

Practices of Spa and Wellness in CALABARZON Region as Inputs to Business Innovation

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Abstract - *This research paper aimed to present the practices of Accredited Spa and Wellness in CALABARZON Region, Philippines as inputs to business innovation. Specifically, it presented the business profile of Department of Tourism (DOT) accredited spa and wellness in the region; determined the adherence of spa and wellness in terms of: DOT minimum standard requirements and DOT general rules on the operation and maintenance; and presented the implication of research through business innovation. Descriptive method was used to describe the condition or situation that occurred at the time of the study, while participants are spa customers. The study revealed that non-accredited Spa and Wellness firms in the region have high adherence of the DOT standards. Based from the result the researcher concluded that most of the non-accredited day spa and wellness establishments has been operating for 11 years and above. The respondents pay much attention to the accessibility of the place, the traditional and cultural services highly adhere while provision on menu moderately adhere. Lastly, its legal conformance of the equipment is vital to the safety of the guests and employees. This researcher recommends that upon accreditation of spa and wellness firm may gain support from the DOT specifically on marketing collaterals. Whereas, the local government may develop performance evaluation measurement or rating system to assess the customer wellness experience to use it as the basis for continuous improvement and sustainability of the Spa and Wellness tourism industry in CALABARZON.*

Keywords: *Spa and Wellness, DOT Spa Standard Requirements, Business Innovation*

INTRODUCTION

Spa and Wellness Tourism is becoming a growing motivation for tourists to put health and well-being at the center of their travel experience. It involves activities that improve and maintain individual's health and quality of life along with the intended visits to preferred destinations and chosen attractions. Tourists nowadays are constantly on a quest for a rewarding experience and seek out something that satisfies them in a way that no other holidays can offer.

Spa and Wellness Tourism is swiftly booming travel niche for which expenditures have hit \$680 billion in 2016. In the same year, Global Wellness Institute (GWI) spending expanded by 50 percent more rapidly compared to the overall tourism and hospitality industry. Spa and wellness journeys can be profitable for travel agents, as these tourists pay out 130 percent more than the average traveler.

Spa businesses are increasingly beating into the earliest, ethnically-based therapeutic and wellness traditions to improve latest services and products [1].

Developing unique offerings that mirror the country of origin or region in which locals operate a spa business.

From the recent update, spa and wellness industry in the country had boomed from scratch to earn \$25.3 million in 2017. Inbound tourists and expatriates are summed to contribute 62 percent of its income revenues [2]. Likewise, Generations X's and Y's consideration on spa and wellness elements varies from healthy food to fitness classes and spiritual healing [3]. The surfacing of the spa industry in the country integrates customs, traditions and therapeutic processes that are recent in global phenomenon. It is considered a natural and normal response to the individual longing for wellness in the circumstances of the evolution of consciousness and globalization leading to spa business progress and innovation.

Spa and wellness tourism has immense potential in the Philippines because of the comparatively small amount of health services and extremely highly skilled service professionals. The Department of Tourism (DOT) mandated the improvement of spa and wellness

tourism nationwide via effective marketing of the country's spa services. Spas not only provide a competitive guest's amenities but also offer lucrative spa profit center.

Philippines enthused to institute and advance national quality systems and accreditation mechanisms. These structures are led by the private spa associations while other systems are formulated by the local government through the efforts of Department of Tourism (DOT). In Regional level, the integration of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Spa Standard has begun in 2015.

Innovation in spa and wellness firms provides services that are essential to the growing complexity of the spa tourism product. In a wide sense it is linked with the contention for sustaining a lifestyle that is healthy. The flexible distinctiveness of the spa business firms has made possible combinations expressed and executed in modern efforts without compromising the conduct of traditional spa [4].

Spa owners exert efforts to innovate business which lead to increase in number of prospective and loyal customers. The increase in demand resulted spa goes to be more health-conscious on their lifestyles, routines and behaviors. The evolution has considerably changed because the industry has become very demanding and competitions are very high [5].

The society is linked to the end-user strong connection and interest on health therapies. The customer's rising affluence brought abundance of spa products and services as everybody is hooked and captivated in search for health and well-being [6].

Travel advisors expect spa and wellness industry to grow in the succeeding years and consumers will become increasingly aware of wellness travel [7].

The flaming competition in spa and wellness tourism industry pushes entrepreneurs to keep up with trends by seeking possible means to continuously develop and innovate [8]. Spa treatment services constantly evolved through provision of personal care to spa customers. However, it is notable to consider that there is a serious threat to the customer's health if the services are performed by an under-skilled therapist.

The creation of latest platform and solution through innovative business ventures open doors for competitive spa business. Hence, tourism accreditation supports business entrepreneurs to meet customer satisfaction by means of complying the industry standards and codes of practice and obeying with the business and industry regulations.

This study analyzed the inputs of spa and wellness in CALABARZON region to business innovation using

the Department of Tourism (DOT) minimum standard requirements and general rules on the operation and maintenance.

The objective of business innovation is to develop an input to spa and wellness firms in CALABARZON Region as basis for the certification process which will improve and develop the spa and wellness firms' human resources, product, services, management, amenities and environmental practices.

The standard will institute high level of professionalism that will benefit spa operators and clients to gain advantageous and collective approach while still being respectful to the nuances of the local culture.

This research will be beneficial to spa and wellness owners as they will be guided with standards to cope the demands of the continuously becoming more affluent customers. More importantly, tourists will also be confident that spa therapists are qualified and professional and that cultural wellness tradition of the country is not compromised. This will also increase opportunity to tourism economy of CALABARZON Region.

The researcher aims to provide insights to potential and existing spa and wellness business owners regarding the advantage of business innovation though accreditation. This will enable the spa and wellness tourism be recognized locally and internationally. It will also open career opportunities among the country's fellowmen.

The conduct of this study is also designed to provide the academe with the latest information about the global spa and wellness industry. The content of the study will serve as tool to enhance hospitality curriculum since spa and wellness tourism industry is becoming more and more popular in the global market. Hospitality students can also use this study as basis to their future researches.

METHODS

Research Design

This research used descriptive method to describe the condition or situation that occurred at the time of the study. The method involved description, recording, analysis and interpretation of conditions that now exist. Descriptive research was used to determine the Spa and Wellness in CALABARZON region; Inputs to Business Innovation.

Participants of the Study

The researcher gathered data from the Department of Tourism Accredited Spa and Wellness establishments in CALABARZON region. Spa

customers served as the best persons to provide information related to the study.

Table A. Distribution of Respondents

Province	No. of Guests	Average	Recommended Sample Size
Cavite	167	21%	55
Laguna	128	16%	42
Batangas	210	26%	69
Rizal	90	11%	29
Quezon	200	25%	65
TOTAL	795	100%	260

Instrument

In order to gather data, the researcher used survey questionnaires answered by spa and wellness costumers who recently availed spa services. The questions are based on the Department of Tourism's minimum standard requirements and general rule on operation and maintenance. After the final comments were incorporated by experts, the instrument was subjected to reliability test and then answered by spa customers in Metro Manila.

The result of reliability statistics showed that the computed Cronbach's alpha value of .72 signifies that the research instrument for spa business innovation has strong and excellent internal consistency. Thus, it indicates that the questionnaire is valid for use.

Part 1 consists of the business profile of spa and wellness enterprise in CALABARZON region; their type of ownership, number of years in the business, type of spa, and different spa services offered.

Part 2 is the compliance of spa and wellness establishments based on the DOT Minimum Standard Requirements and DOT General Rules on the Operation and Maintenance.

Procedure

A letter of request was distributed to Department of Tourism officer in each of the provinces in CALABARZON region (Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal and Quezon) to seek assistance and approval in order to allow the researcher gather necessary data.

The researcher personally distributed the questionnaire to the participants and gave well-defined instruction in order to give clarification and before answering the questions.

There is a general agreement regarding the intention of an individual to participate in privacy protection and the conforming responsibilities of the researcher to respond to information gathered in confidential manner. Respecting the information trusted by the

participants in research is globally acknowledged ethical and norm standards are seriously observed

Data Analysis

Upon retrieval of the questionnaires, data gathered were tallied, tabulated, encoded, analyzed and interpreted. Different statistical tools were used such as frequency distribution, percentage, ranking, weighted mean and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and Regression. In addition, all data were treated using statistical software, PASW version 18 to further analyze the results of the study.

All data were presented using the SPSS software. This study used scale to measure and interpret the result of data gathered for as such the numerical value has equivalent verbal interpretation: 3.50 – 4.00 = Highly Adhere; 2.50 – 3.49 = Adhere; 1.50 – 2.49 = Moderately Adhere; 1.00 – 1.49 = Do Not Adhere

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Percentage Distribution of the Business Profile

Profile Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Status		
Accredited	26	10.00
Non-Accredited	234	90.00
Number of Years in the Business		
1year–5 years	14	5.40
6 years–10 years	100	38.50
11years–& above	146	56.20
Categories of Spa		
Day Spa	149	57.30
Destination Spa	26	10.00
Resort Spa	85	32.70
Number of Licensed Therapist		
3 – and above	260	100.00

Table 1 shows the business profile of spa institutions according to its status either accredited by the Department of Tourism (DOT) or non-accredited. It also illustrates the number of years in the operation and category of the spa business. It is important to note that the first table highlights that 90% of the spa and wellness establishments in CALABARZON Region is not DOT accredited and only 10% is accredited. Meanwhile, 56% or 146 respondents affirmed that spa establishments they visited have been operating for 11 years and more, 38.50% confirmed that the spa business had been serving clients for 6 years to 10 years and only 5.40% or 14 respondents believed that they

visited a spa business newbie operating in the last 1 to 5 years.

The result also implies that there are 57.30% day spas in the region followed by 32.70% resort spa and 10% destination spa. Moreover, all of the respondents confirmed that spa businesses in CALABARZON have more than three licensed therapists.

Spa customers are motivated to visit spa and wellness firms that offer luxurious and splendid ambiance and relaxed environment that are strategically located to accessible areas. Nowadays, customers appreciate a relaxing hospitality service experience that gives emphasize on health and well-being. The time-consuming stressful work demands make people escape from stressful environment and search for indulgent comfort through massage service.

According to the Republic Act 9593 of the Philippine Constitution, spa and wellness establishments are considered secondary tourism enterprises. Therefore, compliance on Department of Tourism accreditation is only on a voluntary basis.

Accreditation is an internal tool to uphold the spa service quality standards. The benefits from the business perspective can be a useful especially as a marketing tool and encourage positive feedback from clients because people trust spa business that is already accredited.

Personal care to spa customers is what it takes to provide an exemplary spa treatment services. However, if the spa service is provided by under-skilled therapist there is a high risk to the well-being and health of spa customers. Therefore, it is important to have a recognized organization such as the Department of Tourism (DOT) to lay down standards to ensure the quality of spa services.

Industry leaders are encouraged to devise accreditation procedures to ensure spa business compliance with regulations and legislation [9]. Operators on the other hand are given incentives, acknowledgement and gain promotional advantage through local government initiatives.

Accreditation unifies spa business owners to raise awareness on spa industry through professional development and interactive networking. It also stimulates communication through regular forums and newsletter.

Through the accreditation program, spa businesses are able to harmonize shared training courses and programmes. Establishing common specialized spa structure and framework are also essential to develop collaborative opportunities for promotional approaches and marketing strategies.

Meanwhile, intense challenges in the market arena are basic scenario being faced by most service organizations including the spa and wellness industry [10]. Hospitality operators have become competitive nowadays to deliver quality and satisfactory services that would please the demands of today's affluent customers.

Spa goers are motivated to relieve stress and take a break from daily stressful activities so they relish a deserving solitude spa treatment that suits to their availability. Industry professionals are time conscious that is why they find day spa more appealing to their needs [11].

Day spa businesses are designed to target market who can easily manage their time and resources in the most affordable way. Most day spas innovate to providing only what the client needs-the massage. Sauna and steam bath on the other hand imposes a lot of positive benefits. However, this does not apply to all spa-goers especially those with heart conditions and medical physician advice is required [12].

Customers create positive impression and are confident to spa and wellness firms especially when they know that the spa therapists are licensed. These staffs must complete training programmes and pass evaluation and examination assessments [13].

In the Philippines, the Training and Technical Education and Skills Development and Authority (TESDA) and the Department of Tourism (DOT) are responsible for certifying qualified spa therapists.

Spa and wellness have become a desired cultural human force and pronounced influence to manage health condition and physical appearance and stress [14]. It also encourages people to improve socialization, recuperate spiritualization while relishing the benefits of spa experience during the travel.

Destination spa is paramount preference for healthy support changes [15]. It usually offers pack of nutritious meal and balanced exercise with relaxing worthy spa service treatment.

Respondents from CALABARZON region find destination spa range from affordable to expensive rates depending on the season. Destination spa is also perfect for spa goers who wish to meditate, improve relationship with loved ones, reduce stress and depression and most importantly nurture sense of comfort and satisfaction.

Meanwhile, respondents of the survey also reaffirmed that resort spa can be on top of their priorities to visit especially when travelling with families and friends while spending quality holiday.

Therefore, it automatically gains competitive advantage through tourist demand anticipation in terms of availability of spa services that are not bound to peak season and can cater to all ages.

Tourists are motivated to visit resort spa because of the impressive amenities and quality of services [16]. Powerful and effective marketing strategy make a great impact on customer preferences. Inevitably, maintenance and value are also factors that add interest on spa goers to pursue spa visits.

Spa goers select the most favorable spa establishments that perceive to have high potential to fulfill customer satisfaction. These customers give importance on the quality of spa service that includes all the choice determinants such as the therapists, products and services, ambiance and the price [17].

Table 2. Adherence of Spa and Wellness Establishment Based on the DOT Minimum Standard Requirements

Indicators	WM	VI	Rank
1. Location and Environment	3.33	A	8
2. Lounge and Reception Counter	3.26	A	12
3. Food Bar	2.50	A	16
4. Washrooms	3.27	A	10
5. Locker Rooms	2.92	A	13
6. Shower Rooms	2.69	A	15
7. Treatment Rooms	3.66	HA	3
8. Services	3.50	HA	6
9. Well trained Staff	3.67	HA	2
10. DOT Registered Therapist	3.70	HA	1
11. Steam, Sauna and Water Baths	2.04	MA	18
12. Hygienic Staff	3.63	HE	4
13. Linen	3.32	A	9
14. Employment Facilities	2.43	MA	17
15. Parking	2.75	A	14
16. Emergency Generator	3.42	A	7
17. First Aid Cabinet	3.53	HA	5
18. Facilities for Disabled	3.27	A	11
Composite Mean	3.16	A	

Table 2 presents the adherence of the respondents on Department of Tourism (DOT) Minimum Standard Requirements. Based from the composite mean of 3.16 it indicates that the spa businesses adhere to the standard. From the table result, it was found out that, they highly adhere on DOT Registered Therapist which obtained the highest weighted mean score of 3.70. It was followed by well trained staff (3.67), treatment rooms (3.66), hygienic staff (3.63), first aid cabinet and services (3.53), all verbally interpreted as highly adhere.

Majority of the respondents affirmed through survey that they appreciate spa and wellness establishments with DOT registered and highly trained

massage therapist. They are more comfortable entrusting any health related concerns to a qualified therapist. They often ask the spa attendant for the type of spa service suitable to their needs before the conduct of the service.

The training certificates displayed at the reception area give the customers an impression of self-security. Moreover, most of them also have high expectations when it comes to how appealing and conducive the spa ambiance can offer.

Spa customers believed that treatment areas are important factor when carrying out a spa service procedure because it must complement the high level of credentials of their therapist.

Qualified massage therapist must have successfully completed massage training in full 600 hours [18]. He/she must pass the assessment strictly administered by qualified assessment organization.

Customers nowadays have become loyal to spa and wellness establishment because of the qualities that makes a great massage therapist. More than the skills, customers are more confident that they will get the relaxation they deserve when attended by trustworthy registered therapists [19].

Moreover, success of the spa business is contingent to the quality service provided by its employees [20]. The performance and skills of employees through training and development thus lead to organizational success, progress and growth.

Respondents on the other hand observed that spa employees are more efficient and productive when away from constrains of stress related work environment. Relatively, they also mentioned that the staffs immediately showed enthusiasm upon guest arrival.

Spa attendants must create positive impact towards guests and consider it as best opportunity make it last [21]. This can be done through pampering the spa customers with simple act of kind gestures such as offering a refreshing cup of tea and assisting guest with the use of spa amenities.

Attending guests in the process of spa treatment is an important task. The set-up of spa treatment areas plays a significant role as it helps set the mood of the guests and create a positive impression. Not only does it set the mood but it also affects the entire spa experience. It also represents itself as a conviction to substantial interest of the clients to revisit again [22].

Meanwhile, relaxation-oriented business according to respondents stimulates a feeling of connection to earth and nature. A soothing amicable environment arouses a positive mood that enables spa goers to feel

refreshed. Therefore, setting treatment room environment is crucial to spa owners to achieve this goal.

As one of the fastest growing industries in today's generation, spa and wellness made its way to break through client's preference and have become their favorite tourism experience. Even the younger generation and millennials are starting to understand and appreciate the benefits of taking care of their bodies as it slow down the aging clock of tomorrow.

However, other standards were assessed as adhere while employment facilities (2.43) and steam, sauna and water baths (2.04) got the lowest rating and verbally assessed as moderately only.

Respondents require an hour or two spa massage as a reward after a long toxic work load. Most of the respondents prefer the nearest day spa from their location so that they can go home after a relaxing self-incentive. Therefore, spa services with steam, sauna and water baths are out of their option because these would entail much of their time.

Consequently, facilities such as the steam, sauna and water baths are often times off the list of spa guests. This is because most spa goers in CALABARZON region do not necessarily need such facility services. Most of them look after the comforts provided by the spa massage therapist and would consider only services that would fit to their financial budget and time.

Guest's spa service expectation is generally focused on atmosphere that is non-polluted and provide helpful information on health topics and relaxation [23].

Respondents affirmed that employment facilities are areas where they do not have access. Customers understand that employees need privacy too and checking out these areas is not their priority.

Table 3. Adherence of Spa and Wellness Establishment Based on the DOT General Rules on the Operation and Maintenance

Indicators	WM	VI	R
1. Maintains equipment and supplies	3.21	A	3.5
2. Practices sanitation measures	3.61	HA	1
3. Provided fire-fighting facilities	3.21	A	3.5
4. Displays sign boards	3.55	HA	2
Composite Mean	3.40	A	

Table 3 shows the compliance of respondents on Department of Tourism's General Rules on the Operation and Maintenance. Based from the composite mean of 3.40, it indicates that the spa businesses adhere to the standard. Based from the result, it was found out that they highly adhere on the practices of sanitation

measures which obtained the highest weighted mean score of 3.61.

Respondents are motivated to visit spa establishments that practice sanitation measures. The ambiance of the spa is very crucial to the development of customer satisfaction and loyalty. For every visit that guests make, there is always a service recall along with how well the facilities and amenities made a good impression.

Display of sign boards helped the respondents familiarize with the place especially that spa and wellness establishments in CALABARZON region are architecturally designed with dim-light interiors. The signage avoids spa customers from going to the wrong direction. It prevented situations such as sudden disruption while other guests are having their spa massage services.

Meanwhile, the spa maintenance on equipment and supplies as perceived by the respondents are things that the spa management has to pay attention to. They dubiously felt that it is not enough that they have qualified therapist and good spa ambiance. They also want supplies and equipment be highly maintained because it adds confidence on their end.

Another thing that respondents noticed is the lack of firefighting facilities at the spa and wellness establishments. Though they have seen fire extinguisher at the reception area, customers still believe that the spa management still have to add firefighting facilities and at least include in their discussions the safety precautions during customer briefing.

Expected spa services should be provided with high quality standards [24]. Cleanliness procedures during the conduct of spa operation should also be observed.

The improvement of sanitation measures are anticipated initiatives at a higher level to remain in place. Techniques in cleaning such as tools and equipment disinfection and sterilization have high potential to be improved through execution of multiple procedural steps.

Application of sanitation measures is expected to immediately take place and make a difference. To ensure practices in sanitation are achieved, managers are assigned to regularly monitor the sanitation standard implementation. Posting reminders at the bulletin board or sanitation areas is an effective way to communicate to all the importance of hygiene and sanitation at work.

However, spa businesses adhere to maintain equipment and supplies and provide fire-fighting facilities with weighted mean of both 3.21.

Tools, equipment, tables and all other implements used in spa treatments should be cleaned, disinfected and sterilized through executing multiple procedure and steps based on the manufacturers' recommendation and sanitation standards. With this, spa business can take into higher level of sanitation that would result to gaining clients' trust and loyalty.

Bacteria grow immediately if equipment and tools are improperly stored [25]. A well designed cleaning system is required to eliminate bacteria from the surfaces. Effective result can only be seen if tools and equipment are taken care the right way.

Table 4. Difference of Responses on the Adherence of Spa and Wellness Establishment Based on the DOT Minimum Standard Requirements When Grouped According to Profile Business

Profile Variables	F-value	p-value
Status	11.448**	0.000
Number of Years in the Business	135.423**	0.000
Categories of Spa	416.384**	0.000

**Significant at p -value < 0.01

As shown from the result of table 4, there were significant difference found on adherence of spa and wellness establishment based on DOT minimum standard requirements when grouped according to business status (p -value = 0.000), number of years in the business (p -value = 0.000) and categories of spa (p -value = 0.000) since the computed p -values were less than 0.05 alpha level. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected and indicates that the responses vary significantly. Based from the post hoc test conducted using Scheffe method, those accredited destination spas and are existing for 11 years and above have higher adherence on DOT minimum requirements.

The status of spa and wellness establishment is an important factor that drives customers to invest trust towards the company. Accreditation of the spa business enables customers to be confident about the quality of spa services being offered. This means that status of spa and wellness firms in CALABARZON Region is highly significant on its adherence based on the Department of Tourism (DOT) Minimum Standards.

The number of years in the business of spa and wellness establishments in CALABARZON region as based on the DOT Minimum Standards is highly significant. This survey result means that customers still prefer spa business which has been operating for many years.

Meanwhile, categories as per the adherence of spa and wellness establishments in CALABARZON

Region on the DOT Minimum Standard is highly significant. This signifies that spa goers consider the type of spa either day, resort or destination spa in accordance to their demands and disposable income.

Performance improvement can be attributed to the dedication of the local government to fulfill the key success factors in tourism development [26]. This includes location accessibility, tourist attractions, promotions, well-maintained facilities, quality services and Department of Tourism accreditation.

Philippines is expected for a progressive move in the upcoming years. It will open doors to opportunities such as the aggressive participation in the ASEAN integration.

Fast growing developments of the country's hospitality sectors now have higher standard of services and products. These standards are required in all types of hospitality amenities including the spa business in CALABARZON region.

The Department of Tourism (DOT) has developed accreditation standards as guide for hospitality firms to assess their establishments whether they comply with the national standards. However, accreditation remains voluntary among secondary hospitality enterprises such as the spa and wellness firms.

Furthermore, DOT has the authority to mandate and enforce a holistic system of obligatory accreditation among primary tourism enterprises. On the other hand, accreditation of secondary tourism enterprises is on a voluntary effort.

Significantly, the program on national voluntary accreditation would dish up to encourage accreditation on departmental which will serve as a strong mechanism for continuous quality improvement [27].

Accredited tourism business adds to the confidence among spa business owners. The alignment of tourism products and services will be highly recognized nationwide. It also accounts to the expectation of being held strictly responsible on the management principles and compliance with the documented standards of the management.

Furthermore, accreditation assists spa business establishments either large or small to enhance their operations and boost up employee morale and strengthen marketing ideas. It also improves the entire performance standards and procedures on the spa business operations while enabling continuous innovation of the organization's management system. Most importantly, it increases business referrals from satisfied customers.

Based from Table 5, there were significant difference found on adherence of spa and wellness

establishment based on DOT general rules on operation and maintenance when grouped according to business status (p-value = 0.000), number of years in the business (p-value = 0.000) and categories of spa (p-value = 0.000) since the computed p-values were less than 0.05 alpha level.

Table 5. Difference of Responses on Adherence of Spa and Wellness Establishment Based on the DOT General Rules on the Operation and Maintenance When Grouped According to Profile Business

Profile Variables	F-value	p-value
Status	9.415**	0.000
Number of Years in the Business	65.896**	0.000
Categories of Spa	88.825**	0.000

** Significant at p-value < 0.01

Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected and indicates that the responses vary significantly. Based from the post hoc test conducted using Scheffe method, those accredited destination spas and are existing for 11 years and above have higher adherence on DOT general rules on operation and maintenance.

Roughly similar with the Minimum Standards set by the Department of Tourism, the General Rules on the Operation and Maintenance of the same leading tourism organization of the country is also significant on the status and categories of the spa and is highly significant on the number of years in the spa business.

Result shows that spa and wellness establishment's in CALABARZON region adherence on DOT general rules on the operation and maintenance is significant. This means that the status of spa business of the said region already met higher standards. Spa firms started to entertain ideas regarding innovative change and development. Likewise, accreditation procedure is part of this innovation.

Meanwhile, the categories of spa and wellness establishments in CALABARZON Region adherence on DOT general rules on the operation and maintenance is also significant. The survey result means that the categories of the spa is now being acknowledged by many customers as motivation to visit a spa according to their personal preferences and budget considerations. The more they try to find a high quality and elevated spa, the more they spend money for relaxation.

However, many customers in CALABARZON region prefer quick and fast spa services where they could go back again and again depending on their most favorable time.

The number of years in the business of spa and wellness establishment in CALABARZON region is

highly significant with regards to the adherence on DOT general rules on the operation and maintenance. This survey result emphasizes on the importance of spa business when it comes to how long it has been operating in the hospitality industry. It is empirical for customers to examine spa business credibility especially that customers nowadays can immediately express their feeling of disappointment and satisfaction via social media.

Well-established spa firms are cautious about maintaining credibility built for long years. That is why more people still prefer spa that has been in the market for many years [28].

Department of Tourism (DOT) is eyeing the adoption of a progressive accreditation scheme for tourism-related establishments to urge more to get accredited and raise the standard of tourism products and services in the country.

In the Philippines, business entrepreneurs who plan to start up a spa and wellness business must secure necessary documentation prior to its operation. Among the requirements are obtaining barangay clearance, Tax Identification Number (TIN), Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) Business Name (BN) Registration Certificate, Mayor's permit or business permit, Security and Exchange (SEC) Registration Certificate and submit list of Department of Health (DOH) or Technical Education and Skills Development and Authority (TESDA) certified therapists [29].

Moreover, DOT is always open to the idea of collaborating with private sectors and make sure that the establishments follow the regulations and standards.

The initial phase of basic accreditation will focus on the minimum requirements, matched up with the necessary business permits and a number of key principles that must be achieved. Therefore, basic accreditation must be annually renewed.

The subsequent level of accreditation has more principles and standards required for conformity but these are essentially communicated towards end user protection relatively than regulations.

Spa business firms with regular accreditation and star ranking compliance is granted and given range of incentives by the Department of Tourism. The favor includes longer renewal periods, marketing collateral inclusions and promotional discounts when participating in trade shows.

Basic compliance of spa business establishments is highly recognized by the Department of Tourism as work-in-progress towards achieving accreditation on regular basis. Constant pursuance of regular

accreditation means being compliant to standards set by the local government with which ASEAN international standards is also embedded [30].

Hence, the local government through the efforts of Department of Tourism is continuously encouraging all local spa and massage operators to apply DOT business accreditation for the implementation of regulations and standards. Private sectors especially those which are already DOT accredited sought help to encourage other operators and service providers of the same field to apply for accreditation. This will enable spa industry in CALABARZON Region a leading destination for spa and wellness services.

It can be gleaned from Table 5 that there was significant difference found on the ASEAN spa standards major criteria and requirements as to place, service, people, product, equipment, management and environmental practices when grouped according to

business status. This was observed since all computed p-values were less than 0.05 alpha level. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected and indicates that the responses vary significantly. Based from the test conducted, those accredited businesses have higher adherence standards major criteria and requirements.

CONCLUSION

There are more non-accredited spa and wellness establishments in CALABARZON region operating for 11 years and above and are mostly day spas with more than two registered spa therapist.

The adherence of spa and wellness establishments based on the Department of Tourism (DOT) Minimum Standard Requirements are highly met. However, day spas do not have steam, sauna and water baths because they only target customers whose needs are limited to massage therapy only.

Table 6. Proposed Strategies as input to Spa Business Innovation

Key result area	Strategies	Outcome
Department of Tourism Spa Standards		
Place		
To provide safe shower rooms for both men and women	Construct sufficient number of shower rooms for men via promotion of green facilities	Awareness on green facilities will be conveyed to customers even on shower room areas
To provide parking facilities	Provide parking spaces that do not compromise the safety of the vehicles while customers are inside the spa establishment	Customers' vehicle are secured and do not obstruct passage ways of other vehicles
Service		
To make a non-slippery Steam, Sauna and Water Baths	Design wet area facilities and amenities that are safe and would not pose danger to both employees and customers	Untoward incident will be avoided and prevented while keeping safe environment will be promoted not just in wet areas but the entire spa vicinity
People		
To improve employment facilities	Create stress-free working environment and provide facilities for employees where they can have privacy especially during operational breaks	Employees will be able to have an encouraging environment and get motivated to improve quality performance so that customers will be delighted
To provide sufficient locker rooms for employees	Provide locker rooms for employees where they can keep their valuables before the conduct of their work shifts	Employees will be able to move freely during the spa service and that reception will not be filed with personal belongings of the staff
Product		
To provide variety of options at the Food Bar	Produce food that are naturally healthy by means of harvesting own crops grown at the spa backyard with the use of natural fertilizers	Customers will be educated with the health conscious lifestyle
Equipment		
To maintain equipment and supplies	Design schedule to properly maintain equipment and supplies	Spa management will be able to save resources and focus more on programs that promote spa benefits awareness
To provide fire-fighting facilities	Send employees to fire-fighting workshops to gain knowledge on proper handling of emergencies	Employees and customers will be secured during emergencies and proper action will be executed immediately when needed

Moreover, the spa and wellness establishments in CALABARZON Region also highly adhere to DOT general rules and regulation and maintenance on practicing sanitation measures. This is evident as the result showed that spa owners pay attention to providing quality products and ensure that it is certified by qualified organization such as the BFAD.

Meanwhile, the management system of spa businesses in CALABARZON region seemed effective according to the respondents. The Liability insurance offered by the spa firms on the other hand, is positively aligned to compliance and adhere international standards.

Spa and wellness establishments also have taken environmental practices seriously especially conservation of water and electricity resources. Spa products are also environmentally manufactured as DOT continuously encourages spa entrepreneurs to become environmental advocates. Lastly, spa establishments are located in isolated or almost remote areas and practice environmental protection.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The spa and wellness establishment though considered secondary tourism and hospitality sectors are highly encouraged to apply for Department of Tourism (DOT) accreditation to strengthen its business stability in the market. Once accredited, it will gain support from DOT and other related spa organizations through conduct of public awareness regarding promotional campaigns. It will also enable the spa establishments to develop high profitability and therefore offer job opportunities to the country's fellowmen.

The development of standards should be naturally linked to the ASEAN Spa Standards to build a more reliable foundation in preparation for its integration.

Likewise, the development of tourism council will be a gateway to address the challenges and opportunities faced by spa owners and other stakeholders of the spa industry not only in CALABARZON region but the entire country.

The local government may also develop performance evaluation measurement tools including a rating system pertaining to the customer wellness experience that would detail all aspects of the spa business. Also, the local government may take the initiative to financially support and help develop the spa industry and assist in sustainability of spa business in CALABARZON region.

Universities may intensify the conduct of awareness on Mutual Recognition Arrangements (MRAs) and develop framework appropriate syllabi for education practitioners and managers that may provide a theoretical understanding of the concepts of spa and wellness. The development of curriculum in line with the ASEAN competency standards may help develop the knowledge and skills of hospitality graduates. Moreover, industry immersion, development of new instructional materials and international certification will add competency and credibility among faculty members.

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