics, on tourist behavior.

Conclusion

This study examined the impact of experiential marketing and service quality on customer satisfaction and behavioral intention among Chinese tourists visiting spa establishments in Chiang Mai. The findings reveal that both experiential marketing and service quality significantly influence customer satisfaction, which in turn positively affects behavioral intention. These results contribute to the theoretical understanding of tourist behavior by confirming the importance of customer experience and service quality in shaping satisfaction and loyalty within the spa industry. The study's practical implications are significant for spa managers seeking to attract and retain Chinese tourists. By designing engaging experiential marketing initiatives and delivering high-quality service, spa establishments can enhance customer satisfaction and foster positive behavioral intentions, leading to increased repeat visits and recommendations.

This research makes a valuable contribution to the field of tourism management by providing empirical evidence of the complex relationships between experiential marketing, service quality, customer satisfaction, and behavioral intention in the context of Chiang Mai's spa industry. It highlights the importance of considering both customer experience and service quality in developing effective marketing strategies for this growing market.

Future Research Directions

Several avenues for future research emerge from this study e.g. future studies could employ probability sampling techniques to obtain a more representative sample of Chinese tourists, enhancing the generalizability of findings. Research could explore the influence of cultural factors on the relationships between the study variables by comparing Chinese tourists with other cultural groups. Longitudinal designs could be used to examine the causal relationships between experiential marketing, service quality, customer satisfaction, and behavioral intention over time. Moreover, incorporating qualitative methods, such as interviews or focus groups, could provide deeper insights into the motivations and experiences of Chinese tourists visiting spa establishments in Chiang Mai. By addressing these research gaps, future studies can further contribute to the understanding of tourist behavior and inform the development of effective marketing strategies for the spa industry.

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