

Lifestyle segmentation of spa users: a study of inbound travelers to Hong Kong

Introduction

Wellness is a special state of health comprising an overall sense of wellbeing which sees man as consisting of body, spirit and mind and being dependent on his environment (Dunn, 1959). According to Mueller and Kaufmann (2001) wellness tourism is “the sum of all the relationships and phenomena resulting from a journey and residence by people whose main motive is to preserve or promote their health” (p. 7). Sheldon and Park (2008) proposed six types of wellness tourism types based around the motivation of users and the purpose/ benefits of the wellness product. These are namely medical, health, sport/fitness, adventure, wellbeing and transformation. International Spa Association (ISPA) defines spas as entities devoted to enhancing overall wellbeing through variety of professional services that encourage the renewal of mind, body and spirit.

The spa and wellness industry has been growing exponentially worldwide, with the global market recently reaching US\$438.6 billion (SRI International and Global Spa & Wellness Summit, 2013). By 2017, it is expected to have grown by a further nine percent or more (Health and Wellness Industry Report, 2014). The industry has become one of the main contributors to destination tourism in terms of arrivals (Rasid & Azman, 2013). Travelers perceive the spa experience as a complement to their traditional leisure activities (Mak, Wong, & Chang, 2009). Moreover, they also regard the presence of a spa as an important criterion for hotel selection and satisfaction (Anderson, 2001). Many hotels now offer spa services, because they are not only a profit center (Keri, Ottenbacher, & Herrington, 2007; Koh, Yoo, & Boger, 2010; Madanoglu & Brezina, 2008), but also give the hotel an opportunity to provide customized service to create satisfaction (Madanoglu & Brezina, 2008).

The Asia Pacific region is well positioned in the health and wellness tourism market (Rasid & Azman, 2013). Thailand, Australia, and China are among the largest spa markets with approximately 1,278 spas between them (Intelligent Spas, 2009). The Chinese market in particular grew by 533%, or from 30 to 190 spas, between 2002 and 2008 according to the China and Hong Kong Spa Benchmark Report 2002-2010 (Intelligent Spas, 2008). In terms of revenue, Hong Kong is among the world’s top 20 spa-going countries (Global Spa Summit, 2008). In 2013, visitor arrivals to Hong Kong reached 54.29 million, including Chinese inbound tourists who accounted for 75% of total visitors (HKTG, 2014). Spa services provided by either hotels or day spas are widespread in Hong Kong. Seventy percent of the market is held by day spas (Foster, 2010), which tourists tend to prefer. To attract customers, spas have developed packages offering a combination of sessions, products, and treatments, which occasionally include hotel products such as a meal or

overnight stay option. In addition, spa facilities are becoming an integral part of hotel services, particularly for the upscale market. Hotel spas provide a wide selection of traditional and modern treatments to promote physical as well as mental wellbeing.

Market segmentation is an approach which is used to divide a heterogeneous market into homogeneous subgroups (Smith, 1956) based on the assumption that each subgroup has different and specific needs and characteristics (McDonald & Dunbar, 1995; Mok & Iverson, 2000; Parasuraman, Berry, & Zeithaml, 1991). Different bases (segmentation criteria) are used to form the segments, such as demography, geography, behavior, lifestyle, personality, and benefits sought (Park & Yoon, 2009; Kotler et al., 2002; Dolnicar, 2002). Lifestyle has an impact on a wide range of everyday consumer behaviors such as selecting a travel destination or leisure activities (Matzler et al., 2005), so it is selected in this study as a segment base to enable a better understanding of Hong Kong travelers who visit spas. Lifestyle segmentation enables researchers to obtain multidimensional views of key market segments and develop a better understanding of customers (Berry, 1983).

Despite the increasing importance of spas in the tourism and hospitality industry, only a few studies so far have concentrated on spa goers. A group of studies looks at motivation to visit spas (Mak, Wong, & Cheng, 2009; Koh, Yoo, & Boger, 2010; Kim, Kim, Huh, & Knutson, 2010; Kucukusta, Pang, & Chui, 2013). Two more recent studies investigate service quality in spas (Lo, Wu, & Tsai, 2014; Giritlioglu, Jones, & Avcikurt, 2014). In addition, spa usage characteristics by gender have been analyzed in two studies (Sherman, Clemenz, & Phillip, 2007; Tsai, Suh, & Fong, 2012).

The lifestyles of individuals have been changing rapidly due to liberalization, privatization, and economic globalization (Bharwani & Jauhari, 2013). Hospitality and tourism customers have evolved to become more diverse. Research suggests that consumers are becoming increasingly hedonistic and self-indulgent (Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982; Van Boven & Gilovich, 2003), seeking an integrated, multicultural, and unique hospitality experience (Bharwani & Jauhari, 2013; Poon, 1993; Scott, Laws, & Boksberger, 2009; Salovey & Mayer, 1990; Miao, 2011). Therefore, psychographic variables such as values, attitudes, opinions, and interests reveal more meaningful information about travelers' behaviors and lifestyles (Cha, McCleary, & Uysa, 1995).

Based on the increasing popularity of the wellness/spa trend and the growing numbers of inbound tourists to Hong Kong, it is crucial for spa industry experts to understand the ever-changing desires of consumers. Moreover, characterizing the lifestyles of spa goers and satisfying their needs and wants will ultimately help businesses to develop strategies to attract new customers as well as retaining existing clients. Consequently, with a focus on the Hong Kong spa industry, the objectives of this research are:

- (1) to identify the lifestyle dimensions of international spa visitors to Hong Kong;
- (2) to segment the spa visitors based on their lifestyles; and
- (3) to profile each segment based on sociodemographic and visit characteristics.

Literature Review

Interest in spas and spa goers

Interest to spas has emerged and reached a more mature stage as a response to the human desire for wellness. Nowadays, travelers are increasingly searching for spa services as part of their hotel accommodation (Mak et al., 2009). According to Hall (2003), physical flexibility, weight loss, better digestion and circulation, mental and physical relaxation, cosmetic surgery, and stress management are among the motivations to visit spas. Monteson and Singer (2004) conclude that the majority of clients visit spas for emotional rather than physical reasons, such as “feeling better,” and reward themselves with a small indulgence while enjoying the pampering aspects of the visit.

Although the number of studies in this area is limited, several concentrate on spa goers’ motivation and decision making. For instance, Mak et al. (2009) analyze the motivation of Hong Kong spa goers. They identify 21 motivating items grouped under four underlying factors; relaxation and relief, escape, self-reward and indulgence, and health and beauty. Koh et al. (2010) segment different markets among spa goers in the US, based on a set of benefit variables. These benefits are sought by three basic market segments; escapists, neutralists, and hedonists. Kim, Kim, Huh, and Knutson (2010) examine customers’ behavioral intentions around spa visiting. They show that perceived behavioral control, past experience, and spiritual wellness are significant predictors of intention to visit a spa. Loureiro, Almeida, and Rita (2013) analyze involvement as an antecedent of emotions and satisfaction as outcomes in the S–O–R (stimulus–organism–response) model, and test this in the context of health and wellness tourism, particularly hotel thermal spas. Their results show that relaxation is the core emotion in the spa context, and the atmospheric cues and involvement are important antecedents of relaxation and pleasure. Kucukusta, Pang, and Chui (2013) analyze Hong Kong inbound travelers’ hotel spa selection criteria and show that relaxation, pampering, and beautification are the main reasons for visiting. In a recent study, Choi, Kim, Lee, and Hickerson (2014) examine the role of two distinct dimensions of perceived value (functional and wellness) in spa visitors’ decision making about future behavior.

Spa service quality is analyzed by Lo, Wu, and Tsai (2014). They identify its dimensions and attributes and investigate their impact on consumers' positive emotions generated by a hotel or resort spa experience. They conclude that a well-designed service process, standardized service procedures, and training for service staff and therapists, can help to enhance service quality, generate positive emotions, and ultimately create a better spa experience. Giritlioglu, Jones, and Avcikurt (2014) analyze the food and beverage service quality in spa hotels in Turkey and identify six dimensions of quality, namely assurance and employee knowledge, healthy and attractive food, empathy, tangibles, responsiveness of service delivery, and reliability. They suggest that these dimensions could help spa hotel managers to increase the perceived quality of the services they offer to their guests.

Sociodemographic and spa usage characteristics have also been analyzed. Sherman et al. (2007) show that both male and female spa customers rate aromatherapy, body scrub and exfoliation, facial, fitness facilities, lymphatic drainage, manicure, mud or seaweed wrap, pedicure, Pilates, Shiatsu, sport massage, and yoga services differently. Tsai et al. (2012) concentrate on male spa goers' preferences, as a growing market segment in Hong Kong. They categorize spa-related attributes into four quadrants - concentrate here, keep up the good work, low priority, and possible overkill - that require management attention when reexamining operations and features. They also show that relaxation is the main motivation of male spa goers. Koh et al. (2010) identify significant differences between male and female consumers in three market segments (hedonists, escapists, and naturalists). Mak et al. (2009) show that escape is one of the main motivations for different respondent groups, including males, younger people, and those with higher levels of education. They conclude that the number of male spa-goers is growing faster than that of their female counterparts. Mak et al. (2009) find that more than half of their respondents had visited a spa more than once when traveling abroad. Tabacchi (2010) concludes that young adults expect more social interaction and do not like to be isolated in a spa.

Segmentation theory and lifestyle segmentation

Market segmentation is one of the most fundamental and important concepts of marketing (Dibb, 1998; Danneels, 1996; Middleton, 1994; Heath & Wall, 1992) and has become a valuable tool in developing marketing strategies (Andereck & Caldwell, 1994; Kotler, Bowen, & Makens, 2002; Middleton, 2001; Morrison, 2001). It is used in marketing research for two fundamental reasons: to improve the marketing program for an existing product or to develop a new product. Different bases (segmentation criteria) are used to form the segments, such as demography, geography, behavior, lifestyle, personality, and benefits sought (Park & Yoon, 2009; Kotler et al., 2002; Dolnicar, 2002).

Market segmentation has been used in many tourism and hospitality studies. For example, Yuksel and Yuksel (2002) attempt to segment the market based on tourists' dining preferences and identify nine dimensions perceived as important by five clusters; value seekers, service seekers, adventurous food seekers, atmosphere seekers, and healthy food seekers. Lee and Tideswell (2005) identify different segments of the Korean senior market and explore the experiences, motivations, perceptions, and preferences of each. Sirakaya, Uysal, and Yoshioka (2003) analyze the travel motivations of Japanese travelers on package tours to Turkey. They identify two segments based on their different motivations for travel. Kim, Park, Gazzoli, and Shenk (2011) analyze the underlying benefits sought by international travelers to Macau and identify four distinct clusters; convention and business seekers, family and vacation seekers, gambling and shopping seekers, and multipurpose seekers. Koh, Yoo, and Boger (2010) attempt to identify different market segments among spa goers and classify them into three categories based on the benefits sought; escapist, neutralists, and hedonists.

An assumption can be made that people in clusters or segments with similar lifestyles are more likely to use similar products and services (Craig-Lees, Joy, & Browne, 1995). If similar lifestyles are held to constitute clusters or segments, appropriate marketing strategies can be developed for each (Craig-Lees et al., 1995). According to Lawson, Tyne, Young, and Juric (1999) lifestyle segmentation offers various advantages to marketers. Since knowing about lifestyle helps to understand someone's underlying motivations, and is related to the personal goals that people set for themselves, lifestyle segmentation provides added insight for the development and management of marketing activities. Fuller and Matzler (2008) show that lifestyles are an adequate basis for market segmentation and suggest that hotel chains that cater to diverse lifestyle groups need to differentiate their communication strategies to each segment. Scott and Parfitt (2004) assert that understanding the lifestyle of customers is a valuable tool in marketing in order to understand how the product fits in with the customer's life.

It has been argued that lifestyle characteristics provide more relevant information than demographic variables in terms of understanding tourists as consumers and designing effective marketing programs (Lee & Sparks, 2007; Matzler, Pechlaner, & Hattenberger, 2004). It has also been shown that lifestyle segments vary according to vacation styles, perceptions of destination attributes, satisfaction, loyalty, and word-of-mouth (Matzler, Hattenberger, Pechlaner, & Abfalter, 2005).

Lifestyle and psychographic methods have been used in many studies (see for example Davis et al., 1988; Fuller & Matzler; 2008; McCleary & Choi, 1999; Madrigal & Kahle, 1994; Lawson, Thyne, Young, & Juric, 1999). In these studies, motivations,

attractions visited, activities undertaken, attitudes, and demographic measurements are used to identify the lifestyle segments (Thyne, Davies, & Nash, 2004). Scott and Parfitt (2004) examine three different approaches to using lifestyle segmentation to improve the quality of tourism and leisure marketing cases. They further suggest that managers may consider matching the type of segmentation approach to understanding the wider market or population. Matzler et al. (2005) set out to segment a sample of 1,042 Alpine ski tourists, using lifestyle characteristics. They identify seven lifestyle and five vacation style typologies. Their analysis shows that satisfaction, word-of-mouth, and intention to revisit a destination are significantly influenced by guest lifestyles. Fuller and Matzler (2008) investigate whether product and service attributes differ between different market segments and find that significant differences are found among lifestyle subgroups.

Lifestyle segmentation approaches

Different approaches can be used in lifestyle segmentation. For instance, the Rokeach Value Survey (RVS), is an instrument to measure human values, introduced by Rokeach in 1973, which consists of 18 terminal values and 18 instrumental values (Kamakura & Novak, 1992).

Values and Lifestyles Attitudes Scales (VALS and VALS2) are two other lifestyle segmentation techniques created as generalized segmentation schemes drawing on Maslow's hierarchy of needs and the concept of social character (SBI Strategic Business Insights, 2012; Matzler et al., 2005). Shih (1986) uses the VALS segmentation scheme for tourism marketing strategy development.

The List of Values (LOV) is a simple and effective tool used in psychographic research by making use of nine terminal values that are primarily person oriented and more directly related to daily life roles and situations (Kahle, Beatty, & Homer, 1986, p. 406). Simpson, Bretherton, and de Vere (2005) use the LOV typology to investigate and evaluate the evolving nature of buyer/seller relationships in a wine tourism setting. However, according to Kamakura and Novak (1992), the LOV is a condensed measurement instrument that only includes terminal values.

AIO is based on the examination of the person's activities, interests, opinions, and values (Frank, Massy, & Wind, 1972). Although there is no empirical evidence to support which instrument is the best in assessing individual lifestyles (Kahle et al., 1986), literature review reveals that AIO is much popular than LOV and VALS. Hur et al. (2010) and Yu (2011) also asserted that AIO, developed by Wells and Tigert in 1971, is the most well known and widely used measurement approach to lifestyle studies. For example, Gonzalez and Bello (2002) review the use of lifestyle segmentation in tourism and use AIO as a base

to study Spanish tourism. Todd and Lawson (2001) use an AIO method for understanding the characteristics of visitors and nonvisitors to museums. In this study, a lifestyle scale developed by Matzler et al. (2004, 2005) was adopted to segment the lifestyles of spa goers. The scale was developed based on AIO statements and includes 22 items. Respondents are asked how strongly these factors influence their lives, with clusters being identified accordingly..

Methodology

This study adopts a quantitative approach to segmenting international spa visitors in Hong Kong by lifestyle. Secondary data were obtained through an extensive literature review and primary data through a survey of international spa visitors.

Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of four parts and was developed based on the lifestyle scale developed by Matzler et al. (2004, 2005). That scale was based on AIO statements and contained 22 items. Respondents are asked how strongly each factor influences their lives, with clusters identified accordingly. The first part of the questionnaire included a screening question to identify those respondents who were eligible to be part of the sample population (“Are you a visitor to Hong Kong?”). The second included 26 lifestyle items. The original scale included 22 items. Four further statements were included in the version used here in order to ensure validity. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was used to test the construct validity. The third part of the questionnaire collected demographic information, such as age, gender, country of origin, education level, and purpose of travel. The final part captured information on previous spa visits as frequency over the past year, who had accompanied the respondent, preferred treatments, and preferred type of spa.

To ensure the reliability and validity of the questionnaire, a pilot test was conducted with 30 Hong Kong spa users to test efficacy and clarity. Modifications were then made based on their recommendations. In addition, to capture comprehensive responses from different countries and regions, the questionnaire was originally prepared in English and then translated into traditional and simplified Chinese using the back-translation method to enhance readability. A 5-point rating scale ranging from 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree was used to capture the responses.

The data were then collected from international spa visitors in Hong Kong, including hotel guests, short- and long-term travelers, and day visitors. Due to the difficulty of reaching travelers who had previously used spas in Hong Kong, a convenience sampling method was used. Data were collected in selected hotel, day, and medical spas whose customers include international travelers. In order to identify these spas, a list of hotel, day

and medical spas are identified in Central, Wan Chai and Mid-levels districts of Hong Kong Island. For the Kowloon side, Tsim Sha Choi, West Kowloon and Mong Kok districts were identified to collect data. These districts are where the spas are mostly located and serve international travelers. The directors or managers of the selected spas were contacted to obtain permission to survey their customers. The surveys were generally conducted in the lobby area and each lasted about 15 minutes. Of the 20 spas approached, only 14 (6 hotel, 6 day, and 2 medical) agreed to participate. The data collection lasted three months (between 01 June 2014 to 01 September 2014). A total of 359 international spa visitors were interviewed at all locations.

Data from 359 respondents were then analyzed using the International Business Machines Statistical Package for Social Sciences (version 20.0 for Windows) software. In order to extract the lifestyle dimensions and enable construct validity, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was used. Reliability analysis was carried out to test the internal consistency of each lifestyle dimension. Factor scores (lifestyle dimensions) were used in a hierarchical cluster analysis to identify the number of clusters within the data. Quick clustering (K-means) was used to identify the clusters. Finally, chi-squared tests were used to explore the sociodemographic and spa travel characteristics of the respondents.

Findings

Profile of the respondents

Table 1 summarizes the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents and their previous spa experiences. Of the respondents, there were more women (56.8%) than men (42.9%). 46.6% of the respondents were from Asia Pacific, followed by Europe and America (34.2%), the China-Taiwan (13.6%), and others (5.3%). The majority of the respondents belonged to the age group of below 26 and 26–35, which represent 87.2% of the total. College or university graduates of the respondents were representing 65.5% of the total. Of the respondents, 63.2% were business/meeting travelers. Respondents who had less spa experience within the past year (visited 0–2 times per year) account for 70% of the total. Those who usually visited a spa alone represented 16.4%. Majority of the respondents preferred mostly body massage (46.0%), followed by traditional treatments (20.7%), foot massage (13.5%) and signature treatments (9.3%). The most preferred spa type is day spa with 49.3% followed by hotel spa (29.5%).

*** Insert Table 1 about here***

Factor analysis and reliability testing of lifestyle dimensions

Lifestyle items were analyzed using EFA with principal component analysis using orthogonal varimax rotation to identify the lifestyle dimensions to be used to determine the clusters. The extraction of the factors and items was based on eigenvalues and factor loadings. Only, factors with an eigenvalue greater than 1 and attributes with loadings larger than 0.40 were considered. Four items were excluded as they did not reach acceptable levels. Reliability tests showed that the Cronbach's alpha of the of the overall scale was .84 which suggests very good internal consistency (Nunnally, 1978). The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity were both computed to assess sampling adequacy. The KMO measure was within acceptable limits (KMO=0.821), and Bartlett's test was significant ($c^2=2396.589$, $df=190$, $p < .001$) (Table 2).

*** Insert Table 2 about here***

The factor analysis revealed six dimensions.

Factor 1: Family focused. This factor explained about 25.0% of the variance in the data with an eigenvalue of 5.507 and an alpha coefficient of .75. It encompasses five statements. Since the key items were family related and the dimensions demonstrate a more family-oriented picture, this dimension was labeled as family focused.

Factor 2: Health conscious. This factor explained 9.84% of the variance in the model with an eigenvalue of 2.16 and an alpha coefficient of .80. It contains four statements, all of which indicate that the factor represents a health-conscious way of living.

Factor 3: Intellectual. This factor includes 3 items and accounted for 7.63% of the variance with an eigenvalue of 1.68 and an alpha coefficient of .66. The component items were largely related to intellectualism.

Factor 4: Modesty. This factor explained 6.66% of the variance in the model with an eigenvalue of 1.46 and an alpha coefficient of .68. It comprised three attributes related to a simple, frugal, and introverted way of living.

Factor 5: Pleasure oriented. This factor comprises 3 attributes and accounted for 6.14% of the variance with an eigenvalue of 1.35 and an alpha coefficient of .69. It mainly reflects pleasure-oriented choices and enjoyment.

Factor 6: Active work life. This factor explained 5.06% of the variance with an eigenvalue of 1.11 and an alpha coefficient of .64. It included three items, which mainly related to living a dynamic and busy life.

Cluster analysis for lifestyle segmentation

The objective of this empirical study was to segment spa visitors to Hong Kong based on their lifestyles. In order to achieve this, cluster analysis was performed. This is a commonly used technique that classifies objects into clusters according to their

characteristics. To form the clusters, six lifestyle dimension scores were used in a multistep analysis (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 2006).

One of the challenges of this type of analysis is to determine the appropriate number of clusters to be resolved (Hair et al., 2006). In the initial step, hierarchical cluster analysis (using Ward's method) was used to estimate the right number of clusters. Clusters were formed based on the fixed factor scores. Three-, four-, and five-cluster solutions were calculated. Comparing the results, the five-cluster solution was selected since it provided the most appropriate distances and yielded the best distribution numbers between clusters.

In the second stage, a nonhierarchical technique, the K-means clustering procedure, was performed to obtain the final clusters. Table 3 shows the final cluster centers and ANOVA results indicating the significant differences between them ($p < .001$).

*** Insert Table 3 about here***

Cluster 1: Health conscious and intellectual lifestyle

This cluster contains 94 visitors, the largest subgroup. When the mean scores of each factor are examined, the top two are health conscious (mean=4.47) and intellectual (mean=4.34) way of life among the other lifestyle dimensions. People in this cluster enjoy life and are more family focused. They are more active in business than people in the other clusters.

Cluster 2: Average lifestyle

This cluster contains 84 visitors. Although the highest mean score is found for the pleasure-oriented lifestyle dimension, the mean scores of all the dimensions range from 3.48-3.98, hence the label of average lifestyle. When compared to Cluster 1 the members of this cluster are less active in business, less intellectual, and less health conscious. However, they care about their families and enjoy their lives.

Cluster 3: Family focused lifestyle

This cluster contains 71 visitors and shows the highest mean score for family-focused lifestyle (mean=4.14). Respondents in this cluster have the lowest mean score for active work life (mean=2.20). On the other hand, they also care about their health.

Cluster 4: Pleasure-oriented lifestyle

This cluster includes 84 respondents and has the highest mean score for pleasure-oriented lifestyle with a mean value of 4.36. People in this cluster have more active lives and are not inclined to a modest way of living (mean=2.35). Although they care about their families and their health, this group is more properly characterized by its love of enjoyment, travelling, and going out.

Cluster 5: Carefree lifestyle

Visitors in this cluster gave their highest scores to the modest way of life (mean=3.51) among other lifestyle dimensions. People in this cluster care less about their families, are less health conscious, and read less, suggesting quieter, more introverted characters free from concern but also with less enjoyment in their lives. This cluster consists of only 26 visitors.

Sociodemographic profiles of the clusters

Chi-squared tests were performed in order to see how sociodemographic characteristics are distributed among the clusters and to test for significant differences. The results showed significant differences between the clusters in terms of country of origin, gender, and age ($p < .05$), but not in educational level or purpose of visit. Table 4 shows the sociodemographic profiles and chi-squared results for each cluster.

*** Insert Table 4 about here ***

Cluster 1: 49.47% of respondents with health-conscious and intellectual lifestyles were from the China-Taiwan region; 24.47% from Europe and North America, and 23.83% from the Asia-Pacific area. In this cluster, 71.28% were female and 28.72% male, making it the most female-dominated of the clusters. The majority were aged 26-45 (48.30%). In terms of education, 71.28% held a college or university degree. Their main purpose in visiting Hong Kong was business (59.14%), vacation (22.58%), and visiting friends or relatives (18.28%).

Cluster 2: 35% of respondents with an average lifestyle were from China-Taiwan; 33.33% from Europe and North America, and 23.10% from the Asia-Pacific region. In terms of gender, 57.14% were men, and 39.29% were aged 26-35 (32.14% were below 26, 11.90% 36-45, and 16.67% over 46). Sixty percent were college or university graduates and 60.71% were visiting Hong Kong on business.

Cluster 3: The family-focused lifestyle cluster was drawn mainly from the China-Taiwan region (57.79%) and was 66.20% female. In terms of age, 54.93% were 26-35; 64.78% were college or university graduates. Just under three-quarters (71.83%) of respondents in this group were visiting Hong Kong on business.

Cluster 4: The pleasure-oriented lifestyle cluster was made up primarily (59.52%) of visitors from Europe and North America, of whom 46.43% were male and 53.57% female. In terms of age, 45.24% were under 26 and 41.66% 26-46. College or university graduates

made up 66.67% of this cluster and their main reason for visiting Hong Kong was, again, for business purposes (67.89%).

Cluster 5: In the carefree lifestyle subgroup, 53.85% were from China-Taiwan, 23.07% from Europe and North America, and 19.23% from the Asia-Pacific region. Males made up 64%, and the subgroup had a relatively higher percentage of those in age group 36-46 (19.23%) compared to other clusters. Nevertheless, 38.46% were under 26, and 33.77% aged 26-35. College or university graduates made up 56.00%. Their main reason for visiting Hong Kong was business (46.15%), followed by vacation (34.62% – the highest of all the clusters), and visiting friends and relatives (19.23%).

Spa visit characteristics of the clusters

A further set of chi-squared tests were performed to examine the spa visit characteristics of the clusters and test for significant differences between groups. The results showed that there was a significant difference between the clusters in terms of frequency of visits, whether or not the client was accompanied during the visit, and preferred treatments ($p < .05$), but not preferred spa type. Table 5 shows the sociodemographic profiles of each cluster and the chi-squared test results. The majority of respondents in all the clusters preferred day over hotel and medical spas.

*** Insert Table 5 about here ***

Cluster 1: 44.68% of spa visitors with a health-conscious and intellectual lifestyle had visited spa once or twice in the past year. Just under one-third (31.87%) preferred to visit with a group of friends or relatives, 30.77% with one friend or relative, and 25.27% with a spouse or partner. The favorite treatment of 40.68% was body massage, and for 20.34% facials. Exactly half (50.00%) of respondents in this cluster preferred day spas.

Cluster 2: Spa visitors with an average lifestyle had visited once or twice in the past year, with 35.71% preferring to go with a friend or relative. Traditional treatments (26.32%) and body massage (40.35%) were their favorite treatments, and again, half preferred day spas.

Cluster 3: A total of 54.93% of spa visitors with a family-focused lifestyle had not visited a spa in the past year, other than the study visit in Hong Kong. They preferred to visit with a group of friends or relatives. Their favorite spa treatment was body massage (44.44%). However, this group was most likely to prefer foot massage compared to other clusters (18.52%). Just over half (52.17%) preferred day spas.

Cluster 4: Just under half (48.10%) of respondents in the pleasure-oriented cluster had visited a spa once or twice in the past year, and 37.03% preferred to come with a spouse or partner. In terms of preferences, 64.58% of members of this cluster liked body massage and the majority went to day spas (68.42%).

Cluster 5: Those with a carefree lifestyle had visited a spa three or four times in the past year. Like those in other clusters, they preferred to visit with a friend or relative (38.46%) or spouse/partner (30.77%). This group had equal preference for body massage and traditional treatments (36.84% for both), and just under half (48%) preferred day spas.

Discussion and Implications

The sample for this study was a group of visitors to Hong Kong who visited a spa. To date, only a small number of studies have analyzed spa goers' preferences and motivations (Mak et al., 2009; Koh et al., 2010; Kim et al., 2010; Kucukusta et al., 2013; Tsai et al., 2012). A cluster analysis revealed five lifestyle segments.

The first cluster, focusing on a health conscious and intercultural lifestyle, is made up mainly of women aged 26-36. They are well educated and enjoy reading and working. They like to go to the spa with someone else rather than alone. Their favorite treatments are body massage and facials and they prefer day spas. To attract more of these visitors, spas can develop packages that offer clients pairs or group activities, allowing them to spend more time in the spa and use different products and treatments. As Mak et al. (2009) suggest, spas can also extend their services to include friends and relatives. Some hotel spas in Hong Kong have already created a new market trend of group spa parties (the so-called "sparty") to attract young urban professionals (Shih & Li, 2009). Facial treatments are most popular among this segment when compared to other clusters as these customers also care about their health. That is to be expected since female spa visitors tend to have more interest in beautification and rejuvenation (Mak et al., 2009; Koh et al., 2010). Personalized treatments can also be developed based on the specific skin-care needs of these visitors by experienced therapists.

Spa visitors with an average lifestyle constitute a large proportion of the visitors in this sample. This group is less active in business, less intellectual, and less health conscious, tending to be more pleasure oriented. The majority are men, consistent with the trend towards a growing number of male spa visitors. Tsai et al. (2012) similarly find in their study of male spa visitors that their preferred treatment is body massage, mainly because their primary motivation is relaxation (Tsai et al., 2012; Mak et al., 2009). However, male spa goers in HK are a fast-growing segment of the market, and they are

becoming more interested in facials and botox as well (Spa Finder Wellness, 2013; *Time out*, 2011). The results of this study show that day and hotel spas are popular with this group of visitors. In addition to body massage, they are interested in trying traditional treatments. It may be easier for hotel spas to reach these visitors since in-room ads and brochures are effective tools to communicate with guests. Given that business travelers often have time constraints; packages could be offered in evenings or weekends to enable guests to enjoy treatments. In addition to flexible operating hours, spa packages can be improved. While these packages can offer variety of spa services and facilities, it can also include health food and beverage services for these visitors to spend longer hours.

Most of the visitors in the family-focused segment are women and their main concern is their families. In other words, an important segment of the spa visitor market in Hong Kong is family oriented. They prefer to visit spas with friends and relatives and mainly enjoy body massage. Their main choice is the day spa, but 26% of this group is also interested in medical spas (the highest proportion among the clusters). In order to attract customers in this segment, hotels could offer advantages in terms of the space and variety of the products. The “kids in spas” concept could be promoted, with fun haircuts, foot massage, and manicure and pedicure treatments for young people (Burkholder, 2007). For promotional purposes, small tester samples of spa products or giveaway packages for kids can be very appealing to business customers who are family oriented although traveling alone. Some of these samples can be put in the hotel guests’ rooms to stimulate the interest to visit the hotel spa.

People in the pleasure-oriented lifestyle segment enjoy spa visits and generally prefers to visit with a spouse or partner. This group is mainly from Europe and North America. The majority prefer day spas, with the highest preference level of the clusters. If hotel spas want to attract this group, promotions and packages should be designed for their needs and expectations. Most of the spas in Hong Kong, including day and hotel spas, provide treatments for couples. Since perceived value is a key determinant of repurchase intention and creates loyalty (Anuwichanont & Mechinda, 2011; Cronin, Brady & Hult, 2000; Petrick, 2004) more value-added products should be developed. For example, inclusive partner packages can be very attractive to this segment. Traditional treatment packages for couples can also be promoted as alternatives. Moreover, it is crucial for spas to employ therapists and personnel with good language skills. They need to be trained to provide the technical details of the spa treatments and do the promotion correctly to provide insightful explanation of the spa services.

The final segment is those visitors with a carefree lifestyle. Most of them are men from China-Taiwan aged under 35. This is the smallest cluster, but its members are the most frequent spa users in their respective countries, even though they do not have a

pleasure-oriented lifestyle. This may indicate a feeling that spa visits are more of a necessity than a pleasure. People in this segment are particularly interested in traditional treatments and body massage. The majority visit day spas, but they also enjoy hotel and medical spas. Since more than half of the visitors in this group visit Hong Kong on vacation or to see friends and relatives, they have more time to spend on relaxation and pampering in spas. As Asia offers a world with authentic, original, genuine, and deep encounters (Fuchs, 2003), eastern practices and cultural elements can be used to enrich the product range for these travelers.

The results show that day spas are generally preferred over hotel spas. This may be because hotel spas represent only 30% of the total market in Hong Kong (Yung, 2010). Some of the day spas may offer reasonable promotional prices for vacation travelers in order to capture large numbers of customers at a time. While hotel spas have more advantages in terms of in-house promotional channels, they may find it hard to compete with the prices offered by day spas. The majority of the sample in this study are business travelers and price is an important criterion in their selection of a spa (Kucukusta, Pang, & Chui; 2013; Kucukusta & Denizci Guillet, 2014).

Another important finding of this study is that most visitors prefer to go to a spa with a partner or group of friends and relatives. Visiting a spa is becoming a social activity. Concepts such as “ladies/men’s night out,” bridal showers, and birthday gatherings are among the latest trends in the industry (Spa Finder Wellness, 2013). Moreover, spas are becoming part of daily business life. Day spas are beginning to garner significant revenue from corporate clients and corporate meeting planners are looking at spas and their grounds as conference venues (Burkholder, 2007).

Conclusion

Developing new business strategies to attract new customers and retaining existing clients are becoming a challenge based on the ever-changing needs and expectations of the customers. Lifestyle segmentation analysis involves classifying customers according to their values, beliefs, opinions and interests (Lawson et al, 1999). However, there is no standardized lifestyle segmentation model due to the dynamic nature of today’s consumers; companies need to devise new categories to target the right clients.

The purpose of this study was to segment a sample of Hong Kong spa visitors based on their lifestyle characteristics, and to map their sociodemographic profiles as well as their visit patterns. As the lifestyles of customers today change rapidly, it becomes more and more difficult to predict their needs and desires. This study provides an insight into the preferences

of spa visitors in Hong Kong which can help spa professionals to better understand their customers.

The lifestyle segmentation analysis presented here is unique in the spa industry context, with previous work having focused on motivation and benefit segmentation. Moreover, the findings can assist spa professionals to get better multidimensional views of their key market segments and develop their marketing strategy based on timely information.

The study results showed that visitors prefer day spas and hotel spas in general. There are plenty of day spas providing variety of spa services in Hong Kong. The most preferred spa treatments were the body massage and traditional treatments and visitors enjoy visiting spas with their friends and relatives. The analysis has revealed five clusters of spa visitors to Hong Kong.

Based on the lifestyle dimensions derived from the factor analysis, these segments can be labeled as health conscious and intellectual, average, family focused, pleasure oriented, and carefree. The sociodemographic and spa visit characteristics of each segment have been discussed and practical implications for each group identified. The results reveal that the majority of travelers who visit spas in Hong Kong are health conscious and intellectual family oriented, and enjoy their lives. Spas can concentrate on the needs and wants of these customers and improve their products.

The study does have some limitations. The data were obtained from hotel, day, and medical spas, but since getting permission to survey customers was difficult, the surveys could only be administered at certain times. Therefore, a convenience sampling method was applied. Due to the limited number of respondents, a balanced distribution based on country of origin and other demographic characteristics was not as comprehensive as if a random sample had been drawn. Future segmentation studies may focus on a specific market, such as Chinese or Western visitors, to gather more precise information. Due to the dynamic nature of the spa industry and the current rapid changes in lifestyles, more such studies on lifestyle segmentation could be conducted in future.

Tables

Table 1

Respondents' profile and spa visit characteristics (N=359)

Variable	Percentage	Variable	Percentage
Gender		Frequency of spa visit in	
Male	42.9	0 times	35.7
Female	56.8	1–2 times	39.0
Missing	0.3	3–4 times	16.2
Country/territory of		5 times or more	9.2
Asia Pacific	46.6	Company during a	
China- Taiwan	13.6	typical spa visit	
Europe and North America	34.2	Alone	16.4
Others	5.3	With your spouse/partner	26.2
Age		With one friend/relative	33.1
Below 26	40.1	With a group of	22.6
26–35	47.1	friends/relatives	
36–45	10.0	Missing	1.7
46 or above	7.8	Most preferred spa	
Education Level		treatment	
High school or below	11.1	Signature treatments	9.3
College/university	65.2	Traditional treatments	20.7
Graduate level or higher	23.4	Body massage	46.0
Missing	0.3	Foot massage	13.5
Main purpose of the trip		Facial treatments	10.5
Business/meeting	63.0	Preferred type of spa	
Vacation	17.5	Hotel spa	29.5
Visiting friends/relatives	19.2	Day spa	49.3
Missing	0.3	Medical spa	17.0
		Missing	4.2

Table 2

Exploratory Factor Analysis Results of Lifestyle Statements (N = 359)

	Factor loadings	Eigenvalue	Variance (%)	Mean*
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Factor 1: Family focused		5.507	25.034	3.88
I like spending time with my family.	.794			
All I live for is my family.	.790			
I live my life on a straight path.	.615			
I help people who are in need.	.590			
This is the life I desire to live.	.491			
Factor 2: Health conscious		2.164	9.839	3.76
I work out regularly.	.865			
I do exercise.	.850			
I live a healthy life.	.571			
I am conscious about my diet.	.493			
Factor 3: Intellectual		1.679	7.633	3.69
I read a lot for entertainment/relaxation.	.765			
I read a lot to broaden my knowledge.	.670			
I actively seek out cultural events.	.653			
Factor 4: Modest		1.466	6.664	3.26
I live a simple life.	.800			
I live a frugal life.	.732			
I do meditative exercises.	.557			
I repair things and work manually in my spare time.	.538			
Factor 5: Pleasure oriented		1.350	6.135	4.02
I like traveling.	.745			
I enjoy my life as much as I can.	.694			
I go out a lot.	.640			
Factor 6: Active work life		1.114	5.066	3.14
I am on business trips a lot.	.730			
I have a busy business life.	.666			
I live a life of constant change.	.584			
Total variance explained (%)	60.369			
KMO	0.821			
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	$\chi^2 = 2396.589$	df = 190	p = 0.001	

(*) Mean values were computed based on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Table 3

Results of Cluster Analysis for Hotel Spa Goers' Lifestyles

Factor	Cluster 1 (n=94)	Cluster 2 (n=84)	Cluster 3 (n=71)	Cluster 4 (n=84)	Cluster 5 (n=26)	F- value
Family focused	4.20 ^a	3.72	4.14	3.23	2.86	57.202 ^b
Health conscious	4.47	3.53	3.80	3.53	2.64	67.70 ^b
Intellectual	4.34	3.48	3.68	3.55	2.62	57.053 ^b
Modest	2.85	3.56	3.50	2.35	3.51	111.335 ^b
Pleasure oriented	4.24	3.98	3.65	4.36	2.50	86.335 ^b
Active work life	3.83	3.45	2.20	2.99	2.79	89.069 ^b
<i>Lifestyles</i>	<i>Health conscious and intellectual lifestyle</i>	<i>Average lifestyle</i>	<i>Family- focused lifestyle</i>	<i>Pleasure- oriented lifestyle</i>	<i>Carefree lifestyle</i>	

^a Mean values were computed based on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

^b Significant at $p < 0.001$.

Table 4

Sociodemographic Profile of the Clusters

	Cluster 1 (n=94)	Cluster 2 (n=84)	Cluster 3 (n=71)	Cluster 4 (n=84)	Cluster 5 (n=26)	
Characteristics	<i>Health conscious and intellectual lifestyle</i>	<i>Average lifestyle</i>	<i>Family- focused lifestyle</i>	<i>Pleasure- oriented lifestyle</i>	<i>Carefree lifestyle</i>	χ^2
Country (n=359)						57.775 ^a
Asia-Pacific	23.83%	23.10%	22.68%	15.48%	19.23%	
China-Taiwan	49.57%	35.24%	57.79%	17.86%	53.85%	
Europe and North America	24.47%	33.33%	22.53%	59.52%	23.07%	
Others	2.13%	8.33%	0	7.14%	3.85%	
Gender (n=359)						22.021 ^a
Male	28.72%	57.14%	33.80%	46.43%	64.0%	
Female	71.28%	42.86%	66.20%	53.57%	36.0%	
Age (n=359)						25.272 ^a
Below 26	36.80%	32.14%	35.21%	45.24%	38.46%	
26-35	48.30%	39.29%	54.93%	41.66%	30.77%	
36-45	11.70%	11.90%	05.63%	07.14%	19.23%	
46 or above	03.20%	16.67%	04.23%	05.96%	11.54%	
Education level (n=358)						14.097
High school or below	08.51%	14.29%	12.68%	4.76%	28.00%	
College/University	71.28%	60.71%	64.78%	66.67%	56.00%	
Graduate level or higher	20.21%	25.00%	22.54%	28.57%	16.00%	
Purpose of the trip (n=358)						13.644
Business	59.14%	60.71%	71.83%	67.86%	46.15%	
Vacation	22.58%	15.48%	15.49%	10.71%	34.62%	
Visiting friends and relatives	18.28%	23.81%	12.68%	21.43%	19.23%	

^a Significant at $p < 0.05$.

Table 5

Spa Visit Characteristics of the Clusters

	Cluster 1 (n=94)	Cluster 2 (n=84)	Cluster 3 (n=71)	Cluster 4 (n=84)	Cluster 5 (n=26)
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Characteristics	<i>Health conscious and intellectual lifestyle</i>	<i>Average lifestyle</i>	<i>Family- focused lifestyle</i>	<i>Pleasure- oriented active lifestyle</i>	<i>Carefree lifestyle</i>	χ^2
Frequency of spa visits in the past year (n=359)						36.239 ^a
0 times	24.47%	34.52%	54.93%	24.52%	30.77%	
1-2 times	44.68%	42.86%	35.21%	48.10%	19.23%	
3-4 times	17.02%	13.10%	08.33%	16.67%	42.31%	
5 times or above	13.83%	09.52%	01.41%	10.71%	07.69%	
Company during a typical spa visit (n=353)						29.951 ^a
Alone	12.09%	22.62%	07.04%	22.22%	23.08%	
With spouse/partner	25.27%	23.81%	18.32%	37.03%	30.77%	
With one friend/relative	30.77%	35.71%	42.25%	25.94%	38.46%	
With a group of friends/relatives	31.87%	17.86%	32.39%	14.81%	07.69%	
Most preferred spa treatments (n=237)						27.839 ^a
Signature treatments	13.56%	14.03%	05.56%	02.08%	10.53%	
Traditional treatments	13.56%	26.32%	18.52%	18.75%	36.84%	
Body massage	40.68%	40.35%	44.44%	64.58%	36.84%	
Foot massage	11.86%	15.79%	18.52%	08.34%	10.53%	
Facial treatments	20.34%	03.51%	12.96%	06.25%	05.26%	
Preferred type of spa (n=344)						12.384
Hotel spa	28.72%	37.50%	21.74%	35.53%	28.00%	
Day spa	50.00%	50.00%	52.17%	68.42%	48.00%	
Medical spa	21.28%	12.50%	26.09%	9.21%	24.00%	

^a Mean values were computed based on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

^b Significant at $p < 0.05$.

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