

## **HOW TO STIMULATE THE SPA TRAVELER'S PERCEPTION IN THEIR CHOICE ON SPA PRODUCT AND SERVICE**

Ni Putu Somawati  
psomawati@yahoo.com

**Abstrak:** *Keinginan wisatawan begitu beragam. Ada yang ingin menikmati hal-hal yang otentik, pemandangan alam sebuah destinasi, peninggalan budaya, penduduk asli dengan keragaman budayanya. Dengan demikian daerah tujuan memiliki peranan penting untuk memenuhi keinginan wisatawan, dengan menyuguhkan atribut yang menarik. Dalam konteks tulisan ini adalah spa resort dengan produk dan layanan spa. Banyak faktor yang mempengaruhi pilihan wisatawan terhadap produk dan layanan spa maka akan sangat bermanfaat bagi pemasar untuk menginformasikan kepada spa traveler tentang jenis-jenis spa serta treatment yang mampu disuguhkan oleh spa, dengan demikian merupakan pengaruh yang berpotensi untuk mempengaruhi persepsinya sehingga spa traveler akan dapat melakukan pilihan yang tepat. Hal ini mengindikasikan bahwa strategi yang tepat telah dilakukan provider/ pemasar dalam merespon permintaan pasar.*

*Kata Kunci: Persepsi, spa traveler, spa type, dan spa treatment*

### **BACKGROUND**

Tourists vary in terms of their desire to experience authenticity. Some want to see beach, historical site, nature or genuine event. Destination will be responsible to provide all these expected needs. Authenticity means really seeing and experiencing what a place, its people, and attraction are like (Friedgen, 1996:160).

Destination and its characteristic play an important role to fulfill the demand., It is due to the consumers/tourists having the tendency to buy things that have attributes consistent with their own perceived image. An individual's total image is made up of several parts. First, the real self is the objective person. What the individual wish in accordance with what she/he wants . Second, there is the ideal self. What we would like to be. This aspect of the individual is easier to discover for two reasons . The first reason is the consumer are more readily willing to discuss what they aspire than what they really believe to motivate them, and second by simply observing of their purchasing behavior much can be learnt about what a consumer is striving for. Last, the self image is how consumers see themselves. It is a combination of the real and ideal self. Consumers'

purchase that will maintain or improve their self image, as they perceive it. According to Walter, in Mill et al., (1984:23) consumer attempts to preserve the self image in several ways;

- Buy products consistent with the self image
- Avoid the product inconsistent with self image
- Trade up to products that relate to an improved self image
- Purchase products that relate favorably to group norm of behavior
- Avoid product that show a radical departure accepted group norm.

The question is how to handle this kind of spa travelers in order that they are willing to buy the service and the spa product unless mastering the information based on the various desire that belong to the consumer. It is believed that the decision to travel to a particular destination, especially spa resort in the context of this writing is linked to one's perception of that object. How we can change an individual's perception of a resort spa in order to increase the likely hood of that individual's visiting the resort spa?

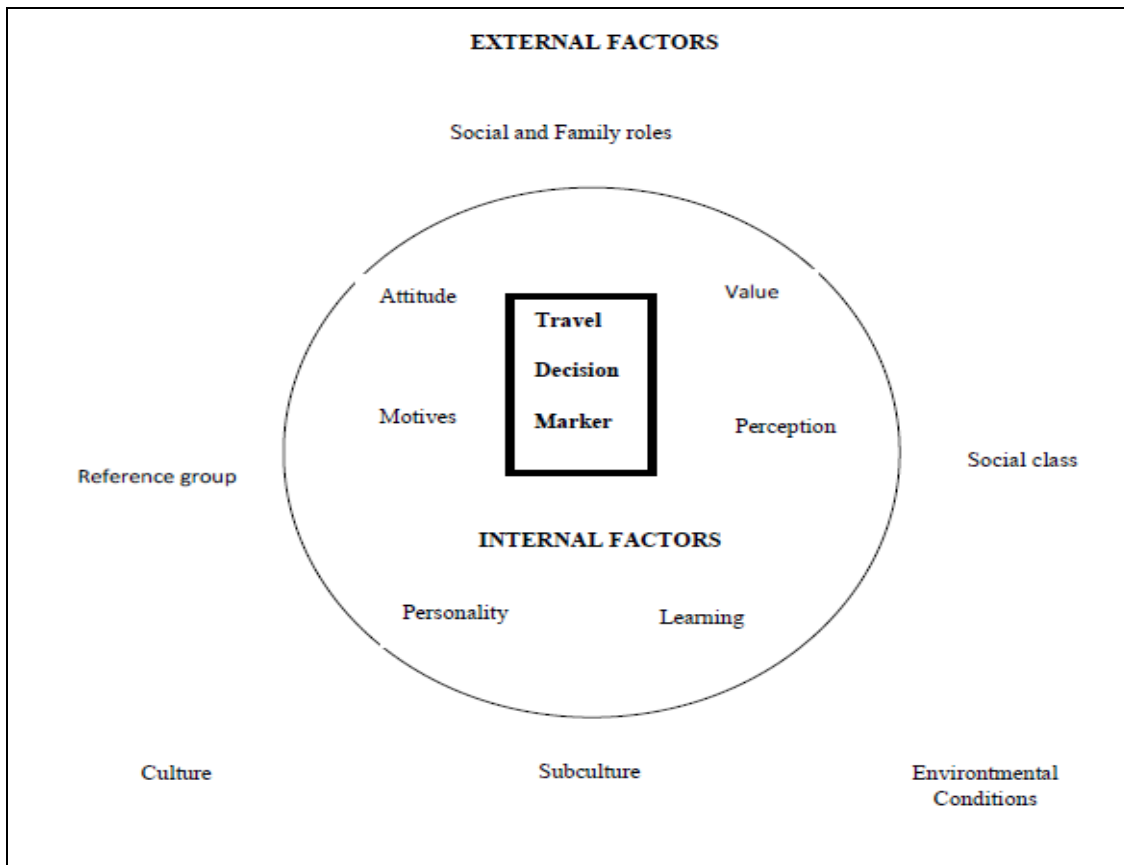
This is literature study, the objective of this study is to reveal how to handle and change travelers' perception in order to increase the possibilities of that consumer's visiting the resort spa. One solution is to gain information from either the social or commercial environment needed to model the image through one's perceptual process.

### **Tourism as a behavior**

According to Fridgen (1996 : 31) 'tourism is a purposeful, planned, and motivated behaviour. The tourist/ consumer will be a central character and a person engaged in travel. There are forces which are influencing the individual/ travel decision which are called internal factors. The internal factors what travel decision does depend on, such as psychological, social, cultural, and environmental forces and all directly influence the travel decision.

Exhibit 1 below serves as a model for decision marker's internal factors which are often considered as part of human strategic behavior. Compared to the external factors external forces exist outside and as environment of human.

Exhibit 1 Influences upon the Travel Decision Maker



Source: Fridgen, 1996 :32

As shown in the exhibit 1 above that the internal factors include attitude, value, perception, learning personality, and motives. The external factors are; social and family roles, social class, environmental condition, culture, subculture, and reference group. The two forces interact in complex ways, so very little can done to change the external factor.

### **The Action Of Perception**

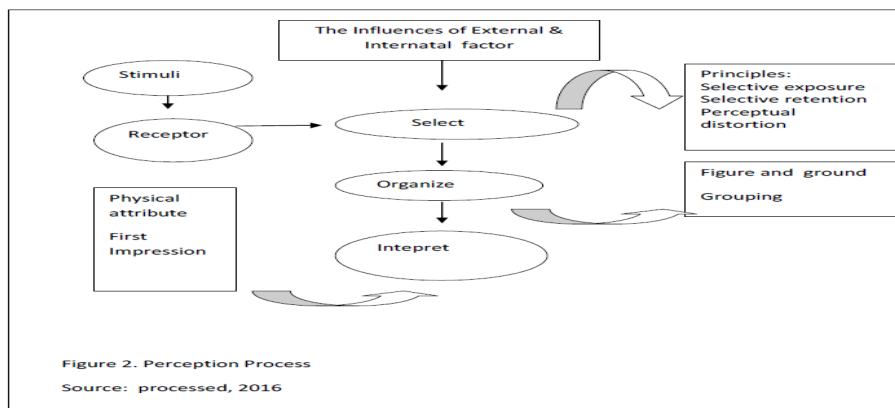
Perception is an active process. People receive sensory input from the environment, they try to seek the input actively. For example we try to explore our neighborhoods, communities in order to gain new and different information. The situation, environment in which perception takes place, as well as the perceivers 'personality, motivation and social background influence the type of information

obtained, due to the dynamic of the perception, which are both active and selective. In the context of this study the writer try to explain the strategy that would be helpful in change the perception into the will of consumer/ spa traveler to visit a resort spa using technical factors such as:

Applying the technical factor which refer to the object (resort spa) , product, or service as it actually exists where the various elements of a particular product or service, such as price, quality, service, availability, and distinctiveness, can be communicated through the product or service itself. All of these inputs are termed significant stimuli. So the individual/ spa traveler become motivated. A motivated spa traveler is ready to act. How that spa traveler act is influenced by his or her perception of the situation/ technical factor. Two people with the same motivation may act quite differently based on how they perceive condition. Question is how do people have different perception of the same perception?

All of us experience a stimulus by the flow of information through our five senses; sight, hearing, smell, touch, and taste. However, each of us receives, organizes, and interprets this sensory information in an individual way. It is because the perception is a process by which individual select, organizes, and interprets information to create a meaningful picture of the world as be seen in figure 2 below:

**Figure 2. Perception Process**



As can be seen from in figure 2 above that people form different perceptions of the same stimulus because of three personal processes; selective exposure, selective Distortion, and selective Retention. These three perceptual factors make the marketer (the spa provider) work harder to get their messages through, which explain why drama and repetition are favored in sending message to the markets. The markets in this context are the spa visitors (Kotler et al., 1996: 197).

In the context of spa's atmosphere which involves the conscious designed of an environment's space can be used to influence the visitor/spa traveler. It is typically conceptual as a way to enhance visitor's emotional response, which are then expected to positively impact their attitude, perception, and visiting behavior.

Several studies have found that mood changes are responsible for many of the observed effects of atmospherics on visitor response. Mehrabian and Russell, (1974 in Chebat et al., 2006:198), who propose that emotional states, such as mood of pleasure and arousal, mediate the effect of environment on behavior. In This context the behavior of spa traveler.

### **The Concept of perceived Quality**

Approching the Spa Traveler to the perceived Quality of the spa is also appropriate decision. According to Zeithaml (1988) quality can be defined broadly as superiority or excellence. By extension, perceived quality can be defined as the consumer's judgement about the product's overall excellence or superiority. So the spa traveller are able to compare to the other product in the same kind. Spa travelers are more likely to be veteran spa-goer than those who only visit the spa close to them. They tend to try a much wider variety of spa treatment. They like to have tried different kinds of spa treatments. Spa travelers do not travel to spa because there are no spas where they live. They visit spa more frequently while they are travelling. They do not only want to visit spa longer but also try as much as they could try the variety of the treatments. Knowing such characteristic of the spa traveler, the provider should inform all about spa including spa

types and treatments. So they are able to make a better choice matching with their perception. Give them the options as much as possible by identifying spa's Type such as:

### **Spa Type**

- **A day spa**

A day spa offers a variety of spa service, including facial and body treatment on daily use basis only. Overnight accommodations are not provided.

- **Resort/ Hotel Spa**

A resort/hotel spa, fitness and wellness services, as well as spa cuisine menu choices and overnight accommodation is also provided by the resort or hotel.

- **Destination Spa**

A destination spa is not a part of another resort or hotel. The destination spa's primary purpose is guiding individual spa-goer to healthy-lifestyle. Historically an extended stay, this information can be accomplished by a comprehensive program that includes spa service, physical fitness activities, wellness education, healthful cuisine and special interesting program.

- **Medical Spa**

A spa which is full time, on site licensed health care professional provide comprehensive medical and wellness care in an environment that integrates spa services, as well as traditional, complimentary and/or alternative therapies and treatments for the visitor. The facilities operate within the scope should have practiced the staffs, which can include both aesthetic/ cosmetic and prevention/wellness procedure and services.

- **Club Spa**

A facility of which primary purpose is fitness and that offers a variety of professional administered spa services on a day- use basis. Is a Club Spa. A hotel gym or fitness club that provide a sauna, steam or whirlpool bath is not a spa unless it explicitly offers spa products and services as its added service.

- **Mineral Spring Spa**

A spa offering on-site sources of natural mineral, thermal or seawater used in hydrotherapy treatments is mineral spring spa.

- **Cruise Ship Spa**

A spa board a cruise ship providing professionally administered spa services. Fitness and wellness components and spa cuisine menu choices is called Cruise Ship Spa. (Canadian Tourism Commission, 2006:6).

Understanding the type of spa will help the visitors to choose the spa which match their need and perception as well as the benefit they experience of using the facilities. Considering that the important factor upon which the tourist's choice of a destination is made can be divided into two. There are factors linked to destination and the unexpected experiences. The second set of chosen factors are related to the tourist home situation. How much does he want to spend, and how long does the holiday last? This is a critical information that must be considered by the marketer to respond to this choice's factor, such as:

- 1) how much to spend
- 2) Pay everything in advance or pay locally as much as possible
- 3) How many days
- 4) Luxury levels 5- star or camping

### **Spa Treatment**

Body treatment or spa treatment is non-medical procedure to help the health of the body. It is performed at resort, destination spa, day spa, beauty salon or school. Typical spa treatment include;

- Aromatherapy
- Bathing or soaking in any of the following
  - a. Hot spring
  - b. Hot tub
  - c. Mud bath
  - d. Sauna
  - e. Steam bath
- Body wrap, wrapping the body in hot lines, plastic sheet and blanket, or mud wraps often in combination with herbal compounds

- Facial, facial cleansing with a variety of products
- Massage
- Nail care such as manicures and pedicures
- Nutrition and weight guidance
- Personal training
- Skin exfoliation, including chemical peel
- Yoga and meditation
- Waxing, the removal of body hair with body with hot wax (Bhardwaj et al.,2013:22).

Knowing the concept of spa and understanding spa travelers' perception and attitude which drive them to visit a spa will provide opportunity to marketer for better understanding of this market and make an appropriate strategy and develop the innovative products so that the visitors are stimulated in the form of willingness to visit the spa resort.

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