

Impact of Sensory Marketing on Consumer Consumption Behaviour in the Hotel Spa Industry

Authors : Li (Claudia) Chen

Abstract : With the rapid development of the global economy, the growing prevalence of customer health consciousness has arisen over the last decade. Consumers are considered more healthy lifestyles and wellness routines in their daily life, and likewise, they are inclined to invest disposable incomes in enhancing their health and wellness, beauty, and social identity. Nowadays, visiting spas has become a popular activity; particularly, millennials are increasingly prone to visiting spas. It has now become one of the major places for relaxation, rejuvenation, revitalization, and enjoyment by providing various types of spa services such as hotel and resort spas, destination spas, mineral, and thermal spring spas, medical spas, and so forth. The hotel and resort spa has been becoming increasingly popular among other spas, which is the largest number of spas and revenue over the last five years, and has now surpassed day/salon spas as the industry revenue leader. In the hotel and resort spa industry, sensory experience plays a vital role in the customer journey, and it encompasses all aspects of the sense that can affect the overall experience. Consumers use senses-sight, sound, touch, smell, and taste to gather the information that contributes to the establishment of an experience, and all senses interacting together form the foundation of sensory experiences. Sensory marketing as a marketing strategy engages consumers' senses and affects their behaviour, yet consumers are often unaware of the way senses interact with their day-to-day experiences. Indeed, it is important to understand consumer sensory experience in terms of how it influences consumer consumption behaviour. The aim of this paper is to evaluate the sensory experiences of consumers and the ways that sensory experiences shape consumer behaviour in the hotel and resort spa industry. This paper consists of in-depth interviews, focus groups, and participant-observation methods to collect data from different stakeholders. The findings reveal that multisensory experiences play vital roles in consumer spa experiences and are highly influential in consumer perception, cognition, and behaviour. Moreover, the findings also demonstrate that sensory stimuli bring positive or negative effects on consumer experience in the hotel spa industry. Ultimately, the findings also offer additional insight to managers on sensory marketing strategy to stimulate brand experience that can establish customer loyalty.

Keywords : sensory marketing, senses, consumer behaviour, multi-sensory marketing, hotel and resorts spa industry, qualitative research

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