

## Impact to Tourism Industry of Massage Spa Therapy in Batangas City, Philippines

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**Abstract** – *This study aimed to assess the benefits of massage spa therapy in tourism industry of Batangas City and their adherence to the standards to DOT on Spa operation and maintenance. The study aimed to identify the profile of massage spa in terms of type of ownership, length of years in the business, type of spa and different spa services offered; to assess the benefits of massage spa to the tourism industry; and to determine the extent of adherence of the massage spa to DOT standards about spa operation and maintenance; and propose a plan of action based on the results of the study. Descriptive method was used in the study. Results showed that the Sole Proprietorship got the highest rank in terms of type of ownership. With the length of years in service, it shows that most of spa business already exists for 4-6 years. Type of spa shows that majority of the spa business were Spa Town. With regards to different spa services, majority offers peat pulp bath and the least is sauna and steam bath. The over-all assessment of the respondents' on the benefits of spa was agree by the result. It was also observed that all items were assessed as agree and it enhances the awareness of the tourists about the beauty of Batangas City. It was followed by provide taxes for the government, became a tourist attraction and improves socio-economic of local residents and improvement on the lifestyle both of the local residents and tourists.*

**Keywords** – *Tourism Industry, Massage, Spa therapy, Batangas City*

### I. INTRODUCTION

Tourism is a very complex industry encompassing a wide range of economic activities in every tourist destination in the country (Vizconde & Felicen, 2012). Tourism means more jobs for the people and improvement of their standard of living (Buted, et al, 2014). As such, tourism has implications on the economy, on the natural and built environment, on the local population at the destination and on the tourists themselves (Kozak, 2002 as cited in Buted, Meñez, Baruc & Borbon, 2014).

Spas have become a pertinent cultural force, influencing not only how consumers manage their health, appearance, and stress, but also how consumers socialize, spiritualize, travel, and work. Rising levels of income, education, and sophistication among travellers and consumers worldwide have dramatically elevated the consciousness and desirability of spa treatments (Mandal, 2009).

The market potential of spa development is being captured by global and premium-brand spas that have expanded their service menus. At the same time, establishments that offer traditional bathing, healing, herbal, and therapeutic treatments derived from centuries-old practices also recognized the potential of branding themselves as spas, and some are investing in new services, equipment, facilities, as well as modifying their ambience. European bath houses and saunas, Japanese onsens, Turkish-style hammams, Indian ayurveda centers, and Thai massage establishments do not necessarily fit the traditional Western concept or business model of spas, but a certain portion of these have begun and will continue to cross over to the spa market as they evolve and adapt to the needs of its consumers (Gupta, 2013). As tourists arrivals increase, additional income for the local people also increases as consumptions for the basic necessities of the tourists that can be found on the destinations are being consumed (Felicen et al., 2014).

Panchal (2012) found out that the opportunity to provide empirical work on the trajectory of tourist behaviour in the Asian spa-going context was identified. According to (Bulanhagui, et al., 2012), there is a big chance for promoting medical tourism. Since most of the guests of San Benito are from abroad, residents of Lipa do not know all the services offered by the spa. A development plan is proposed to promote and enhance the existing medical tourism in Lipa City and to encourage their constituents to participate in the development of medical tourism especially health tourism using alternative medicines. Furthermore, study of del Castillo et.al (2010) found out that there are different facilities for spa massage, hydro therapy and other product provided by spas. They encountered problems relating to the employees communication skills among foreigner and tourists and determining which kind of therapy is appropriate for the needs of the clients.

As interest in physical well-being increases, spa therapy has become popular among consumers and has been recommended by many medical specialists (Koh, 2009). The trend of combining the benefits of a spa visit with a holiday has increased. Awareness regarding the benefits of healthy eating, nutrition, exercise, beauty, relaxation and pampering is increasing and people love to include those elements in their holidays or purposefully travel to achieve wellness. Either it is visiting local spa or traveling overseas, more and more people are opting to take break from their speedy life to pamper themselves, relax and rejuvenates.

Now a day's number of Spas and retreat associations are actively promoting and working extensively on the further development of the wellness industry by coming out with specialized spa including eco-friendly spas, luxury spas, romantic spas, pampering spas, stress management etc. In addition to this, to attract more people and satisfy their demands, different spas are promoting variety of wellness programs and treatments including healthy lifestyles, alternative therapies, fitness programs, weight-loss treatments, detox diets, mineral and thermal skin treatments, massage and yoga.

The massage therapy has impact to tourism industry because people would love to travel also for the benefit of their medical and healthcare. They usually visit a place where health is being taken cared and at the same time enjoyed the attractions in such places. Economic benefit also adds up to the impact of message therapy because they will pay taxes to the government and can encourage tourists to visit the place.

The researchers have chosen to conduct a study about spa and massage therapy to make an ideal effort of how medical, health and tourism can be combined in order to enhance the economic stability of Batangas City. Undertaking research on health related topic will enhance the special skills of students in tourism industry not only becoming experts in destination analysis but also competing with the innovation in the health and tourism industry. This will help them understand the real concept of tourism which can be merged with different industry used as another profit generation. As future professionals, learning can make them competitive in the career path they have chosen.

## **II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

This study aimed to assess the benefits of massage spa therapy in the tourism industry of Batangas City and their adherence to the standards of Department of Tourism on Spa operation and maintenance.

Specifically, it identifies the profile of massage spa in terms of type of ownership, length of years in the business, type of spa, and different spa services offered; assesses the benefits of massage spa to the tourism industry; determine the extent of adherence of the massage spa to DOT with regard to operation and maintenance; and propose a plan of action based on the results of the study.

## **III. METHODS**

### **Research Design**

The study made use of descriptive method. The researchers employed questionnaire or review schedules to gather the needed data. The questionnaire determines information which is both focused on the variables and profile of the respondents.

Descriptive studies are valuable in providing facts which could form basis of scientific judgment, since they also play a large part in the development of instruments that can help measures things, events, or phenomenon such as interviews, observation, schedules, checklists, score cards and rating scales, test and questionnaires (Calderon, 2011).

### **Participants**

The participants of the study were seventy five (75); composed of 5 owners, 5 managers, 3 employees and 10 customer each of selected SPA in Batangas City. There were 5 owners of the selected spa such as Mandala Spa, Body Essenxa, Mont Albo, Ton Ton and CND Spa.

**Instrument**

The instrument is an adapted questionnaire from DOT standards which is partially modified. It is composed of three parts; the first part includes the profile of massage spa in terms of type of ownership, length of years in the business, type of spa and different spa services offered. The second part assesses the benefits of massage spa to the body. The third part is the extent of adherence of the massage spa to DOT standards about spa operation and maintenance.

**Procedure**

The researchers selected the research problem and ended-up with the title Massage Spa Therapy in Batangas City: Impact to Tourism Industry. The data were from reading books, journals and other published materials related to the study. Furthermore, in order to be acquainted with the contents and format of the study, other researcher studies were considered. After the consultation and approval to their adviser, the construction of the questionnaire followed.

Upon the finalization of the final draft of the questionnaire and after seeking the approval of the dean, the researchers distributed the survey forms to the selected respondents along with the necessary permit. The respondents were assured that all the information will be kept confidential. Enough time was given to the respondents to answer the questionnaire. Then data were collected, immediately after they had finished answering the entire question to ensure proper retrieval.

**Data Analysis**

All data gathered were tallied, encoded and interpreted using different statistical tools. These include percentage and frequency distribution used to determine the profile of the respondents in terms of type of ownership, length of years in the business, type of spa and different spa services offered. Weighted mean was used to assess the benefits of massage spa to the body and the extent of adherence of the massage spa to DOT standards about spa operation and maintenance. This scale was used to interpret the result of the data gathered: 3.50 – 4.00 = Strongly Agree; 2.50 – 3.49 = Agree– 2.49 = Disagree; 1.00 – 1.49 = Strongly Disagree

**IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Table 1 shows the percentage distribution of the business profile in terms of type of ownership, length of years in the business, type of spa, and different spa services.

**Table 1. Percentage Distribution of the Business Profile**

Profile	f	%
<b>Type of Ownership</b>		
Sole Proprietorship	53	70.70
Partnership	22	29.30
<b>Length of Years in the Business</b>		
Below 1 year	7	9.30
1-3 years	22	29.30
4-6 years	28	37.30
7 – 9 years	9	12.00
10 years and above	9	12.00
<b>Type of Spa</b>		
Day Spa Single	1	1.30
Destination Spa	6	8.00
Spa Town	20	26.700
Foot Spa	10	13.30
Hot Tub	1	1.30
Soda Fountain	7	9.30
Spa (mineral water)	17	22.70
Resort/Hotel Spa	13	17.30
<b>Different Spa Services Offered</b>		
Aromatherapy	38	30.40
Bathing	62	49.60
Hot tub	19	15.20
Mud bath	6	4.80
Peat pulp bath	119	95.20
Sauna Bath	3	2.40
Steam Bath	3	2.40
Body wraps	36	28.80

In terms of type of ownership, the sole proprietorship obtained the frequency of 53 and percentage of 70.70 while partnership obtained the frequency of 22 or percentage of 29.30. The sole proprietorship got the highest score.

With the length of years in service, it shows that most of spa business already exists for 4-6 years with frequency of 28 or percentage of 37.30, some existed for 1-3 years with frequency of 22 or percentage of 29.30, 7 – 9 years and 10 years and above with frequency of 9 or percentage of 12.00 and below 1 year with frequency of 7 or percentage of 9.30.

Type of spa shows that majority of the spa business were Spa Town with frequency of 20 or 26.70 while Spa (mineral water) with 17 or 22.70, and Resort/Hotel Spa with 13 or percentage of 17.30, Foot Spa with 10 or percentage of 13.30, Soda Fountain with 7 or 9.30 percent. Destination Spa with 6 or 8.00 percent and the

least is Hot Tub and Day Spa Single with frequency of 1 or 1.30.

With regards to different spa services, majority offers peat pulp bath with frequency of 119 or 95.20 followed by bathing with 62 or percentage of 49.60 while aromatherapy with 38 or percent of 30.40, body wraps with frequency of 36 or 28.80, hot tub with frequency of 19 or 15.20 percent, mud bath with 6 or 4.80 percent and the least is sauna and steam bath with 3 or percentage of 2.40.

The respondents composed of 5 owners, 5 managers, 3 employees and 10 customers each of selected SPA in Batangas City. There were 5 owners of the selected spa such as Mandala Spa, Body Essenxa, Mont Albo, Ton Ton and CND Spa.

**Table 2. Benefits of Massage Spa**

Indicators	WM	VI	Rank
1. It provides job opportunities among the residents of Batangas City and nearby places.	2.92	Agree	7
2. It enhances the awareness of the tourists about the beauty of Batangas City.	3.20	Agree	1
3. It generates income among owners of spa.	2.93	Agree	6
4. It provides taxes for the government.	3.14	Agree	2
5. This gives opportunity that outdoor culture will be recognized by tourists and local residents.	2.89	Agree	8
6. It became a tourist attraction and improves socio-economic of local residents	3.01	Agree	3.5
7. Most tourists will prefer to go to this place and acquire hospitality, tourism and acquire services.	2.79	Agree	10
8. It improves the lifestyle both of the local residents and tourists.	3.01	Agree	3.5
9. It brings social changes among the local residents, tourists and different organizations in Batangas City	2.86	Agree	9
10. It fosters social commitment local residents to their place.	2.95	Agree	5
<b>Composite Mean</b>	<b>2.97</b>	<b>Agree</b>	

As seen from the table, the over-all assessment of the respondents on the benefits of spa was agree with a composite mean of 2.97. It was also observed that all items were assessed as agree. Massage spa enhances the awareness of the tourists about the beauty of Batangas City, ranking first with weighted mean score of 3.20. It was followed by provide taxes for the government, became a tourist attraction and improves socio-economic of local residents and improved the lifestyle both of the local residents and tourists.

Even though all were positively rated, giving opportunity for the outdoor culture to be recognized by tourists and local residents (2.89), bringing social changes among the local residents, tourists and different organizations in Batangas City (2.86) and most tourists preferring to go to this place and acquire hospitality, tourism and acquire services (2.79) got the lowest mean value.

The respondents perceived that the benefit brought by spa is enhancing the awareness of the tourists about the beauty of the place because the spa have customers that are not residents of Batangas City. When they visit the spa, they are becoming aware of simple things about the city and would think of coming back here to see the tourist destinations.

However, the respondents also agreed that most tourists prefer to go to this place and acquire hospitality, tourism and acquire services as the least item because there are available spas in any part of the country, so tourists who would want to acquire services may prefer to go to the nearest spa therapy center which is available.

Spas are already providing wellness, even if they don't recognize it or claim it. The tradition of spa as a place for healing, renewal, relaxation, and feeling well, positions the spa industry as one of the most logical sectors to take advantage of the wellness movement. Wellness also provides an opportunity to reshape the image of spa, to regroup after the global recession, and to position spa as an investment or an essential element in maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

There are a number of business opportunities for the spa industry to pursue along the wellness continuum. While some opportunities will require long-term effort and investment, others simply require spa owners and investors to make small adjustments to their service offerings and reexamine their marketing approaches and customers with a new, wellness-oriented viewpoint (Global Spa Summit, 2010).

The study of del Castillo et.al (2010) entitled "Management of selected spa in Batangas Province"

aimed to find out the facilities and problems encountered by the management. It was found out that there are different facilities for spa massage, hydro therapy and other product provided by spas. They

encountered problems relating to the employees communication skills among foreigner and tourists and determining which kind of therapy is appropriate for the needs of the clients.

**Table 3. Adherence to the DOT Standards**

Indicators	WM	VI	Rank
1. The spa is situated in a safe and reputable location with clean, calm and relaxing environment.	3.00	Agree	6
2. There are reception counters attended by qualified staff and a reasonably furnished lounge with seating facilities commensurate with the size of the spa.	3.00	Agree	6
3. There are well-maintained and well-stocked food bar for clients.	2.88	Agree	15
4. There are separate clean and adequate washrooms for male and female provided with running water, hand dryer and toiletries.	2.99	Agree	10.5
5. There are separate male and female locker rooms for guests.	2.92	Agree	14
6. There are separate male and female shower and changing rooms.	3.00	Agree	6
7. There shall be separate unlocked treatment rooms for male and female.	3.03	Agree	2
8. The spa provides all of the following services in addition to other spa-related amenities which it may offer massages, steam baths, and body treatments.	3.00	Agree	6
9. There are adequate number of well-trained, well-groomed, experienced, courteous and efficient staff.	3.00	Agree	6
10. There are adequate supply of linen, towels and appropriate garments such as sarongs of good quality which shall be kept clean.	3.00	Agree	6
11. There are adequate, secured parking space provided for free to customer/guests.	2.99	Agree	10.5
12. There are high-powered generator capable of providing full power in all areas of the establishment except those spas located in a commercial building with its own emergency generator capable of supplying the power requirements of its tenants.	2.96	Agree	12.5
13. There shall be a well-stocked first aid cabinet available at all times.	3.00	Agree	6
14. There are available facilities for disabled.	3.12	Agree	1
15. There are adequate and well-maintained locker rooms and bathrooms for male and female employees.	2.96	Agree	12.5
<b>Composite Mean</b>	<b>2.99</b>	<b>Agree</b>	

Based from the result, all items were interpreted agree and it obtained a composite mean value of 2.99. There are available facilities for disabled got the highest mean score of 3.12, followed by there shall be separated unlocked treatment rooms for male and female with weighted mean of 3.03.

However, items which obtained the lowest mean values are there are separate male and female locker rooms for guests, and there are well-maintained and well-stocked food bar for clients with 2.92 and 2.88 respectively.

The respondents believed that the spa centers in Batangas City have facilities for disabled persons because spa can help those people who need support to their deteriorating health.

Furthermore, they believed that the least items were availability of generator and well maintained locker rooms because spa therapy centers usually takes 2-3

hours at maximum time and can be also done within 30 minutes depending on the services that the customers prefer so locker rooms are not always available. Addition to this, the centers do not usually need generator because most of their services need water than electricity. It is commonly claimed, in a commercial context, that the word is an acronym of various Latin phrases such as "*Salus Per Aquam*" or "*Sanitas Per Aquam*" meaning "health through water". This is very unlikely: the derivation does not appear before the early 21st century and is probably a backronym as there is no evidence of acronyms passing into the language before the 20th century; nor does it match the known Roman name for the location. The ads are enticing and hard to miss: A serene atmosphere featuring relaxed and beautiful people, all of whom ostensibly got that way by living the "spa" life.

Often, medical tourism fails because the members of the community do not understand its goals and benefits. Locals may have misperceptions of what it means to bring people in need of medical attention into their community. They may not understand that they too play a role in the success of the programme, or may resent the fact that their local doctor is now seeing out-of-town patients. They must ensure to provide accurate cost-benefit information and work with the community rather than imposing a new model onto it.

There are a number of reasons why people travel to other places for medical treatment. Among these are:

choice to go to another location due to lower costs, seeking services not available in their home location, needing to travel to a different location due to denial of services in a managed care or nationalized health care programme, seeking to combine rest and relaxation with a medical procedure, and/or seeking privacy. In order to develop a good medical tourism programme it is essential to determine what drives a portion of the market and which of the above reasons may apply to the segment of the medical tourism market (Hutchinson, 2008).

**Table 4. Action Plan**

<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Person Responsible</b>
To enhance the acknowledgement of the tourist and even local residents about the batangueno culture	The spa businesses may include some local products of Batangas as part of their health and spa services such as usage of coffee beans and etc.	Local Government Spa Owners / health providers
To enhance the knowledge of Batanguenos about the Salum per Aquam health considerations and allows them to be part of the spa tourism industry	SPA education, development and training among local residents of Batangas City which is in partnership of TESDA and CHED Building facilities for training of local residents of different spa services	Local Government TESDA CHED
To segregate the SPA therapy specialized for women and for men.	Establishment of SPA facilities for men and SPA facilities for women	SPA Owners and Managers

**V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Majority of the spa businesses in Batangas City owned by a single person (sole proprietorship) has been in the business for 4-6 years, considered as SPA TOWN and always using mineral water with peat pulp and bathing services. Spa centers enhance the awareness of the tourists about the beauty of the place. Spa business in Batangas city strictly adheres to the standards set by the government. A plan of action was proposed to enhance the benefits brought by the spa businesses in Batangas City.

It is recommended that the College of International Tourism and Hospitality Management may conduct seminar about the SPA and how it can uplift the tourism industry for the residents of Batangas City. The spa in Batangas City must identify the essence of spa tourism and how it can help the economy. The plan of action may be utilized after being approved. A future study may be conducted using other variables to further confirm the results of the study.

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