

**Impacts of ISO 17679 Standards on Customer
Satisfaction and Behavioral Intentions in
Wellness SPAs of 5-Star Thermal Hotels**

Ph.D. Dissertation In Tourism Management

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Impacts of ISO 17679 Standards on Customer Satisfaction and Behavioral Intentions in Wellness SPAs of 5-Star Thermal Hotels

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ÖZET

5 Yıldızlı Termal Otellerdeki Wellness Spa'larda ISO 17679 Standartlarını Uygulama Düzeyi ve Müşteri Memnuniyeti ile Davranışsal Niyet Üzerindeki Etkisi

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Bu tez, 5 yıldızlı termal otellerde bulunan sağlık merkezlerinde ISO 17679'a göre hizmet gerekliliklerinin uygulanma derecesini ve bunun müşteri memnuniyeti ve davranışsal niyet üzerindeki etkisini incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Kapsamlı bir kuramsal ve deneysel model geliştirilmiş ve test edilmiştir. Bu model, hizmet gerekliliklerinin müşteri memnuniyeti üzerindeki doğrudan ve aracılı (hizmet ortamı ve hizmet kalitesi) etkisini aracılığıyla araştırmaktadır.

Araştırma, Muscat'ta bulunan termal otellerde sağlık merkezlerinde hizmetlerinden yararlanmış olan 397 müşteriyi kapsayan kolay örnekleme tekniğini kullanmıştır. Bu örneklemeden elde edilen veriler Yapısal Eşitlik Modellemesi (YEM) kullanılarak analiz edilmiştir.

Araştırmanın bulguları, Muscat'taki termal otellerde ISO 17679'un yüksek bir düzeyde uygulandığını ortaya koymaktadır. Ayrıca, hizmet gerekliliklerini karşılamanın müşteri memnuniyetini artırmak ve davranışsal niyetleri etkilemek açısından önemini vurgulamaktadır. Sonuçlar ayrıca hizmet ortamı ve hizmet kalitesinin, hizmet gereklilikleri ile müşteri memnuniyeti arasındaki ilişkide kısmi aracılar olarak rol oynadığını vurgulamaktadır.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Hizmet gereklilikleri, Hizmet ortamı, Hizmet kalitesi, Müşteri memnuniyeti, Davranışsal niyetler, ISO 17679, Umman.

ABSTRACT

Impacts of ISO 17679 Standards on Customer Satisfaction and Behavioral Intentions in Wellness SPAs of 5-Star Thermal Hotels

IYAD A. A. ABUSAHLOUB

Anadolu University, Institute of Social Science, July 2023

Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Semra Günay

This dissertation aimed to examine the extent of service requirements implementation according to ISO 17679 within wellness SPAs located in 5-star thermal hotels, and its effect on customer satisfaction and behavioral intentions. A comprehensive theoretical and empirical model was developed and tested, investigating the direct and indirect impact of service requirements on customer satisfaction through the mediating roles of servicescape and service quality.

The study adopted the convenience sampling technique, involving 397 customers who had experienced wellness SPA services in thermal hotels situated in Muscat. The data collected from this sample were subjected to analysis employing Structural Equation Modeling (SEM).

The findings of the study reveal a high level of ISO 17679 implementation within thermal hotels in Muscat. Additionally, they underscore the significance of meeting service requirements as a means of augmenting customer satisfaction and influencing behavioral intentions. Furthermore, the results emphasize the role of servicescape and service quality as partial mediators in the relationship between Service requirements and customer satisfaction.

Keywords: Service requirements , Servicescape, Service quality, Customer satisfaction, Behavioral intentions, ISO 17679, Oman.

STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE WITH ETHICAL PRINCIPLES AND RULES

I hereby truthfully declare that this thesis is an original work prepared by me; that I have behaved in accordance with the scientific ethical principles and rules throughout the stages of preparation, data collection, analysis and presentation of my work; that I have cited the sources of all the data and information that could be obtained within the scope of this study, and included these sources in the references section; and that this study has been scanned for plagiarism with “scientific plagiarism detection program” used by Anadolu University, and that “it does not have any plagiarism” whatsoever. I also declare that, if a case contrary to my declaration is detected in my work at any time, I hereby express my consent to all the ethical and legal consequences that are involved.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

α : Alfa

AVE : Average Variance Extracted

β : Beta

CFI : Comparative Fit Index, a measure of how well the estimated model fits the data compared to a baseline model.

CR : Composite Reliability.

df : Degrees of freedom, which represents the number of independent pieces of information available in the data.

GCC : Gulf Cooperation Council.

GDP : Gross domestic product.

GFI : Goodness of Fit Index, a measure of how well the observed data fit the estimated model.

H : Hypothesis.

ISO : International Organization for Standardization.

ISO 17679 : Tourism and related services – Wellness SPA – Service requirements .

NCSI : National Centre for Statistics and Information in Muscat.

OIC : The Organization of Islamic Cooperation

- Oman : The Sultanate of Oman.
- P-value : The probability of obtaining a test statistic as extreme as the one observed, assuming the null hypothesis is true.
- RMR : Root Mean Square Residual, a measure of the discrepancy between the observed and predicted covariance matrices.
- RMSEA : Root Mean Square Error of Approximation, a measure of how well the model fits the covariance matrix of the observed data.
- RO : Rial Omani
- S.A : Saudi Arabia.
- SEM : Structural Equation Modeling
- SPA : An acronym of the Latin phrase *Salus/Sanum per aquam* or *Sanitas per aquam*, which translates as “health through water”.
- U.A.E : The United Arab Emirates.
- UK : The United Kingdom.
- USD : U.S. dollar
- χ^2 : Chi-square, a measure of the discrepancy between the observed and expected data in a statistical model.
- χ^2/df : The ratio of the chi-square statistic to the degrees of freedom, which provides an indication of model fit.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Herrick (2007) and Connell (2005) have documented the extensive historical roots of medical or health-related travel. In earlier times, the opportunity to journey to different cities or countries was enjoyed exclusively by a privileged few. However, the conclusion of the 20th century witnessed remarkable technological progress and improved transportation facilities, thereby facilitating health travel on a larger scale. Over the past two decades, health tourism has emerged as a prominent and effective alternative within the realm of tourism. Notably, since the 1970s, international health tourism programs and services have been systematically developed, leading to the recent phenomenon of blending health and tourism offerings as a unified product (Köstepen & Öter, 2013).

The concept of "health tourism" can be categorized into four distinct types, as outlined by Köstepen and Öter (2013): a) Thermal tourism wellness & SPA, b) Disabled tourism, c) Geriatric tourism, and d) Medical tourism. However, this research focuses exclusively on examining Thermal Tourism (wellness & SPA) within the context of the Sultanate of Oman.

1.1. Rationale of the Study

The wellness SPA industry has become a global trade, requiring strategies to enhance service quality and competitive pricing. Identifying high-quality services, promoting transparency, building trust, improving efficiency, and transferring

knowledge on service quality are urgent needs. ISO 17679 is crucial in defining service requirements, supporting processes, and setting standards for wellness SPA quality (ISO 17679, 2016).

Existing research has extensively explored factors affecting customer satisfaction and behavioral intentions, such as servicescape, service quality, service experience, emotions, perceived value, and perceived quality. However, the significance of service requirements as a fundamental precursor to these variables has often been overlooked.

This study focuses on 5-star thermal hotel SPAs in the Sultanate of Oman, a leading tourist destination among Arab countries. Despite its natural beauty and diversity, Oman has been relatively overlooked by international tourists until recent years. This context makes Oman an ideal setting for this study, providing valuable insights into the implementation of ISO 17679 standards.

The main objective of this research is to assess the implementation of ISO 17679 standards in SPAs of 5-star thermal hotels in Oman and its impact on customer satisfaction and behavioral intentions. The study's findings will contribute to theoretical and practical implications in the field of wellness SPA tourism management.

1.2. Purpose of the Study

This dissertation aims to develop and validate an empirical model that examines the implementation of ISO 17679 standards in 5-star thermal hotel wellness SPAs. Specifically, the study focuses on the impact of ISO 17679 implementation on servicescape and service quality. Additionally, it explores the mediating role of servicescape and service quality in the relationship between ISO 17679 implementation and customer satisfaction, as well as the direct and indirect effects of these variables on

customer satisfaction. Moreover, the study investigates the influence of customer satisfaction on behavioral intentions. To achieve these objectives, the research seeks to:

1. Evaluate the implementation level of service requirements according to tourists' perceptions based on ISO 17679 in wellness SPAs of 5-star thermal hotels.
2. Measure servicescape according to tourists' perceptions based on Chang (2016).
3. Measure service quality according to tourists' perceptions based on Chen et al. (2015).
4. Measure customer satisfaction according to tourists' perceptions based on Han & Ryu (2009).
5. Measure behavioral intentions according to tourists' perceptions based on Virabhakul & Huang (2018).
6. Investigate the direct effect of ISO 17679 implementation on customer satisfaction.
7. Explore the indirect effect of ISO 17679 implementation on customer satisfaction, mediated by servicescape and service quality.
8. Examine the relationship between customer satisfaction and behavioral intentions in wellness SPAs of 5-star thermal hotels.

1.3. Significance and Contribution of the Study

This study focuses on SPA service requirements in the Sultanate of Oman, contributing to limited research on the importance of service requirements in shaping customer satisfaction and behavioral intentions.

The choice of the Sultanate of Oman as the research area for this study is supported by multiple justifications, which will be elaborated upon in subsequent sections of this dissertation.

Based on ISO 17679 standards, this research examines six critical factors related to service requirements i.e. (reception facilities, reception services, treatment area, equipment, hygiene practices, and staff). It pioneers the investigation of service requirements' significance and their impact on customer satisfaction aligned with ISO 17679 standards, contributing to the existing knowledge in the field.

Using multiple serial mediation models, this study explores the influence of service requirements on customer satisfaction. It examines the mediating effects of servicescape and service quality individually and combined, revealing the underlying mechanisms that link service requirements to customer satisfaction.

The practical implications of this study benefit SPA managers, providing insights to enhance the service experience, increase customer satisfaction, and foster repeat business. The findings and recommendations can be applied by stakeholders in the SPA industry to improve service offerings, attract new customers, and promote customer loyalty and retention.

1.4. Study Area (Oman)

The area of this study is the Sultanate of Oman which is situated at the southern extremity of the Arabian Peninsula, bordered by the United Arab Emirates (U.A.E.), Saudi Arabia (S.A.), and Yemen. Encompassing a land area of 309,500 km², Oman boasts diverse topography, characterized by rugged mountains and steep coastal fjords in the northern regions, verdant hills and mountains in the Dhofar region to the south, and the expansive expanse of the Wahiba Sands at its core. Positioned along the tropic

of cancer, Oman falls within the hot and arid climatic zones, although the southern part of the country experiences a tropical climate (Choufany & Younes, 2005).



Figure 1.1. Location map of the Sultanate of Oman.

Source: Britannica | Geography & Travel | Oman, Jul 28, 2023. Retrieved

from: <https://www.britannica.com/place/Oman>

Despite entering the tourism sector relatively late compared to other Gulf countries, Oman has successfully transformed its oil wealth into a more diversified economy through strategic government initiatives. This has positioned Oman as an attractive destination, experiencing a steady increase in tourist numbers (Oukil, Channouf, & Al-Zaidi, 2016).

As stated by the Omani Ministry of Information (2023), Oman is renowned for its remarkable diversity and natural splendor, which, despite its appeal to discerning travelers, had remained largely overlooked by international tourists until recent times. The government, recognizing the significance of adequate readiness to accommodate

visitors, refrained from actively promoting the Sultanate as a tourist destination until suitable infrastructure was firmly established. Presently, with a commendable and secure infrastructure in place, an extensive selection of international hotels, and a plethora of captivating attractions and activities, Oman is prepared to extend its traditional hospitality to visitors from around the globe. As of the end of 2004, the country boasted a total of 146 hotels, with continuous efforts dedicated to ongoing development and expansion of facilities. A testament to the government's commitment to this sector was the enactment of Royal Decree No. 61/2004, establishing the ministry of tourism and appointing a woman as its minister, underscoring the sector's significance and inclusivity.



Figure 1.2. A photo from The Sultanate of Oman

Source: ABU MALAK GLOBAL ENTERPRISES, Oman, Jul 28, 2023. Retrieved

from: <https://www.protectgcc.com/sultanate-of-oman>

Tourism in Oman is a developing sector, with Muscat international airport welcoming a significant number of travelers, particularly from European countries. In

2011, Oman had 248 hotels offering 12,195 rooms with 19,265 beds. The hotels' occupancy rate stood at 45%, demonstrating the growing importance of tourism in the country. Oman offers diverse tourism experiences, including eco and nature tourism, sports and activities tourism, cultural tourism, beach tourism, rural tourism, heritage tourism, adventure tourism, wildlife tourism, MICE tourism, and island tourism. Visitors can engage in various activities such as sand dune safaris, camel rides, jeep race competitions, and marine tourism, including dolphin and whale watching. The country's long and clean beaches also provide opportunities for turtle watching. In 2010, tourism contributed 2.66% of Oman's GDP. Tourist visas are typically valid for one month, and larger hotels often offer recreational activities such as water sports (Kumar & Mathur, 2013).

The tourism industry in Oman made a significant contribution to the country's GDP in 2015, accounting for approximately 5.7%. This contribution resulted in the creation of 111,500 jobs, representing 5.7% of total employment. Projections for 2023 indicate further growth in job opportunities, with an estimated 117,000 jobs supported by the tourism industry. These figures highlight the increasing importance of tourism in Oman's economy and its potential for sustained growth and job creation. A benchmarking analysis of the hotel industry in Oman revealed that the majority of hotels were technically inefficient. Efficient hotels were predominantly located in Muscat, accounting for approximately 72.7% of the sample. The study identified star ratings and cultural attractions as the primary factors influencing hotel efficiency in Oman (Oukil, Channouf, & Al-Zaidi, 2016).

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Overview

Given the existing research gap regarding the influence of service requirements on servicescape, service quality, and customer satisfaction within wellness SPAs in 5-star thermal hotels, this study aims to address this gap by examining the level of implementation of international standards related to service requirements, as outlined in ISO 17679. Additionally, the study aims to investigate the impact of this implementation level on servicescape, service quality, and customer satisfaction, while considering servicescape and service quality as potential mediator variables. Furthermore, the study seeks to explore the relationship between customer satisfaction and behavioral intentions from the perspective of customers. By examining these relationships, the study aims to contribute valuable insights to the field and fill the existing research gap.

Moreover, the rationale for selecting the Sultanate of Oman as the focal point for this research is supported by several factors, which will be expounded upon in the following sections of the dissertation.

2.2. Service Requirements

Noipom et al. (2019) emphasize the importance of having Halal SPA service standards in Thailand, specifically focusing on criteria for service requirements. They

discuss various aspects related to SPA centers in Thailand, while the current study investigates the implementation level of service requirements based on ISO 17679 international standards. While both studies address the need for service requirement standards and customer satisfaction, they differ in the specific standards and criteria they focus on.

The study by Kucukusta et al. (2013) examines the selection criteria used by inbound travelers for SPA-related services, considering demographic factors and travel characteristics. These studies highlight the influence of service requirements on tourists' destination choices and the importance for marketing leaders to understand and fulfill these criteria effectively. ISO 17679 provides international standards for service requirements in SPA centers and hotels, serving as a framework for managers to meet tourists' expectations and ensure a high level of service quality.

2.3. ISO Standards

Dick et al. (2002) conducted a study examining the usage and importance of quality measurements in the largest service companies in the UK. The research specifically explores the relationship between internal and customer-based quality measurements and the significance given to ISO 9000 accreditation. The study findings indicate that service firms considering accreditation important exhibit a distinct emphasis on quality compared to other firms. These firms adopt a balanced approach, giving equal attention to both internal and customer-based quality measurements, whereas other firms predominantly focus on internal processes. This suggests that ISO 9000 accreditation has the potential to significantly influence how quality is perceived and assessed by large service companies. In summary, the ISO 9001:2000 standards aim to establish systems that ensure good quality across both internal and customer-based

measurements, whereas the SERVQUAL framework primarily focuses on customer-oriented measurements without considering internal processes. This distinction highlights the broader scope of ISO 9001:2000 standards, encompassing both internal and customer perspectives, while SERVQUAL concentrates solely on customer-based quality measurements.

Nowicki et al. (2014) aim to explore the recognition and knowledge of customer satisfaction standards within the ISO 10000 family by SPA enterprises in Poland. The study focuses on eight SPA organizations and employs case studies, conducting interviews with individuals responsible for managing systems and addressing customer satisfaction. The findings reveal that while most companies are familiar with the ISO 10000 family standards, they lack detailed knowledge about them. The primary reasons for not implementing these standards include perceived cost, time constraints, and bureaucratic processes. It is important to note that the study has limitations, focusing only on the SPA sector in a specific geographical area and investigating general principles of customer satisfaction within the ISO 10000 series.

Чирва and Литвин (2020) emphasize the impact of international cooperation on tourism development in Ukraine, particularly the adoption of international standards in the tourism sector. They highlight three national standards aligned with international and European regulations. ISO 17679:2016 focuses on SPA services and their requirements, providing guidelines for wellness SPA services. ISO 17049:2013 addresses accessible design, specifically incorporating Braille signage, equipment, and devices to enhance accessibility for individuals with visual impairments. ISO 23599:2012 pertains to tactile walking surface indicators for the blind and visually impaired, offering guidelines for their installation and use. The adoption of these

international standards reflects countries' commitment to international cooperation in developing their tourism industry and improving service quality.

2.4. ISO 17679

The global wellness SPA industry has become a significant sector in international trade. To succeed in the global market, it is essential to implement effective strategies that improve service quality and ensure competitive pricing. This includes identifying and promoting high-quality services, ensuring transparent service transactions, building client trust, enhancing business competence, and facilitating knowledge transfer on service quality (ISO 17679, 2016).

In response to the increasing influence of globalization, organizations are adopting management standards established by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) to meet customer expectations effectively. These ISO management standards play a critical role in reducing performance variations among suppliers and facilitating global trade. However, it is important to recognize that adopting ISO standards also fosters a degree of similarity or isomorphism among organizations. The concept of "standards" inherently promotes a level of similarity among firms (Su et al., 2015).

ISO 17679 plays a vital role in defining service requirements, supporting processes, and quality standards for wellness SPAs. Its main objective is to establish and enhance the quality requirements of wellness SPA services, ensuring comprehensive monitoring and measurement and offering guidance on appropriate methods for effectiveness and adaptability. ISO 17679 applies to various types and sizes of wellness SPAs, including those integrated into other establishments such as

accommodation facilities, fitness centers, and hospitals. However, it is important to note that ISO 17679 does not cover requirements related to accommodation or food and beverage services. Furthermore, the regulations established in ISO 17679 do not apply to medical SPAs and thalassotherapy centers. In addition, the standards set forth by ISO 17679 do not address aspects related to medical professions, including medical education, religious considerations, and matters concerning medical vocations (ISO 17679, 2016).

2.5. Servicescape

Loureiro (2017) conducted a study to examine the influence of servicescape and credibility on the emotions, perceived quality, and image of medical tourists in Portugal. The study identified three key factors related to the servicescape: ambient, design, and social factors. The findings indicated that ambiance and design were the most significant factors shaping the servicescape, and the servicescape had a positive impact on customer pleasure, perceived service quality, and perception of the hospital's image.

Amato (2016) investigated the impact of servicescape on consumer emotions and sensations in the wellness industry. The study conducted a critical review and questionnaire-based analysis to explore the relationship between servicescape elements and customer preferences. The research highlighted the importance of efficient design in creating an appropriate atmosphere and eliciting positive emotions. Temperature, cleanliness, and scent were identified as crucial elements influencing consumer moods, while all other elements also had a significant impact. The study offers insights for facility managers to reevaluate the relationship between servicescape and consumer preferences and provides guidance for those planning to establish a SPA or wellness facility.

In summary, both studies emphasize the significance of servicescape in shaping customer experiences and perceptions. They highlight the importance of various elements such as ambiance, design, cleanliness, and employee behavior in creating a positive environment that enhances customer satisfaction and emotional responses. These findings have implications for managers in the tourism and wellness industry to improve servicescape design and meet customer preferences effectively.

Choi et al. (2016) conducted a study to investigate the factors contributing to customers' positive wellness service experiences by examining the antecedents of such experiences. The study proposed that servicescape plays a significant role in enhancing the effects of emotion and trust on the service experience. The authors emphasized the need to simultaneously consider servicescape, emotion, and trust in understanding customers' emotional evaluation of the service experience, as previous research had not fully explored their combined influence. The study collected data directly from customers of a SPA in the Midwestern United States and used multiple regression analysis to assess the impact of emotion, trust, and servicescape on customers' evaluations of their SPA experiences. The analysis also examined the interaction effects among these factors. The findings revealed that servicescape, emotion, and trust had significant main effects on customers' wellness experiences. However, the interaction effects between these factors were not significant. Among the factors examined, trust had the most substantial effect on customers' wellness experience, followed by emotion and servicescape.

The findings of a study conducted by Chang (2016) indicate that the tangible facilities and intangible services offered by resorts interact to create customer value, aligning with Levitt's concept of "marketing intangible products and product

intangibles" (1981). The study emphasizes the significance of employee behaviors, perceived servicescape, and customer emotions in shaping customer consumption experiences within a service-oriented firm. The specific results of the study can be summarized as follows: The perceived substantive staging of servicescape in hot spring resorts positively influences customer emotions. The perceived communicative staging of servicescape also has a similar effect on customer emotions, highlighting the ongoing importance of employee behavior even in the presence of luxurious tangible offerings. To measure the variables, the study adopted specific items related to each dimension:

1. Substantive staging of servicescape (SS):

- Pleasant background music in the hot spring resort.
- Pleasant smell in the hot spring resort.
- Cheerful atmosphere in the hot spring resort.
- Cleanliness of the hot spring resort.
- Modern and well-maintained facilities in the hot spring resort.
- Attractive architecture of the hot spring resort.
- Appealing color scheme of the hot spring resort.
- Well-maintained facilities in the hot spring resort.

2. Communicative staging of servicescape (CS):

- Willingness of employees in the hot spring resort to help.
- Polite and friendly behavior of employees in the hot spring resort.
- Personal attention provided by employees in the hot spring resort.
- Passion demonstrated by employees in the hot spring resort.

3. Customer emotions (CE):

- Feeling of energy experienced in the hot spring resort.
- Feeling of enthusiasm experienced in the hot spring resort.
- Feeling of excitement experienced in the hot spring resort.

4. Behavioral intentions (BI):

- Intentions to return to the hot spring resort for the next trip.
- Plan to recommend the hot spring resort to family and friends.
- Intentions to stay at the hot spring resort within the next three years.

2.6. Service Quality

El-refae (2012) conducted a study in Malaysia's SPA setting to explore the impact of service quality on customer satisfaction and revisit behavioral intentions. The study identified two dimensions of service quality, tangibles and empathy, as having the most significant influence on customer satisfaction and behavioral intentions. The dimensions of reliability and responsiveness also played a role, while assurance did not have a significant effect on customer satisfaction and behavioral intentions in this particular study.

In a study conducted by Chen et al. (2015) in Taiwan's 5-star hotels, the researchers investigated the influence of luxury restaurants' stimuli (food quality, service quality, atmospherics, other customers) and customers' expectations on diners' emotions and loyalty, using a modified M-R (Motivation-Reasoning) model. The data analysis supported the proposed framework of the study, demonstrating the relationship between stimuli, expectations, emotions, and loyalty. The study also highlighted the

differential effects of positive and negative emotions on diners' loyalty towards restaurants.

2.7. Customer Satisfaction

Han and Ryu (2009) conducted a research study in the restaurant industry to investigate the relationships between the physical environment (decor and artifacts, spatial layout, and ambient conditions), price perception, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty. The study utilized structural equation modeling and data from a survey with 279 cases to evaluate the proposed model and test the research hypotheses.

The study's findings provide valuable insights for restaurateurs to enhance customer loyalty by understanding the roles of the physical environment, price perception, and customer satisfaction. Key findings include: The physical environment factors strongly influenced customers' perception of price, which, in turn, had a positive impact on customer satisfaction. Customer satisfaction, directly or indirectly through price perception, significantly influenced customer loyalty. Decor and artifacts were identified as the most significant predictors of price perception among the physical environment components. Finally, price perception and customer satisfaction played important mediating roles in the model.

These findings offer valuable guidance for restaurant owners and managers to improve customer loyalty by focusing on enhancing the physical environment, managing price perception, and ensuring high levels of customer satisfaction. The study employed the following questionnaire items:

- Overall, I am satisfied here.
- I have really enjoyed myself here.
- The overall feelings I got from here put me in a good mood.

2.8. Behavioral Intentions

González et al. (2007) conducted a study highlighting the lack of research on consumer behavioral intentions despite their importance in the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction. The study aimed to develop a model illustrating how service quality perceptions and customer satisfaction influence behavioral intentions. Questionnaire items were distributed to consumers visiting SPA resorts to measure their behavioral intentions. The study's results indicated the significant impact of service quality and customer satisfaction on behavioral intentions in the tourism industry.

Clemes et al. (2020) conducted research to develop and test a comprehensive hierarchical model of behavioral intentions among day SPA customers. Data was collected from customers of 17 day spas in Thailand and analyzed using exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and structural equation modeling (SEM). The findings provide insights such as customer satisfaction being the key determinant of behavioral intentions. Service quality and perceived value are influential factors affecting customer satisfaction. Service quality, specifically interpersonal quality, environment quality, administrative quality, and technical quality, significantly impacts customer satisfaction and behavioral intentions. Customer satisfaction partially mediates the relationship between service quality and behavioral intentions, as well as perceived value and behavioral intentions. Understanding and managing these factors can enhance customer loyalty and retention in the day SPA industry.

Virabhakul and Huang (2018) investigated the relationships among service experience, emotions, perceived value, satisfaction, and behavioral intentions in wellness SPA services. They examined the mediating effects of emotions, perceived value, and satisfaction on the service experience-behavioral intentions relationship. Data

from a survey of 500 Thai day spa goers in five major cities showed sequential mediation of emotions, perceived value, and satisfaction. The study revealed significant connections among service experience, emotions, perceived value, satisfaction, and behavioral intentions, enhancing our understanding of Thai SPA goers' decision-making process.

To measure the study variables, the following dimensions were adopted:

1. Service experience:
 - Physical environment
 - Therapists and staff
 - SPA products and treatments
 - Other customers
2. Emotions:
 - Feeling refreshed
 - Feeling relaxed
 - Feeling peaceful
 - Feeling joyful
3. Perceived value:
 - Physical value
 - Hedonic value
 - Social value
 - Price value
4. Satisfaction:
 - Feeling of making a correct decision
 - Positive feelings
 - Overall satisfaction
5. Behavioral intentions:
 - Intentions to revisit

- First choice
- Positive comments
- Recommendation to others
- Continual intentions.

2.9 Theoretical Framework

2.9.1 Customer expectation-perception theory

The Customer Expectation-Perception Theory, proposed by Parasuraman., Zeithaml, & Berry (1985) in their seminal 1985 paper titled "*A Conceptual Model of Service Quality and Its Implications for Future Research*", aims to understand and measure customer perceptions of service quality. The theory revolves around the concept of a "gap" between customers' expectations and their actual perceptions of the service they receive.

Service Quality: The authors define service quality as the extent to which customers' perceptions of a service meet or exceed their expectations. Customers form expectations based on various factors, including past experiences, word-of-mouth, advertising, and personal needs.

Customer Expectations: Customers enter into service encounters with pre-existing expectations about how the service should be delivered. These expectations can be both explicit (consciously formed) and implicit (subconsciously formed).

Perception: After experiencing the service, customers form perceptions of the service quality based on the actual service encounter. These perceptions can be influenced by the service delivery process, the behavior of service providers, and the service environment.

The Gap Model: The central idea of the theory is represented through the "gap model," which identifies four potential gaps that can occur in a service delivery process:

Gap 1: The Knowledge Gap - This gap represents the difference between management's understanding of customer expectations and what customers actually expect. It highlights the importance of understanding customer needs and preferences accurately.

Gap 2: The Standards Gap - This gap is the difference between management's understanding of customer expectations and the service quality standards set by the organization. It emphasizes the need to set appropriate service standards that align with customer expectations.

Gap 3: The Delivery Gap - This gap reflects the difference between the established service quality standards and the actual service delivered to customers. It emphasizes the importance of consistent and effective service delivery.

Gap 4: The Communication Gap - This gap is the difference between what the company communicates to customers about its services and what customers actually perceive during the service encounter. It highlights the need for accurate and transparent communication.

Implications: The theory emphasizes that closing these gaps is essential for enhancing overall service quality and customer satisfaction. To achieve this, organizations should focus on understanding customer expectations, setting appropriate service standards, ensuring consistent service delivery, and improving communication with customers.

The Expectation-Perception Theory provided a foundational framework for measuring service quality and has been widely used to improve customer experiences in

various industries. It highlights the importance of aligning customer expectations with service delivery and offers valuable insights into customer satisfaction and loyalty.

The present research is centered on addressing two gaps identified in the Customer Expectation-Perception Theory, specifically Gap 2 (The Standards Gap) and Gap 3 (The Delivery Gap). It seeks to explore the applicability of service standards, exemplified by ISO 17679, in the context of wellness SPAs. These standards play a crucial role in defining the requisite service elements, supporting processes, and quality benchmarks for wellness SPAs. The principal aim of this study is to establish and enhance the quality criteria for wellness SPA services through the implementation of comprehensive monitoring and measurement practices, while also providing guidance on the adoption of suitable methods to enhance effectiveness and adaptability. Additionally, the research delves into Gap 3 by examining the potential mediating effects of servicescape and service quality in the relationship between service requirements and customer satisfaction. By investigating these two gaps, this study contributes to a better understanding of service quality in the wellness SPA industry, ultimately striving to improve customer experiences and satisfaction levels.

2.9.2 Expectancy- disconfirmation theory

Expectancy-Disconfirmation Theory, which is also known as Expectation-Confirmation Model, proposed by Oliver (1980), is a psychological theory that deals with how individuals form perceptions and evaluations of products, services, or experiences based on their prior expectations and actual experiences with the product or service.

According to this theory, when people have certain expectations about a product or service, they create a cognitive benchmark or reference point for evaluating their

actual experience with it. This reference point is established by comparing their expectations (what they believe or hope the product or service will provide) to the perceived performance or outcome they experience.

The theory proposes three main possibilities for the outcome of this comparison:

Positive Disconfirmation: Occurs when the actual performance exceeds expectations. This leads to higher satisfaction and a positive evaluation of the product or service.

Negative Disconfirmation: Occurs when the actual performance falls short of expectations. This leads to dissatisfaction and a negative evaluation of the product or service.

Confirmation: This occurs when the actual performance matches expectations. This can lead to satisfaction or, at least, the maintenance of the same level of satisfaction.

Expectancy-Disconfirmation Theory is often applied in marketing and consumer behavior studies to understand how consumers judge products and services and how companies can manage customer satisfaction by aligning expectations and actual performance.

Richard L. Oliver, an American marketing scholar, first proposed the theory. Oliver introduced this theory in his 1980 research paper titled "*A Cognitive Model of the Antecedents and Consequences of Satisfaction Decisions*". Since then, the approach has been widely researched and applied in various fields to study consumer behavior and satisfaction.

Drawing upon this pervasive theoretical framework, the present research crystallizes pivotal hypotheses that revolve around the premise that customer satisfaction in the context of spa centers within thermal hotels does not arise

haphazardly. Instead, it emerges as a result of a cognitive process undertaken by customers, wherein they engage in a comparative assessment between their preconceived service expectations and the tangible service encountered during their visit.

2.9.3 Theory of reasoned action (TRA)

The Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), proposed by Fishbein & Ajzen (1977), is a social psychology theory that seeks to explain and predict human behavior, particularly in the context of decision-making related to a specific behavior. It was first proposed by Martin Fishbein and Icek Ajzen in 1967 and later refined in 1975. The theory suggests that behavioral intentions are primarily determined by an individual's attitudes toward the behavior and subjective norms associated with the behavior.

According to the Theory of Reasoned Action, two main factors influence an individual's behavioral intentions:

Attitude: This refers to an individual's positive or negative evaluation of a particular behavior. It involves beliefs about the outcomes of the behavior and the overall attitude toward those outcomes. Positive attitudes toward a behavior increase the likelihood of the individual intending to perform that behavior, while negative attitudes decrease the likelihood.

Subjective Norms: Subjective norms are the perceived social pressures or expectations related to behavior. They represent an individual's perception of whether significant others (such as family, friends, or colleagues) approve or disapprove of the behavior. The more an individual perceives that others expect them to engage in a specific behavior, the stronger the influence on their behavioral intentions.

These two factors, attitude, and subjective norms, are combined to predict behavioral intentions. The theory does not directly predict actual behavior but posits that strong behavioral intentions are more likely to lead to the actual performance of the behavior.

The Theory of Reasoned Action has been widely applied in various fields, including marketing, health behavior, environmental behavior, and consumer behavior, to understand and predict human decision-making and behavior in different contexts. It has also served as a foundation for the development of other related theories, such as the Theory of Planned Behavior.

Grounded in this widely recognized theoretical framework, the present research formulates a pivotal hypothesis asserting that behavioral intentions concerning spa services within thermal hotels are not haphazardly established but rather emerge as a consequence of customers' specific attitudes toward the services they receive. Evidently, this phenomenon is intricately intertwined with customer satisfaction, a salient focal point in this research. Conversely, the second factor elucidated in the theory, namely subjective norms, remains beyond the scope of investigation in the present study.

2.9.4 Theory of planned behavior (TPB)

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), proposed by Ajzen (1991), is a social psychology theory that expands upon the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA). The TPB seeks to explain and predict human behavior, particularly in situations where individuals have control over their actions and are making deliberate decisions.

Similar to the Theory of Reasoned Action, the Theory of Planned Behavior posits that behavioral intentions are crucial in predicting actual behavior. Behavioral intentions are influenced by three main factors:

Attitude: This factor is the same as in the TRA and refers to an individual's positive or negative evaluation of a specific behavior. It includes beliefs about the expected outcomes of the behavior and the overall attitude toward those outcomes.

Subjective Norms: This factor is also similar to the TRA and involves perceived social pressures or expectations related to behavior. It encompasses an individual's perception of whether significant others approve or disapprove of the behavior.

Perceived Behavioral Control: This is the additional factor introduced in the TPB. It refers to an individual's perception of the ease or difficulty of performing a specific behavior. If individuals believe that they have control over the behavior and can easily perform it, they are more likely to form strong intentions to engage in that behavior.

In summary, the Theory of Planned Behavior proposes that an individual's behavioral intentions is influenced by their attitude toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. Strong behavioral intentions are more likely to lead to the actual performance of the behavior when the opportunity arises.

The Theory of Planned Behavior has been widely used in various fields, including marketing, health behavior, environmental behavior, and consumer behavior. It provides valuable insights into understanding and predicting human decision-making and behavior, particularly in situations where individuals have the freedom and control to act upon their intentions.

Drawing upon this pervasive theoretical framework, the present research refrains from formulating a specific hypothesis but instead underscores the paramount significance of behavioral intentions in the decision-making process of customers. Specifically, the theory focuses on predicting potential actual behavior subsequent to

the formation of behavioral intentions, necessitating the inclusion of the variable "behavioral intentions" in the model variables. Notably, the study diverges from utilizing "customer satisfaction" as an ultimate dependent variable, as the theory posits that predicting customer decisions solely based on measuring customer satisfaction is inadequate. Rather, the predictive power lies in measuring their behavioral intentions, which serves as a prerequisite for understanding customer decision-making.

2.9.5 Stimulus-organism-response (SOR) theory

The Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) theory, proposed by Mehrabian & Russell (1974), is a psychological framework that seeks to explain the relationship between external stimuli, internal cognitive and emotional processes (organism), and subsequent behavioral responses. This theory posits that when individuals are exposed to various stimuli from their environment, their internal mental and emotional processes mediate the way they perceive and interpret these stimuli. As a result of these cognitive and emotional processes, individuals then produce observable behavioral responses.

In the context of SOR theory, a stimulus can be any external event or input that triggers a reaction in an individual. The organism represents the psychological factors within the person, including their perceptions, attitudes, beliefs, emotions, and cognitive processing. These internal factors interact with the stimulus to determine the individual's response or behavior.

Mehrabian & Russell identifies and measures relevant variables (e.g., color, heat, light, and sound) involved in environmental psychology and fits them into a systematic framework. They proposed that environmental stimuli are linked to behavioral responses by the primary emotional responses of arousal, pleasure, and dominance.

The SOR model is particularly relevant in the field of consumer behavior, as it helps to understand how consumers respond to marketing stimuli and make decisions about products and services. By examining how different stimuli evoke various cognitive and emotional responses, marketers can better tailor their strategies to influence consumer behavior and preferences.

Overall, the Stimulus-Organism-Response theory provides valuable insights into the complex interplay between external influences, internal cognitive processes, and behavioral outcomes, contributing to our understanding of human behavior and decision-making processes in various contexts, including tourism management.

Based on this widely acknowledged theory within the realm of tourism management, the present study postulates that the servicescape significantly influences customer satisfaction. The servicescape, as the initial component, encompasses a multitude of stimuli, including elements such as background music, pleasant aromas, vibrant colors, cheerful ambiance, architectural design, interior embellishment, cleanliness, and others. Correspondingly, the ultimate outcome emerges as the customer response. Amidst these factors, an intermediary organism subsists, encompassing the cognitive and psychological dimensions of the tourist.

2.9.6 Service requirements in theories

According to the SERVQUAL model and the Gap Model of Service Quality that were developed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry (1985, 1988), which are widely used frameworks for measuring and assessing service quality in various industries, including tourism, hospitality, healthcare, and other service-based sectors, the model provides a structured approach to understand and evaluate the gaps between customer

expectations and perceptions of service quality. The SERVQUAL model identifies five key dimensions of service quality:

Reliability: Refers to the ability of the service provider to deliver services consistently, accurately, and as promised.

Responsiveness: Focuses on the willingness and readiness of the service provider to assist customers and respond to their needs promptly.

Assurance: Relates to the competence, courtesy, and trustworthiness of the service personnel, instilling confidence in customers.

Empathy: Refers to the extent to which the service provider demonstrates care, individualized attention, and understanding toward customers' specific needs.

Tangibles: Encompasses the physical aspects and tangible elements of the service environment, such as facilities, equipment, appearance, and other visual cues.

To assess service quality using SERVQUAL, customers are asked to rate their expectations and perceptions of each of these five dimensions on a scale. The difference between the expectation scores and the perception scores provides a measure of the service quality gap for each dimension.

A positive gap indicates that customers' perceptions exceed their expectations, signifying a positive service experience. Conversely, a negative gap suggests that expectations are higher than perceptions, indicating potential areas for improvement in service delivery.

The SERVQUAL model has been widely adopted and adapted by researchers and businesses alike to measure service quality, identify areas for improvement, and enhance customer satisfaction and loyalty. It remains a valuable tool in understanding and managing customer perceptions of service quality in diverse service-oriented industries (Asubonteng et al., 1996).

The present research draws upon these well-established models in the domain of tourism management to advance the hypothesis that service requirements significantly influence the dimensions of servicescape, service quality, and customer satisfaction. This proposition is grounded in the observable correlation between the fundamental aspects of the SERVQUAL model, encompassing reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles, and the six dimensions of ISO 17679, namely, reception (facilities) requirements, reception (services) requirements, requirements in the treatment area, requirements in equipment, hygiene good practices requirements, and staff requirements.

2.9.7 Servicescape in theories

Bitner (1992, p.58) introduced the concept of "servicescape" to describe the constructed environment, specifically the human-created and physical surroundings in service settings. Multiple studies, such as Nguyen & Leblanc (2002); Raajpoot (2002); and Wakefield & Blodgett (1999), have emphasized the importance of décor, artifacts, spatial layout, and ambient conditions in investigating customer behavior. According to Wakefield & Blodgett (1994); Baker (1987); Nguyen & Leblanc (2002), decor and artifacts enhance visual appeal, spatial layout influences functionality and customer comfort, and ambient conditions subconsciously impact customer perceptions. Mehrabian and Russel's Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) theory (1974) suggests a link between human behavior and the physical environment, where positive approach behaviors indicate favorable responses and negative avoidance behaviors reflect reluctance. According to Kotler (1973); Booms & Bitner (1982); Reimer & Kuehn (2005); Wakefield & Blodgett (1996), the physical environment significantly influences customer satisfaction and subsequent behavior. (Han & Ryu, 2009).

According to Ali et al., (2015); Huang et al., (2014); Verhoef et al., (2009); Lo et al., (2013); Chang & Horng, (2010), the service experience in wellness SPAs encompasses the overall perceived quality by clients, considering various stimuli such as the physical environment, therapists, staff, other clients, products, and treatments (Virabhakul & Huang, 2018). Virabhakul and Huang's (2018) study found that emotions, perceived value, and satisfaction mediate the relationship between service experience and behavioral intentions, with satisfaction fully mediating the effects. This indicates that stimuli, including the physical environment, influence perceived experience quality, and satisfaction acts as a mediator for customer behavioral intentions.

2.9.8 Service quality in theories

Parasuraman et al. (1985) conducted an exploratory investigation to address the undefined concept of quality in services. They identified 10 dimensions of service quality applicable across different service types and discovered four crucial gaps on the service provider's end that affect perceived service quality. These findings contribute to the development of a conceptual model for understanding service quality.

In a seminal study, Parasuraman et al. (1988) aimed to identify and measure service quality dimensions. They initially identified 10 potentially overlapping dimensions and created a survey instrument with 97 items. The instrument was validated through data collection, where respondents evaluated their expectations and perceptions of service quality in various categories. After refinement, the final scale consisted of 22 items and encompassed the dimensions of tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy according to the SERVQUAL model.

The SERVQUAL model is highly favored by managers due to its ease of application, flexibility, and straightforward theoretical framework (Asubonteng et al., 1996). It provides a structured approach that guides decision-making and helps identify the strategic direction for firms, even though the results may not represent an absolute truth. Managers recognize the value of SERVQUAL as a tool to assess service quality, improve customer satisfaction, and enhance overall organizational performance.

In their study, Seth, Deshmukh, and Vrat (2005) conducted a comprehensive review of 19 service quality (SQ) models. These models encompass a range of perspectives and approaches, including the technical and functional quality model, GAP model, attribute service quality model, and many others. This review offers valuable insights into the existing literature, enhancing our understanding of the dimensions and factors influencing service quality assessment.

Service quality can be categorized into four key aspects: interpersonal quality, environment quality, administrative quality, and technical quality, according to Clemes et al. (2020).

1. Interpersonal quality refers to the interaction between service providers and customers. Communication skills and friendliness play a vital role in shaping interpersonal quality, as highlighted by scholars such as Brady and Cronin (2001), Gronroos (1984), and Rust and Oliver (1994).

2. Environment quality encompasses the physical atmosphere and tangibles associated with the service encounter. Dagger et al. (2007) identified atmosphere and tangibles as sub-dimensions of environment quality. The overall perception of the service experience can be influenced by the environmental quality of a service setting.

3. Administrative quality focuses on value-added services and the facilitation of core service production. It involves the effectiveness and efficiency of administrative processes, such as booking, scheduling, and handling customer inquiries. Gronroos (1990) and Lovelock et al. (2001) emphasize the importance of administrative quality in customer satisfaction and the service experience.

4. Technical quality involves the service provider's technical competence, knowledge, and outcomes achieved. Scholars such as Ware et al. (1983), Gronroos (1984), and McDougall & Levesque (1995) stress the significance of technical expertise in delivering high-quality services. Customers evaluate technical quality based on the service provider's capabilities and excellence in service delivery.

Understanding these four aspects provides a comprehensive framework for assessing and managing service quality in different industries and contexts. By focusing on interpersonal quality, environment quality, administrative quality, and technical quality, service providers can enhance the overall customer experience and meet or exceed customer expectations.

According to Durmaz et al. (2018), service quality has a positive relationship with customer satisfaction and hotel image. When customers perceive high service quality, they are more satisfied with their hotel experience and hold a positive perception of the hotel's image. Additionally, customer satisfaction and hotel image positively influence customers' intentions to revisit the hotel and recommend it to others.

These findings suggest that service quality serves as a precursor to customer satisfaction. When service quality is high, it enhances customer satisfaction. Moreover, customer satisfaction acts as a precursor to behavioral intentions, including the intentions to revisit the hotel and recommend it to others. This implies that satisfied

customers are more likely to exhibit positive behaviors such as returning to the hotel in the future and recommending it to their acquaintances.

Understanding the connection between service quality, customer satisfaction, and behavioral intentions is crucial for hotel managers and marketers. It emphasizes the significance of delivering high-quality services to enhance customer satisfaction and foster positive behavioral outcomes. Ultimately, this leads to customer loyalty and positive word-of-mouth recommendations.

2.9.9 Customer satisfaction in theories

Satisfaction, as defined by Engel and Blackwell (1982), is the evaluation made by customers regarding the consistency of their chosen alternative with their pre-existing beliefs or expectations. It is considered significant in marketing, according to Spring et al. (1996) and Yi (1990), as it addresses customer needs and desires. Consequently, customer satisfaction has become a central concept in marketing research and practice (Han and Ryu, 2009).

Han and Ryu (2009) built upon previous theories and proposed that customer satisfaction involves a cognitive judgment process. It is an overall evaluation by customers that compares their prior expectations with their actual consumption experience. The perceived discrepancy between expectations and actual consumption plays a crucial role in shaping customer satisfaction.

In the realm of tourism, satisfaction, influenced by various psychological and physical factors, is connected to specific behavioral outcomes according to Ajzen and Fishbein (1980). Psychological variables such as beliefs, attitudes, and evaluations have the potential to impact customer satisfaction (El-refae, 2012).

Customer satisfaction, as established by Hunt (1977) and Loureiro et al. (2013), encompasses overall judgment, evaluation, and emotional and cognitive responses to consumption experiences. Oliver (1997) defined satisfaction as a comprehensive evaluation that involves both cognitive and emotional responses to service encounters within an experiential context (Virabhakul & Huang, 2018).

Customer satisfaction is a concept with abstract and varied characteristics, as highlighted by Munteanu et al. (2010). It can be characterized as the state where buyers perceive adequate rewards in relation to the sacrifices made during a purchase. Satisfaction is influenced by the alignment of actual purchase experiences with expected benefits and the fulfillment of customer motives. Kim (2005) refers to Oliver's (1997) definition, stating that satisfaction is the customer's response to feeling fulfilled through consumption. Zeithaml and Bitner (2003) interpret satisfaction as the customer's evaluation of a product or service meeting their needs and expectations. Expectations play a significant role in shaping satisfaction, followed by perceived performance (El-refae, 2012). Health service quality is a crucial factor influencing patient satisfaction and behavioral intentions, according to Dagger et al. (2007) and Clemes et al. (2020). Higher customer satisfaction is achieved when there is a corresponding perception of high service quality. Hence, service quality acts as a determinant or antecedent of satisfaction.

Various studies, including those by Anderson et al. (1994), Cronin and Taylor (1992), and Zeithaml et al. (2006), establish service quality as a predictor of customer satisfaction. The level of service quality directly influences the level of satisfaction. Moreover, customer satisfaction and service quality perceptions positively impact purchase intentions, as revealed by Cronin and Taylor (1992), Cronin et al. (2000),

Patterson and Spring (1997), Rust and Oliver (1994), and Tian-Cole et al. (2002). Customer satisfaction has a stronger and more consistent effect on purchase intentions compared to service quality. Enhancing service production and delivery processes contributes to customer satisfaction, influencing their intentions to revisit (El-refae, 2012). Therefore, service quality serves as a precursor to both customer satisfaction and behavioral intentions.

2.9.10 Behavioral intentions in theories

According to Ajzen (1985), customers' behavioral intentions serve as crucial indicators for predicting actual behaviors. Oliver (1999) introduces four types of loyalty: cognitive, affective, conative, and action loyalty. However, tracking customers' future intended behaviors through loyalty action is challenging, as argued by Chen and Chen (2010) and Yang and Peterson (2004). Therefore, behavioral intentions are considered the most significant factor in predicting actual behavior, representing conative loyalty in the attitudinal stage (Virabhakul & Huang, 2018).

Previous studies have explored the relationship between service quality and behavioral intentions using different approaches. Some directly examine the link between service quality and behavioral intentions, such as Cronin and Taylor (1992), Boulding et al. (1993), Baker and Crompton (2000), and Alexandris et al. (2002). Others investigate the indirect relationship through customer satisfaction as a mediating factor. Examples include studies by Woodside et al. (1989), Gremler and Brown (1997), Shemwell et al. (1998), Oh (1999), Caruana et al. (2000), Bou et al. (2001), and Jeong et al. (2003). These studies examine various dimensions of behavioral intentions, such as repurchase, recommendation, loyalty, word-of-mouth, and intentions to purchase.

Higher perceived service quality not only enhances customer satisfaction but also increases behavioral intentions (González et al. 2007).

Models have been employed to investigate the interplay between behavioral intentions, service quality, and customer satisfaction. Gonzales and Brea (2005) and Choi et al. (2015) have explored this relationship in their research. Specific dimensions of service quality, such as tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy, have been scrutinized by Hsieh et al. (2008), Giritlioglu et al. (2014), and Lo et al. (2015). Additionally, Lo et al. (2013) have examined the impact of environmental treatments, personalized services, and professional skills on enhancing tourist experiences. Tsai et al. (2012) have studied relationships between environmental service, experience, service quality, value, reliability, satisfaction, likelihood of revisiting, and recommendation. These studies contribute to our understanding of the factors and dimensions influencing customer experiences, satisfaction, and behavioral intentions in tourism management (Clemes et al. 2020).

Based on the findings of previous studies, it can be concluded that service quality acts as a predictor of customer satisfaction and behavioral intentions. The quality of the service directly affects satisfaction levels and influences customers' intentions and behaviors. Therefore, service quality plays a critical role in shaping customer satisfaction and subsequent behavioral intentions.

2.10 Hypotheses

Based on the theoretical framework and the review of relevant literature, the study puts forth the subsequent hypotheses:

H1: Service requirements have a significant positive effect on customer satisfaction in wellness SPAs of 5-star thermal hotels.

H2: Service requirements have a significant positive effect on servicescape in wellness SPAs of 5-star thermal hotels.

H3: Servicescape has a significant positive effect on customer satisfaction in wellness SPAs of 5-star thermal hotels.

H4: Servicescape has a significant positive effect on service quality in wellness SPAs of 5-star thermal hotels.

H5: Service requirements have a significant positive effect on service quality in wellness SPAs of 5-star thermal hotels.

H6: Service quality has a significant positive effect on customer satisfaction in wellness SPAs of 5-star thermal hotels.

H7: Customer satisfaction has a significant positive effect on behavioral intentions in wellness SPAs of 5-star thermal hotels.

H8: Servicescape, and service quality separately and jointly mediate the relationship between service requirements and customer satisfaction in wellness SPAs of 5-star thermal hotels. H8 is encompassing three hypotheses, outlined as follows:

- **H8a.** Servicescape mediates the relationship between service requirements and customer satisfaction in wellness SPAs of 5-star thermal hotels.
- **H8b.** Service quality mediates the relationship between service requirements and customer satisfaction in wellness SPAs of 5-star thermal hotels.
- **H8c.** Servicescape, and service quality jointly and respectively mediate the relationship between service requirements and customer satisfaction in wellness SPAs of 5-star thermal hotels.

2.11 Research Model

In light of the hypotheses, the study proffers the research model, outlined as follows:

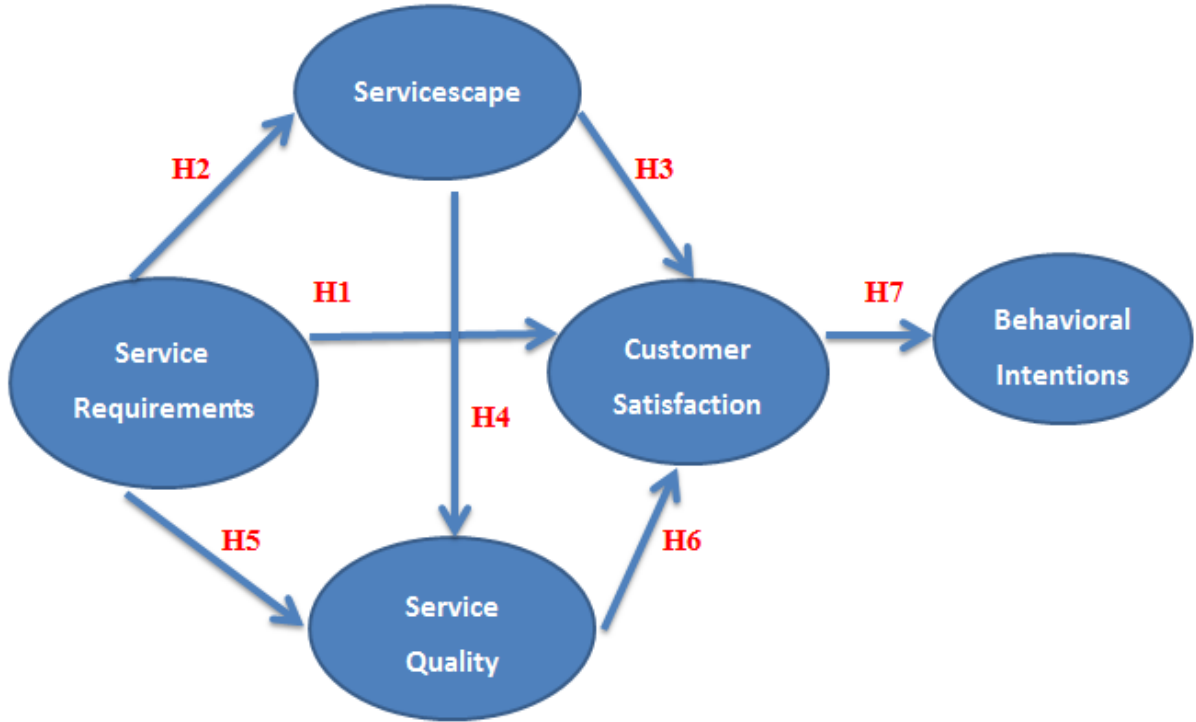


Figure 2.1. *The Research Model*

Chapter 3

RESEARCH DESIGN

3.1. Overview

This chapter provides a comprehensive discussion of the research methodology employed in this research study. The chapter elucidates various aspects, such as the research approach, research method, research technique, research tools, as well as the overall procedure undertaken for data collection, sampling, and other pertinent considerations pertaining to the design and generation of data for this research. More specifically, this chapter encompasses a detailed examination of sampling techniques and procedures, the approach to data collection, the measurement of constructs, and the evaluation of data normality.

3.2. Research Approach

This study adopts a deductive approach and utilizes a quantitative method. The deductive approach involves the formulation of an anticipated pattern, which is subsequently tested against observations, as opposed to the inductive approach which begins with observations and endeavors to identify patterns within them (Babbie, 2010). By employing the deductive approach, this research endeavors to develop hypotheses based on existing theories and subsequently designs a research strategy to assess the validity of these hypotheses (Wilson, 2014). This deductive approach was employed to examine and verify the causal relationships proposed by a specific theory within the research model.

3.3. Research Method

This study employs a quantitative method, which is a systematic approach to examining objective hypotheses by analyzing the relationships between variables. In this method, variables are measured, often using instruments, to obtain numerical data that can be subjected to statistical analysis. Quantitative research follows a standardized structure, encompassing sections such as introduction, literature review, theoretical framework, research methodology, findings, and discussion. It is characterized by its emphasis on data analysis and interpretation. Survey research is a widely utilized method within quantitative research methodologies and studies (Creswell, 2002). It involves gathering information from a sample of individuals through the administration of structured questionnaires or interviews. This method facilitates the collection of quantitative data on a larger scale and is commonly employed in various research domains.

3.4. Research Technique

The research methodology of this study will involve the use of survey research, which is defined as the collection of information from a sample of individuals through their responses to questions (Check & Schutt, 2011, p. 160). Survey research offers flexibility in participant recruitment, data collection methods, and the use of various instruments.

This study employs a cross-sectional survey design, which allows for a precise portrayal of the attributes of a particular individual, group, or situation. The selection of this design is in accordance with the research objectives, primarily focused on examining the attitudes of SPA tourists concerning service requirements. Data will be collected through the use of self-administered questionnaires as the survey instrument.

These questionnaires have been prepared in English and distributed among the research area, targeting the 5-Star Thermal Hotels in the Sultanate of Oman.

3.5. Variables Measurement

The questionnaire includes 5 parts, outlined as follows:

First part: In the initial phase of assessment, the quantification of service requirements, grounded on the ISO 17679 standards, is undertaken as the independent variable. This evaluation encompasses six dimensions with a total of 41 items, as detailed in Table 3.3.

Second part: In the subsequent phase of the investigation, the servicescape is assessed utilizing the framework employed by Chang (2016), comprising two dimensions i.e. substantive staging of servicescape and communicative staging of servicescape. However, servicescape will be treated as a first-order construct acting as a mediator variable, encompasses twelve questionnaire items, as illustrated in Table 3.4.

Third part: To evaluate service quality, as adopted from the study by Chen et al. (2015), is employed as a mediator variable. This dimension consists of three questionnaire items, which are enumerated in Table 3.5.

Fourth part: For the assessment of customer satisfaction, the model adopted by Han & Ryu (2009) is employed, serving as both an independent and a dependent variable. This measurement comprises three distinct questionnaire items, which are outlined in Table 3.6.

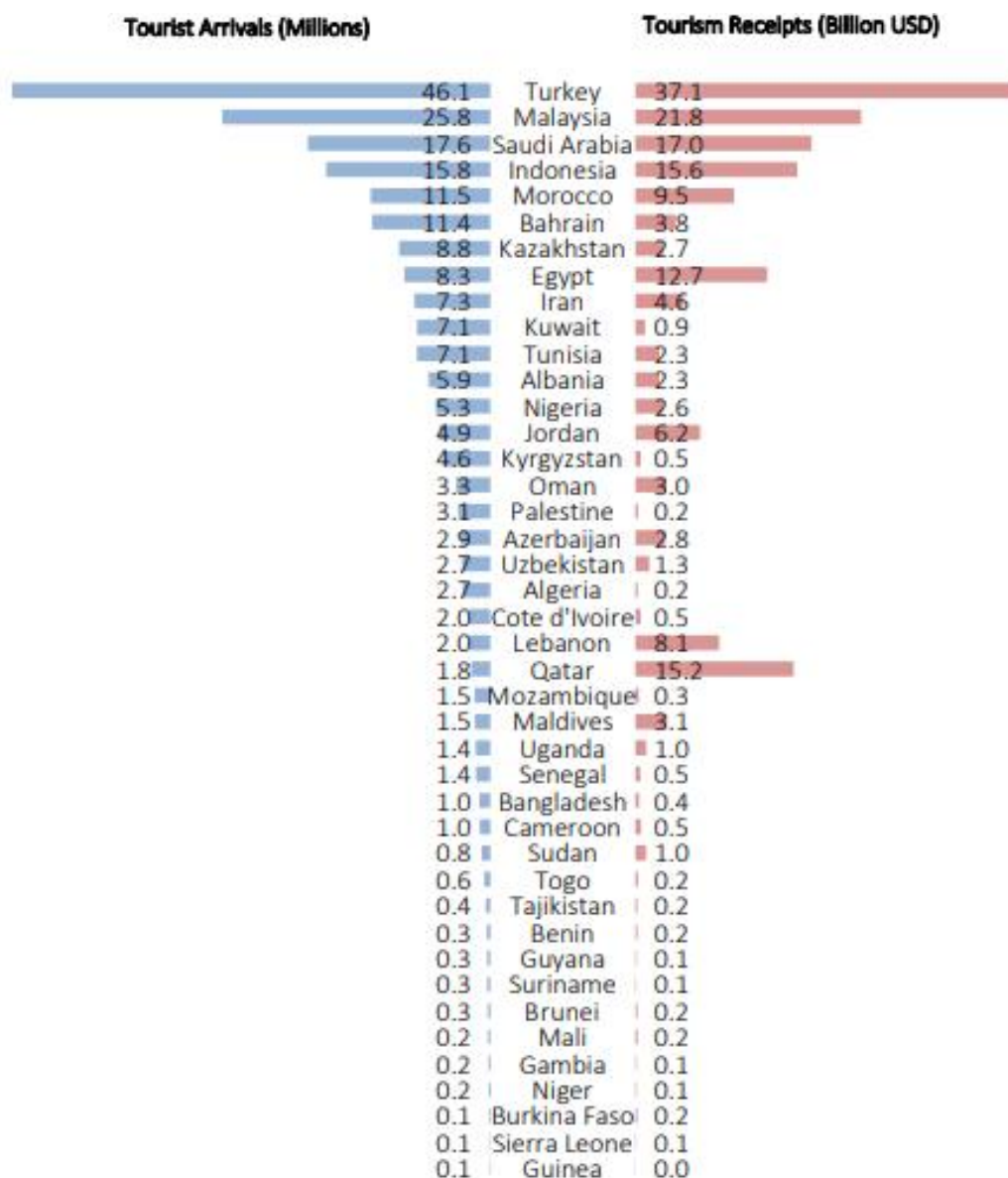
Fifth part: For the evaluation of behavioral intentions, the conceptual framework employed by Virabhakul & Huang (2018) is utilized as the dependent variable. This assessment consists of five distinct questionnaire items, which are presented in Table 3.7.

3.6. Area of the Study

This study selected the Sultanate of Oman as the research context to assess the implementation of service requirements based on ISO 17679 in wellness SPAs of 5-star thermal hotels. Several reasons justify this choice:

Oman ranked fifth among Arab countries as a tourist destination in 2014, with total tourism production amounting to R.O 1.22 billion. Inbound tourism contributed R.O 205.9 million (20.5%), while domestic tourism accounted for R.O 971.1 million (79.5%). Between 2005 and 2014, inbound tourism doubled, whereas domestic tourism more than tripled. The tourism sector added R.O 724.5 million (2.2%) to the GDP in 2014. Oman aims to attract 7 million tourists by 2040, constituting 6% of the GDP (Al-Badi et al., 2017).

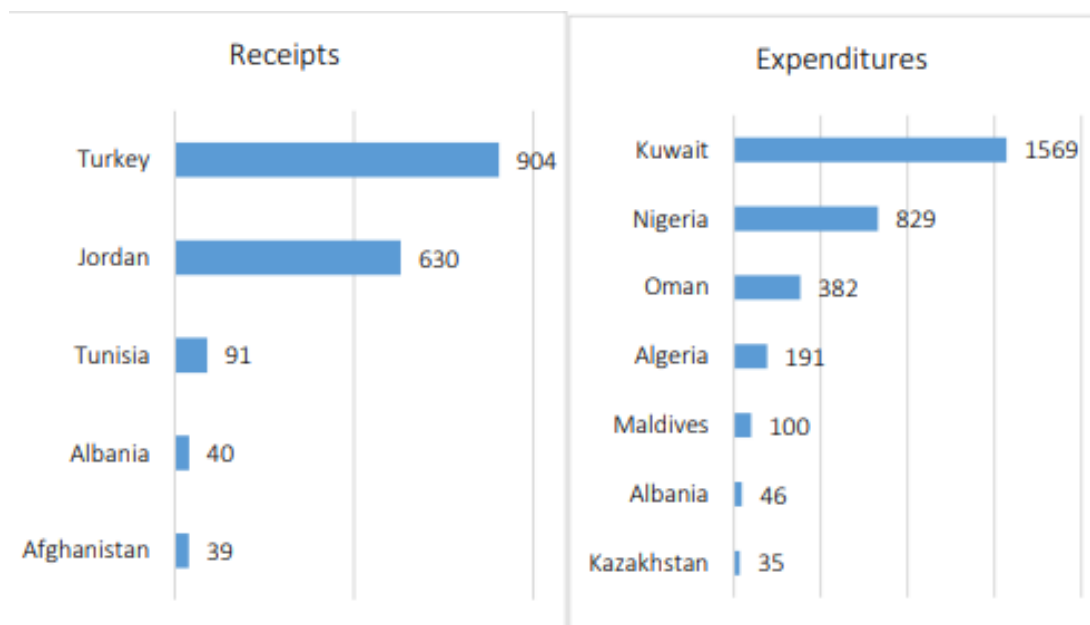
To comprehensively assess Oman's position in the tourism sector, it is imperative to analyze key statistical indicators. Figures 3.1 and 3.2 present data on Oman's rankings among member countries of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). In terms of tourist arrivals, Oman stands at the 16th position, attracting a significant influx of 3.3 million visitors. Similarly, for tourism receipts, Oman ranks 12th, generating substantial revenue of 3 billion USD. However, it is noteworthy that Oman is not among the top five countries in terms of health tourism receipts. Conversely, Omani nationals spent approximately 382 million USD abroad in 2015 for accessing health tourism services (see Figure 3.1).



Source: World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and OICStat
 *Most Recent Year Available since 2016

Figure 3.1. OIC Tourist Destinations and Tourist Earners in 2018

Source: INTERNATIONAL TOURISM IN THE OIC COUNTRIES: PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES 2020. ORGANIZATION OF ISLAMIC COOPERATION: STATISTICAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RESEARCH AND TRAINING CENTRE FOR ISLAMIC COUNTRIES (SESRIC). Retrieved from: <https://sesricdiag.blob.core.windows.net/sesric-site-blob/files/article/757.pdf>



Source: UNWTO and European Travel Commission, 2018

Figure 3.2. Health Tourism Performance of Selected OIC Countries, 2015 (Million USD)

Source: INTERNATIONAL TOURISM IN THE OIC COUNTRIES: PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES 2020. ORGANIZATION OF ISLAMIC COOPERATION: STATISTICAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RESEARCH AND TRAINING CENTRE FOR ISLAMIC COUNTRIES (SESRIC). Retrieved from: <https://sesricdiag.blob.core.windows.net/sesric-site-blob/files/article/757.pdf>

Oman's tourism strengths lie in its favorable environmental policies and active promotion as an economic diversification strategy (OBG, 2016a). The country's political stability adds to its appeal as a tourist destination (MacGillivray, 2016; Wee, 2015). The local population's hospitality is another recognized strength (Feighery, 2012; OBG, 2016b; Busaidi et al., 2019).

However, weaknesses in Oman's tourism sector include limited economic contribution (Busaidi et al., 2019), ongoing development of tourist infrastructure (Aulia & AlMandhari, 2015; MNE, 2007; OBG, 2016b), inadequate economic research and data availability (Ponnampalam, 2011), insufficient government strategies for public awareness and capacity development (MNE, 2007; ESO, 2011), weak enforcement of regulations (Naser, 2014), and high reliance on expatriate labor (MNE, 2007).

In terms of tourism management, the inclusion of thermal springs in Oman's offerings necessitates environmentally-conscious promotion and preservation efforts (Al Shidi & Victor, 2022). Attention should be given to protecting and conserving the vulnerable thermal springs through prioritized initiatives.

Oman especially the capital (Muscat) offers an ideal research setting to investigate the impact of implementing service requirements (ISO 17679) on customer satisfaction, considering the mediating roles of servicescape and service quality. Exploring the relationship between customer satisfaction and behavioral intentions in Oman would yield valuable insights. This study in Oman deepens understanding of how service requirements implementation influences customer satisfaction and behavioral intentions, while accounting for servicescape and service quality as mediating factors. The research contributes to existing knowledge and provides practical implications for the SPA industry in Oman and beyond.

By conducting this study in Oman, valuable insights can be gained regarding the implementation of service requirements in wellness SPAs within a prominent and diverse tourism destination.

3.7. Population and Sample

The study population for this research consists of customers who have utilized wellness SPA services at 5-star thermal hotels in Muscat. The sample for this study was selected from three specific thermal hotels (as shown in Table 3.1). These hotels were chosen based on their suitability for the study, considering their 5-star rating and the diverse range of wellness SPA treatments they offer to their guests.

Table 3.1. *The Sample*

Facility Name	Category	Participants Number (customer)
Shangri-La Barr Al Jissah, Muscat	SPA Hotel 5-stars and Resort	141
AL BUSTAN PALACE, Muscat	SPA Hotel 5stars and Resort	119
The CHEDI Muscat	SPA Hotel 5-stars and Resort	137



Figure 3.3. *A photo from Shangri-La Barr Al Jissah, Muscat*

Source: GOING LUXURY | SHANGRI LA BARR AL JISSAH RESORT & SPA. Retrieved from: <https://goingluxury.com/hotel/shangri-la-barr-al-jissah-resort-spa/>



Figure 3.4. *A photo from AL BUSTAN PALACE, Muscat*

Source: Al Bustan Palace, a Ritz-Carlton Hotel | SPA, July 28 2023. Retrieved from:
<https://www.ritzcarlton.com/en/hotels/mctrz-al-bustan-palace-a-ritz-carlton-hotel/spa/>



Figure 3.5. *A photo from The CHEDI, Muscat*

Source : THE CHEDI | Spa & Wellness Offers, July 28 2023. Retrieved from:
<https://www.ghmhotels.com/en/muscat/spa-wellness/spa-packages-promotions/>

3.8. Sample Size and Pilot Study

In this study, obtaining accommodation statistics for thermal hotels in the Sultanate of Oman was not feasible. Although the Information and Statistics Department under the General Directorate of Planning in the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism in Oman provides general indicators for tourism statistics from 2005 to 2021, it also offers data on hotel establishments categorized by star rating from 2009 to 2021. For example, it revealed that there were 27 five-star hotels in Oman, comprising 5,710 rooms, employing 4,237 workers, generating OMR 60,346,000 in revenue, accommodating 434,000 guests who spent a total of 576,000 nights, with an occupancy rate of 29.2% (Omani Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, 2023). However, despite the importance of these data, they do not specifically show the number of guests who availed of SPA services in thermal hotels, possibly due to the lack of accurate statistics on this matter by thermal hotels.

Since the current study targets only the guests of five-star thermal hotels who have experienced spa services at these hotels, and considering that such data is not available from official sources in Oman. Consequently, it was not possible to calculate the sample size required to adequately represent the population. However, considering the use of the "convenience sampling" method, which falls under non-probability sampling techniques, it is acknowledged that a sample size of **384** can provide a **95%** reliability level when the total number of elements in the population is unknown (Mercan, 2018).

While convenience samples have limited generalizability compared to probability samples, researchers argue that homogeneous convenience samples offer clearer generalizability than conventional convenience samples. Thus, when restricted to

convenience samples, researchers should consider homogeneous convenience samples as a favorable alternative. Despite the scientific advantages of probability sampling, convenience samples dominate developmental science research. A study by Jager et al. (2017) examining prominent developmental science journals revealed that 92.5% of studies utilized convenience samples, while only 5.5% employed probability samples. Probability samples were over 16 times less likely to be utilized compared to convenience samples in these journals.

A preliminary pilot study was conducted to gain initial insights into the validity and reliability of the scale utilized in the main study; however, it should be noted that the pilot study does not provide definitive evidence. Additionally, the pilot study served the purpose of testing the research design, procedures, and data collection instruments on a limited sample of participants before implementing the full-scale study. According to Wittes & Brittain (1990), clinical trial investigators often face uncertainty regarding critical parameters such as variances or event rates in the control group when designing their studies. To ascertain reasonable values for these parameters, they may conduct a small pilot study separate from the main trial. In their paper, they introduced what is referred to as "internal pilot studies," wherein a portion of the main trial is designated as a pilot phase. Following the conclusion of the internal pilot study, the investigators reassess the preselected parameters and recalculate the required sample size, leading to subsequent modifications based on the pilot phase findings. The final data analysis integrates all information, disregarding the origin of the data, whether from the pilot phase or the main study.

To ascertain the conclusive validity and reliability of the scale, further statistical analyses were conducted utilizing data from the main study. These additional tests aimed to ensure that the scale items effectively and consistently measured the intended constructs. The internal validity tests and structure validity tests are detailed in Table 3.3, Table 3.4, Table 3.5, Table 3.6, Table 3.7, and Table 3.8. Additionally, the reliability and validity of the measurement model are examined in Table 4.7 and Table 4.8.

3.9. Data Collection

The present study adopts the convenience sampling technique, wherein a pilot study involving the distribution of 50 questionnaires to customers residing in the wellness SPAs of the specified three 5-star thermal hotels listed in Table 3.1 was conducted. Additionally, considering the research objectives, the collection of demographic information from respondents was deemed unnecessary and, consequently, was not pursued.

Following the validation process, a total of **503** questionnaires were distributed to collect data from the participants. Out of these, **397** questionnaires were found to be correctly and completely filled, which is considered sufficient for the convenience sample approach adopted in this study. These questionnaires will be analyzed to investigate the hypotheses proposed in this study. **141** questionnaires were collected from participants experienced the SPA experience in Shangri-La Barr Al Jissah, Muscat, **119** questionnaires were collected from participants experienced the SPA experience in AL BUSTAN PALACE, Muscat, and **137** questionnaires were collected from participants experienced the SPA experience in The CHEDI Muscat.

3.10 Data Analyzing

The data analysis was performed using SPSS 22 and AMOS 20 software packages. Following the analysis of the initial Pilot sample, comprising 50 questionnaires, a preliminary assessment was made concerning the scale's validity and reliability, as described in Section 3.8. Subsequently, with a number of 397 valid questionnaires, the following statistical tests were conducted:

1. The assessment of data normality was conducted using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov (K-S) test, the results of which are presented in Table 3.2 of this chapter.
2. The scale's validity was then examined through internal validity tests presented in Table 3.3, Table 3.4, Table 3.5, Table 3.6, and Table 3.7 and structural validity tests shown in Table 3.8 at the conclusion of this chapter. The Pearson Correlation coefficient test was employed for both tests due to the normal distribution of the data.
3. Moving on to the fourth chapter, descriptive analyses were performed to depict the collected data regarding respondents' opinions on the level of ISO 17679 implementation, servicescape, service quality, customer satisfaction, and behavioral intentions. Mean, relative weight, standard deviation, and other relevant measures were presented in Table 4.2, Table 4.3, Table 4.4, Table 4.5, and Table 4.6 of the subsequent chapter.
4. Subsequently, this study adopted Anderson and Gerbing's (1988) two-step analysis method. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was employed to validate the factor loadings of the five constructs and assess the model fit. The reliability and validity of the measurement model were evaluated and reported in Table 4.7, followed by the discriminant validity test outlined in Table 4.8.

5. The subsequent step involved estimating the structural equation model (SEM) using maximum likelihood estimation and a correlation matrix as input to examine the mediating effect, as well as the direct, indirect, and total effects among the variables. The results of these analyses were presented in Table 4.9 and Figure 4.1 at the conclusion of the following chapter.

3.11 Data Normality Test

To assess the normality of the sample data before conducting the main investigation of the study, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov (K-S) test was performed. The K-S test is a statistical method commonly used to determine if a dataset follows a normal distribution (Razali & Wah, 2011). The results of the K-S test indicated the normality of the dataset, as shown in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2. *Data Normality Test*

Variable	Items number	K-S Test	Skewness	Kurtosis	Sig.
The Service requirements according to ISO 17679	41	0.140	-0.16106	-0.65381	0.071
Servicescape	12	0.142	-0.17034	-0.86827	0.082
Service quality	3	0.107	-1.04841	-0.792	0.200
Customer satisfaction	3	0.087	-0.17034	-0.32593	0.200
Behavioral intentions	5	0.136	-0.0862	-0.1896	0.054

3.12 Data Validity Test

3.12.1 . Internal validity test

Table 3.3 shows the correlation coefficient between each item of the variable "service requirements according to ISO 17679" and the sub-variable that includes this

item, which shows that the correlation coefficients are significant, thus all the 6 sub-variables of "service requirements according to ISO 17679" have internal validity.

Table 3.3. *Internal Validity Test of (Service requirements)*

The Service requirements according to ISO 17679	Pearson Correlation coefficient	Sig.
1. Reception (facilities) requirements		
The reception area exhibits a favorable condition concerning cleanliness, illumination, and absence of obstructions.	.813**	0.000
The areas dedicated to client service are effectively and visibly marked with appropriate signage.	.930**	0.000
2. Reception (services) requirements		
The reception offers clients a comprehensive menu of services, providing clear information on the offerings, including scope, treatments, packages, pricing, operating hours, and guidelines.	.759**	0.000
The wellness SPA reception provides new clients with an informational document outlining the potential health risks associated with each treatment. In order to ensure client awareness and responsibility, the SPA requires clients to sign this document.	0.406**	0.005
A reservation procedure is in place, requiring the identification of the client's name, contact details (telephone, fax, or email), requested services, pricing, number of clients, reserved period, and the booking guarantee policy.	.591**	0.000
All additional requests are registered.	.796**	0.000
The confirmation is formally notified and delivered to the client, including the guarantees for booking conditions (prepayment, credit cards, deposit, etc.)	.796**	0.000
All booking requests are listed as soon as the request is received and answered within 24 hours.	.832**	0.000
Clients are promptly informed by reception staff about any changes in bookings, accompanied by valid justifications. Any exceptional circumstances are communicated to clients through efficient means of communication such as telephone or email.	.826**	0.000
The check-in services are carried out in a prompt and effective way.	.894**	0.000
Precise indications of the schedule and form of access to the facilities, clothing, etc. is given (or it is provided in written form), if required.	.396*	0.011
If required, specific guidelines are given, indicating the steps to be physically followed by the client for each treatment.	.400*	0.011
The issuing of invoices and collection of payment are carried out effectively, promptly and discreetly. Invoices are detailed and all receipts signed by the client are provided upon request.	.704**	0.000
3. Requirements in Treatment area		

Table 3.3. (Continued) Internal Validity Test of (Service requirements)

An area for treatment is present, equipped with a sink, unless in temporary settings like natural environments.	.550**	0.000
A specific amount of floor space is designated as the minimum requirement for each type of treatment.	.725**	0.000
The treatment room is equipped with a sufficient level of illumination that meets the necessary standards for cleanliness and safety, along with a lighting system that can be adjusted as needed.	.925**	0.000
The air conditioning systems in the treatment rooms are individually regulated, subject to regular servicing and maintenance.	.640**	0.000
In the event that the treatment room is utilized for herbal wraps or mud treatments, there is provision for a shower facility.	.505**	0.001
In the case of offering wet treatments, the presence of a floor drain is ensured.	0.493**	0.002
The wellness SPA incorporates safety mechanisms, such as emergency alarms.	.818**	0.000
Appropriate technical measures are implemented to prevent hazardous situations for clients.	.489**	0.001
Visible placement of usage instructions is provided for all wellness facilities that can be utilized without the presence of a therapist.	.820**	0.000
The SPA establishes a protocol to ensure the capability of providing first aid to its clients.	.838**	0.000
The first-aid kit is readily accessible to the staff members.	.814**	0.000
4. Requirements in Equipment		
The SPA furnishes measuring instruments, including clocks, hourglasses, and thermometers.	.683**	0.000
All water-filled aquatic wellness facilities and equipment are maintained in a clean and debris-free condition, while also ensuring appropriate water chemistry.	0.473**	0.004
The design and construction of all floor surfaces are tailored to suit the specific activities conducted in each area, such as incorporating non-slip flooring in wet areas to ensure safety.	.774**	0.000
All electrical installations and equipment are constructed, maintained, and functioning in accordance with proper standards and specifications.	.901**	0.000
5. Hygiene good practices requirements		
Regular supervision by staff ensures that wellness facilities and equipment are consistently maintained in a hygienic and visually clean condition.	.755**	0.000
After each wellness treatment, thorough disinfection is performed on all elements of the facility that may have come into direct contact with the previous client.	.809**	0.000
For every client, textiles that have directly come into contact with them are replaced.	.713**	0.000
The taps or water outlets undergo daily cleaning and disinfection.	.794**	0.000

Table 3.3. (Continued) Internal Validity Test of (Service requirements)

Following each utilization, tubs are emptied, subjected to cleaning procedures, and disinfected.	0.372	0.015
The showerheads are designed to be detachable, while providing easy access to their internal components for disinfection.	.452**	0.003
The cleaning and disinfection of the floor are promptly conducted whenever required.	0.378	0.011
The storage and utilization of maintenance and hygiene products for facilities and equipment strictly adhere to regulations.	.798**	0.000
The tubs, pools, and whirlpools undergo regular maintenance to ensure their proper upkeep.	.473**	0.002
6. Staff requirements		
The staff attends to all client requirements and upholds their privacy with utmost respect.	.532**	0.000
Clients are addressed in a respectful and formal manner, adhering to the protocols of courteous conduct.	.628**	0.000
The staff possesses the capability to effectively handle unforeseen circumstances.	.609**	0.000
The delivery of services is efficient and prompt in all aspects.	.754**	0.000

* correlations significant at $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ** correlations significant at $\alpha \leq 0.01$

Table 3.4 shows the correlation coefficient between "servicescape" and its items one by one, which shows that the correlation coefficients are significant, thus "servicescape" has internal validity.

Table 3.4. Internal Validity Test of (Servicescape)

Servicescape	Pearson Correlation coefficient	Sig.
Substantive staging of Servicescape		
The background music in this wellness SPA is pleasant.	.831**	0.000
This wellness SPA has nice smell.	.426**	0.006
The atmosphere in this wellness SPA is cheerful.	.788**	0.000
This wellness SPA is clean.	.788**	0.000
This wellness SPA has up-to-date facilities.	.477**	0.002
The architecture in this wellness SPA is attractive.	.398*	0.011
The color scheme in this wellness SPA is attractive.	.568**	0.000
The facilities in this wellness SPA are maintained well.	.762**	0.000

Table 3.4. (Continued) Internal Validity Test of (Servicescape)

Communicative staging of servicescape		
The employees this wellness SPA are willing to help.	.792**	0.000
The employees this wellness SPA are polite and friendly.	.759**	0.000
The employees this wellness SPA give customer's personal attention.	.848**	0.000
The employees this wellness SPA are passionate.	.841**	0.000

* correlations significant at $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ** correlations significant at $\alpha \leq 0.01$

Table 3.5 shows the correlation coefficient between "service quality" and its items one by one, which shows that the correlation coefficients are significant, thus "service quality" has internal validity.

Table 3.5. Internal Validity Test of (Service Quality)

Service quality	Pearson Correlation coefficient	Sig.
The staffs provide a thorough and satisfactory service.	.844**	0.000
The staffs are reliable	.856**	0.000
The staffs are professional.	.892**	0.000

* correlations significant at $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ** correlations significant at $\alpha \leq 0.01$

Table 3.6 shows the correlation coefficient between "customer satisfaction" and its items one by one, which shows that the correlation coefficients are significant, thus "customer satisfaction" has internal validity.

Table 3.6. Internal Validity Test of (Customer satisfaction)

Customer satisfaction	Pearson Correlation coefficient	Sig.
Overall, I am satisfied here.	.835**	0.000
I have really enjoyed myself here.	.909**	0.000
The overall feelings I got from here put me in a good mood.	.875**	0.000

* correlations significant at $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ** correlations significant at $\alpha \leq 0.01$

Table 3.7 shows the correlation coefficient between "behavioral intentions" and its items one by one, which shows that the correlation coefficients are significant, thus "behavioral intentions" has internal validity.

Table 3.7. *Internal Validity Test of (Behavioral intentions)*

Behavioral intentions	Pearson Correlation coefficient	Sig.
I intend to revisit this place again.	0.410**	0.003
This place will be the first choice for me	.713**	0.000
I have positive comments about this place	.754**	0.000
I will recommend this place to others.	.759**	0.000
I have a continual intentions to visit this place in the future.	.527**	0.000

* correlations significant at $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ** correlations significant at $\alpha \leq 0.01$

3.12.2 Structural validity

Table 3.8 shows the correlation coefficient between the variable "service requirements according to ISO 17679" and its 6 sub-variables one by one. As well as shows the correlation coefficient between the variable "servicescape" and its 2 sub-variables one by one. Furthermore shows the correlation coefficient between the questionnaire as a whole and its variables one by one. The table 3.8 shows that the correlation coefficients are significant, thus the study instrument (the questionnaire) has a structure validity.

Table 3.8. Structure Validity Test

Variable		Pearson Correlation coefficient	Sig.
The Service requirements according to ISO 17679	Reception (facilities) requirements	0.647**	0.000
	Reception (services) requirements	.670**	0.000
	Requirements in Treatment area	.540**	0.000
	Requirements in Equipment	.721**	0.000
	Hygiene good practices requirements	.782**	0.000
	Staff requirements	.673**	0.000
The Service requirements according to ISO 17679		.749**	0.000
Servicescape	Substantive staging of servicescape	.720**	0.000
	Communicative staging of servicescape	.851**	0.000
Servicescape		.876**	0.000
Service Quality		.915**	0.000
Customer satisfaction		.751**	0.000
Behavioral intentions		.717**	0.000

* correlations significant at $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ** correlations significant at $\alpha \leq 0.01$

Chapter 4

FINDINGS

4.1. Overview

This chapter presents the analysis and interpretation of the data obtained from the participants. The findings are examined in relation to previous research and existing literature, aiming to identify similarities and differences between this study and prior studies, where applicable. Prior to conducting the main examination of the study, the scale items were rigorously tested to ensure the reliability and validity of the data. Additionally, this chapter provides the results of hypotheses testing.

The collected data underwent correlation analysis using structural equation modeling (SEM) to determine the relationships between the model's constructs. The measurement of the items was also scrutinized to ascertain the reliability and validity of the results. To assess the accuracy of the internal constructs, such as reliability, composite reliability (CR) and Cronbach's alpha were utilized.

4.2. Descriptive Analyses & Measurement Model

This section is divided into three sub-sections, first of them shows the descriptive analyses in order to measure the levels of implementing of the service requirements, servicescape, service quality, customer satisfaction and behavioral intentions were measured as outlined in follows in Table 4.2, Table 4.3, Table 4.4, Table 4.5, and Table 4.6. Second sub-section shows the measurement model including the reliability and validity tests as outlined in Table 4.7 and Table 4.8. Third sub-section shows the results

of the structural equation model and hypotheses testing as outlined in Table 4.9 and Figure 4.1.

Table 4.1 describe means, and their interpretation (value allocation) based on Alston and Miller (2002), Moohammed (2014) adopted interpretation for the 5-Points Likert scale as cited in a study of (Pärn, 2017).

Table 4.1. *Mean and Interpretation (Value Allocation)*

Mean	Interpretation
1.00 ≤ 1.49	Not at all (Very low)
1.5 ≤ 2.49	Slightly (Low)
2.5 ≤ 3.49	Moderately (Average)
3.5 ≤ 4.49	Mostly (High)
4.5 ≤ 5	Completely (Very high)

Source: The researcher using the adoptions of Alston and Miller (2002), Moohammed (2014).

4.2.1 Descriptive Analyses

Table 4.2 presents a comprehensive overview of the collected data by displaying the mean, relative weight, and standard deviation values pertaining to the study variables, namely service requirements, servicescape, service quality, customer satisfaction, and behavioral intentions. This table offers a detailed description of the respondents' responses and aids in understanding the characteristics of the data.

4.2.1.1 *Reception (facilities) requirements*

Table 4.2 shows that the relative weight of all reception (facilities) requirements is 84.6% which is at a high level, with a mean is 4.23 and a standard deviation is 0.57. As for the items of reception (facilities) requirements, the item *"The reception area exhibits a favorable condition concerning cleanliness, illumination, and absence of obstructions"* is ranked first with a relative weight of 88% which is at a high level.

While the item *"The areas dedicated to client service are effectively and visibly marked with appropriate signage"* is ranked last with a relative weight of 81% which is also at a high level.

4.2.1.2 Reception (services) requirements

Table 4.2 shows that the relative weight of all reception (services) requirements is 79% which is at a high level, with a mean is 3.95 and a standard deviation is 0.52. As for the items of reception (services) requirements, the item *"A reservation procedure is in place, requiring the identification of the client's name, contact details (telephone, fax, or email), requested services, pricing, number of clients, reserved period, and the booking guarantee policy"* is ranked first with a relative weight of 87% which is at a high level. While the item *"The wellness SPA reception provides new clients with an informational document outlining the potential health risks associated with each treatment. In order to ensure client awareness and responsibility, the SPA requires clients to sign this document"* is ranked last with a relative weight of 68% which is at a average level.

4.2.1.3 Requirements in treatment area

Table 4.2 shows that the relative weight of all requirements in treatment area is 78.60% which is at a high level, with a mean is 3.93 and a standard deviation is 0.53. As for the items of requirements in treatment area, the item *"The treatment room is equipped with a sufficient level of illumination that meets the necessary standards for cleanliness and safety, along with a lighting system that can be adjusted as needed."* is ranked first with a relative weight of 84.6% which is at a high level. While the item *"In the case of offering wet treatments, the presence of a floor drain is ensured."* is ranked last with a relative weight of 73% which is at also a high level.

4.2.1.4 Requirements in equipment

Table 4.2 shows that the relative weight of all requirements in equipment is 84% which is at a high level, with a mean is 4.2 and a standard deviation is 0.52. As for the items of requirements in equipment, the item *"The design and construction of all floor surfaces are tailored to suit the specific activities conducted in each area, such as incorporating non-slip flooring in wet areas to ensure safety"* is ranked first with a relative weight of 87% which is at a high level. While the item *"All electrical installations and equipment are constructed, maintained, and functioning in accordance with proper standards and specifications."* is ranked last with a relative weight of 80.5% which is also at a high level.

4.2.1.5 Hygiene good practices requirements

Table 4.2 shows that the relative weight of all hygiene good practices requirements is 82.2% which is at a high level, with a mean is 4.11 and a standard deviation is 0.46. As for the items of hygiene good practices requirements, the item *"The storage and utilization of maintenance and hygiene products for facilities and equipment strictly adhere to regulations"* is ranked first with a relative weight of 87.6% which is at a high level. While the item *"After each wellness treatment, thorough disinfection is performed on all elements of the facility that may have come into direct contact with the previous client"* is ranked last with a relative weight of 76.6% which is at a high level.

4.2.1.6 Staff requirements

Table 4.2 shows that the relative weight of all staff requirements is 85.2% which is at a high level, with a mean is 4.26 and a standard deviation is 0.43. As for the items

of staff requirements, the item *"Clients are addressed in a respectful and formal manner, adhering to the protocols of courteous conduct"* is ranked first with a relative weight of 88.6% which is at a high level. While the item *"The staff possesses the capability to effectively handle unforeseen circumstances"* is ranked last with a relative weight of 81.6% which is also at a high level.

Table 4.2. *Descriptive Analysis (Service requirements according to ISO 17679)*

The Service requirements according to ISO 17679	Mean	Standard deviation	Relative weight %	Test value	p-value	Items Order
1. Reception (facilities) requirements	4.23	0.57	84.60	13.70	0.00	
The reception area exhibits a favorable condition concerning cleanliness, illumination, and absence of obstructions.	4.40	0.50	88.00	17.85	0.00	1
The areas dedicated to client service are effectively and visibly marked with appropriate signage.	4.05	0.78	81.00	8.48	0.00	2
2. Reception (services) requirements	3.95	0.52	79.00	11.68	0.00	
The reception offers clients a comprehensive menu of services, providing clear information on the offerings, including scope, treatments, packages, pricing, operating hours, and guidelines.	3.70	0.94	74.00	4.71	0.00	10
The wellness SPA reception provides new clients with an informational document outlining the potential health risks associated with each treatment. In order to ensure client awareness and responsibility, the SPA requires clients to sign this document.	3.40	0.67	68.00	3.77	0.00	11
A reservation procedure is in place, requiring the identification of the client's name, contact details (telephone, fax, or email), requested services, pricing, number of clients, reserved period, and the booking guarantee policy.	4.35	0.62	87.00	13.72	0.00	1
All additional requests are registered.	3.95	0.96	79.00	6.26	0.00	7
The confirmation is formally notified and delivered to the client, including the guarantees for booking conditions (prepayment, credit cards, deposit, etc.)	4.05	0.93	81.00	7.12	0.00	4
All booking requests are listed as soon as the request is received and answered within 24 hours.	4.00	0.55	80.00	11.40	0.00	5

Table 4.2. (Continued) Descriptive Analysis (Service requirements according to ISO 17679)

Clients are promptly informed by reception staff about any changes in bookings, accompanied by valid justifications. Any exceptional circumstances are communicated to clients through efficient means of communication such as telephone or email.	3.98	0.86	79.50	7.15	0.00	6
The check-in services are carried out in a prompt and effective way.	4.10	0.63	82.00	11.00	0.00	3
Precise indications of the schedule and form of access to the facilities, clothing, etc. is given (or it is provided in written form), if required.	3.78	0.73	75.50	6.68	0.00	9
If required, specific guidelines are given, indicating the steps to be physically followed by the client for each treatment.	3.90	0.63	78.00	9.00	0.00	8
The issuing of invoices and collection of payment are carried out effectively, promptly and discreetly. Invoices are detailed and all receipts signed by the client are provided upon request.	4.28	0.85	85.50	9.52	0.00	2
3. Requirements in Treatment area	3.93	0.53	78.60	11.05	0.00	
An area for treatment is present, equipped with a sink, unless in temporary settings like natural environments.	3.98	0.95	79.50	6.51	0.00	4
A specific amount of floor space is designated as the minimum requirement for each type of treatment.	3.85	1.10	77.00	4.89	0.00	10
The treatment room is equipped with a sufficient level of illumination that meets the necessary standards for cleanliness and safety, along with a lighting system that can be adjusted as needed.	4.23	0.89	84.60	8.69	0.00	1
The air conditioning systems in the treatment rooms are individually regulated, subject to regular servicing and maintenance.	4.03	0.83	80.50	7.79	0.00	3
In the event that the treatment room is utilized for herbal wraps or mud treatments, there is provision for a shower facility.	4.05	0.71	81.00	9.30	0.00	2
In the case of offering wet treatments, the presence of a floor drain is ensured.	3.65	0.80	73.00	5.12	0.00	11
The wellness SPA incorporates safety mechanisms, such as emergency alarms.	3.95	0.78	79.00	7.68	0.00	6
Appropriate technical measures are implemented to prevent hazardous situations for clients.	3.85	0.36	77.00	14.87	0.00	8
Visible placement of usage instructions is provided for all wellness facilities that can be utilized without the presence of a therapist.	3.85	0.80	77.00	6.70	0.00	9
The SPA establishes a protocol to ensure the capability of providing first aid to its clients.	3.95	0.64	79.00	9.41	0.00	5
The first-aid kit is readily accessible to the staff members.	3.88	0.82	77.50	6.73	0.00	7
4. Requirements in Equipment	4.20	0.52	84.00	14.70	0.00	
The SPA furnishes measuring instruments, including clocks, hourglasses, and thermometers.	4.10	0.78	82.00	8.94	0.00	3
All water-filled aquatic wellness facilities and equipment are maintained in a clean and debris-free condition, while also ensuring appropriate water chemistry.	4.33	0.62	86.50	13.61	0.00	2

Table 4.2. (Continued) Descriptive Analysis (Service requirements according to ISO 17679)

The design and construction of all floor surfaces are tailored to suit the specific activities conducted in each area, such as incorporating non-slip flooring in wet areas to ensure safety.	4.35	0.62	87.00	13.72	0.00	1
All electrical installations and equipment are constructed, maintained, and functioning in accordance with proper standards and specifications.	4.03	1.05	80.50	6.18	0.00	4
5. Hygiene good practices requirements	4.11	0.46	82.20	15.45	0.00	
Regular supervision by staff ensures that wellness facilities and equipment are consistently maintained in a hygienic and visually clean condition.	4.25	0.74	85.00	10.65	0.00	4
After each wellness treatment, thorough disinfection is performed on all elements of the facility that may have come into direct contact with the previous client.	3.83	1.15	76.60	4.53	0.00	9
For every client, textiles that have directly come into contact with them are replaced.	4.05	0.81	81.00	8.15	0.00	6
The taps or water outlets undergo daily cleaning and disinfection.	4.10	0.78	82.00	8.94	0.00	5
Following each utilization, tubs are emptied, subjected to cleaning procedures, and disinfected.	4.25	0.71	85.00	11.18	0.00	3
The showerheads are designed to be detachable, while providing easy access to their internal components for disinfection.	3.95	0.68	79.00	8.87	0.00	7
The cleaning and disinfection of the floor are promptly conducted whenever required.	3.90	1.19	78.00	4.77	0.00	8
The storage and utilization of maintenance and hygiene products for facilities and equipment strictly adhere to regulations.	4.38	0.49	87.60	17.74	0.00	1
The tubs, pools, and whirlpools undergo regular maintenance to ensure their proper upkeep.	4.33	0.66	86.50	12.78	0.00	2
6. Staff requirements	4.26	0.43	85.2	18.53	0.00	
The staff attends to all client requirements and upholds their privacy with utmost respect.	4.33	0.76	86.50	10.97	0.00	2
Clients are addressed in a respectful and formal manner, adhering to the protocols of courteous conduct.	4.43	0.50	88.60	18.00	0.00	1
The staff possesses the capability to effectively handle unforeseen circumstances.	4.08	0.66	81.50	10.37	0.00	4
The delivery of services is efficient and prompt in all aspects.	4.23	0.80	84.50	9.68	0.00	3
The Service requirements according to ISO 17679	4.11	0.40	82.20	17.67	0.00	

Table 4.2 shows that the relative weight of the service requirements according to ISO 17679, with its six dimensions, is 82.2%, which is at a high level, with a mean of 4.11 and a standard deviation of 0.40. These indicate the level of implementation of ISO 17679 standards in wellness SPAs in 5-Star thermal hotels under investigation in this study is at a high level and this is from the point of view of the respondents to the

questionnaire. That is the answer to part one of this study title, following sections investigate the impacts of the ISO 17679 standards on customer satisfaction through 2 mediators namely servicescape and service quality. Then investigate the impact of customer satisfaction on behavioral intentions.

4.2.1.7 *Substantive staging of servicescape*

Table 4.3 shows that the relative weight of all substantive staging of servicescape is 84.2% which is at a high level, with a mean is 4.21 and a standard deviation is 0.44. As for the items of substantive staging of servicescape, the item *"The facilities in this wellness SPA are maintained well"* is ranked first with a relative weight of 86.6% which is at a high level. While the item *"The background music in this wellness SPA is pleasant"* is ranked last with a relative weight of 81.6% which is also at a high level.

4.2.1.8 *Communicative staging of servicescape*

Table 4.3 shows that the relative weight of all communicative staging of servicescape is 88% which is at a high level, with a mean is 4.40 and a standard deviation is 0.53. As for the items of communicative staging of servicescape, the item *"The employees this wellness SPA are polite and friendly"* is ranked first with a relative weight of 91% which is at a very high level. While the item *"The employees this wellness SPA give customers personal attention"* is ranked last with a relative weight of 85.6% which is at a high level.

Table 4.3. *Descriptive Analysis (Servicescape)*

Servicescape	Mean	Standard deviation	Relative weight%	Test value	P-value	Items Order
1. Substantive staging of servicescape	4.21	0.44	84.20	17.34	0.00	
The background music in this wellness SPA is pleasant.	4.08	1.07	81.60	6.35	0.00	8

Table 4.3. (Continued) Descriptive Analysis (Servicescape)

This wellness SPA has nice smell.	4.13	0.76	82.50	9.39	0.00	6
The atmosphere in this wellness SPA is cheerful.	4.25	0.59	85.00	13.44	0.00	4
This wellness SPA is clean.	4.25	0.61	85.00	13.44	0.00	5
This wellness SPA has up-to-date facilities.	4.30	0.72	86.00	11.37	0.00	3
The architecture in this wellness SPA is attractive.	4.30	0.65	86.00	12.68	0.00	2
The color scheme in this wellness SPA is attractive.	4.08	0.76	81.50	8.90	0.00	7
The facilities in this wellness SPA are maintained well.	4.33	0.47	86.60	17.67	0.00	1
2. Communicative staging of servicescape	4.40	0.53	88.00	16.79	0.00	
The employees this wellness SPA are willing to help.	4.50	0.51	90.00	18.73	0.00	2
The employees this wellness SPA are polite and friendly.	4.55	0.75	91.00	13.08	0.00	1
The employees this wellness SPA give customers personal attention.	4.28	0.75	85.50	10.74	0.00	4
The employees this wellness SPA are passionate.	4.28	0.60	85.50	13.47	0.00	3
Servicescape	4.31	0.44	86.20	18.86	0.00	

Table 4.3 shows that the relative weight of Servicescape, with its 2 dimensions, is 86.2%, which is at a high level, with a mean of 4.31 and a standard deviation of 0.44. These indicate the level of servicescape in wellness SPAs of 5-Star thermal hotels under investigation in this study is at a high level and this is from the point of view of the respondents to the questionnaire. Servicescape is the first mediator in this study, following sections investigate the indirect impact of the service requirements according to ISO 17679 on customer satisfaction through this first mediator.

4.2.1.9 Service quality

Table 4.4 shows that the relative weight of all service quality is 88.8% which is at a high level, with a mean is 4.44 and a standard deviation is 0.65. As for the items of service quality, the item *"The staffs are professional"* is ranked first with a relative weight of 90.6% which is at a very high level. While the item *"The staffs provide a thorough and satisfactory service"* is ranked last with a relative weight of 86.6% which is at a high level. These indicate the level of service quality in wellness SPAs of 5-Star thermal hotels under investigation in this study is at a high level and this is from the

point of view of the respondents to the questionnaire. Service quality is the second mediator in this study, following sections investigate the indirect impact of the service requirements according to ISO 17679 on customer satisfaction through the first mediator (servicescape) and this second mediator (service quality) separately and then jointly respectively.

Table 4.4. *Descriptive Analysis (Service Quality)*

Service quality	Mean	Standard deviation	Relative weight%	Test value	p- value	Items Order
The staffs provide a thorough and satisfactory service.	4.33	0.76	86.60	10.97	0.00	3
The staffs are reliable	4.48	0.85	89.60	11.01	0.00	2
The staffs are professional.	4.53	0.64	90.60	15.07	0.00	1
Service quality	4.44	0.65	88.80	14.10	0.00	

4.2.1.10 Customer satisfaction

Table 4.5 shows that the relative weight of all customer satisfaction is 85.8% which is at a high level, with a mean is 4.29 and a standard deviation is 0.50. As for the items of customer satisfaction, the item *"The overall feelings I got from here put me in a good mood"* is ranked first with a relative weight of 87.6% which is at a high level. While the item *"I have really enjoyed myself here"* is ranked last with a relative weight of 85% which is also at a high level. These indicate the level of customer satisfaction in wellness SPAs of 5-Star thermal hotels under investigation in this study is at a high level and this is from the point of view of the respondents to the questionnaire. customer satisfaction is a main dependent variable in this study, following sections investigate the impact of customer satisfaction on behavioral intentions.

Table 4.5. *Descriptive Analysis (Customer satisfaction)*

Customer satisfaction	Mean	Standard deviation	Relative weight%	Test value	p- value	Items Order
Overall, I am satisfied here.	4.26	0.44	85.20	18.03	0.00	2
I have really enjoyed myself here.	4.25	0.63	85.00	12.54	0.00	3
The overall feelings I got from here put me in a good mood.	4.38	0.63	87.60	13.85	0.00	1
Customer satisfaction	4.29	0.50	85.80	16.47	0.00	

4.2.1.11 Behavioral intentions

Table 4.6 shows that the relative weight of all behavioral intentions is 85.60% which is at a high level, with a mean is 4.28 and a standard deviation is 0.36. As for the items of behavioral intentions, the item *"I intend to revisit this place again"* is ranked first with a relative weight of 90% which is at a very high level. While the item *"This place will be the first choice for me"* is ranked last with a relative weight of 81.6% which is at a high level. These indicate the level of behavioral intentions in wellness SPAs of 5-Star thermal hotels under investigation in this study is at a high level and this is from the point of view of the respondents to the questionnaire. Behavioral intentions is the final dependent variable in this study.

Table 4.6. *Descriptive Analysis (Behavioral intentions)*

Behavioral intentions	Mean	Standard deviation	Relative weight%	Test value	p- value	Items Order
I intend to revisit this place again.	4.50	0.51	90.00	18.73	0.00	1
This place will be the first choice for me	4.08	0.69	81.60	9.80	0.00	5
I have positive comments about this place	4.25	0.59	85.00	13.44	0.00	3
I will recommend this place to others.	4.13	0.56	82.60	12.63	0.00	4
I have a continual intentions to visit this place in the future.	4.43	0.64	88.60	14.17	0.00	2
Behavioral intentions	4.28	0.36	85.60	22.31	0.00	

Based on the previous data analysis conducted, the following summary encapsulates the most significant findings:

1. The present study examines the extent of ISO 17679 standards implementation in wellness SPAs within 5-Star thermal hotels investigated by this study, revealing a high level of implementation (82.2%).
 - The fulfillment of reception (facilities) requirements has achieved a high level (84.6%).
 - Reception (services) requirements also demonstrate a high level of compliance (79%), with the exception of the item which states *"The wellness SPA reception provides new clients with an informational document outlining the potential health risks associated with each treatment. In order to ensure client awareness and responsibility, the SPA requires clients to sign this document"* ranking at an average level (68%).
 - The requirements pertaining to the treatment area exhibit a high level of adherence (78%).
 - The requirements concerning equipment meet a high standard (84%).
 - Hygiene good practices requirements are met at a high level (82.2%).
 - Staff requirements are fulfilled at a high level (85.2%).
2. The investigation of wellness SPAs of 5-Star thermal hotels in terms of servicescape, as defined by Chang (2016), reveals a high level of implementation (86.2%).
 - The substantial staging of servicescape demonstrates a high level of implementation (84.2%).

- The communicative staging of servicescape also achieves a high level of implementation (88%), except for the item which states *"The employees of this wellness SPA are polite and friendly,"* ranking first with a relative weight of 91%, indicating a very high level of implementation.
3. The study evaluates the level of service quality, as outlined by Chen (2015), in wellness SPAs within 5-Star thermal hotels, revealing a high level of service quality (88.8%), with the exception of item 3, which states *"The staffs are professional."*
 4. The examination of customer satisfaction, according to Han & Ryu (2008), in wellness SPAs within 5-Star thermal hotels, shows a high level of customer satisfaction (85.8%).
 5. The analysis of behavioral intentions, as defined by Virabhakul & Huan (2018), in wellness SPAs within 5-Star thermal hotels, indicates a high level of behavioral intentions (85.6%), with the exception of the item *"I intend to revisit this place again,"* ranking first with a relative weight of 90%, indicating a very high level of intentions.

Following a thorough exploration of the level of ISO 17679 implementation and other variables in wellness SPAs situated within 5-star thermal hotels, this chapter will investigate the effects of ISO 17679 on customer satisfaction. Subsequently, the influence of customer satisfaction on behavioral intentions will be examined in the subsequent sections. By conducting these analyses, a comprehensive understanding of the relationships and impacts between ISO 17679, customer satisfaction, and behavioral intentions will be attained.

4.2.2 Measurement model

This study employed Anderson and Gerbing's (1988) two-step analysis method. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS 22 and AMOS 20. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was employed to validate the factor loading of the five constructs and assess the model fit. The measurement model specifics are provided below.

4.2.2.1 Reliability and validity of measurement model

In Table 4.7 and Table 4.8, the internal consistency and reliability and discriminant validity of the study's measures were tested.

Table 4.7. Reliability and Validity of the Measurement Model

			Factor loading	Mean	Std. Deviation	Composite Reliability (CR)	Cronbach's alpha	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
The Service requirements according to ISO 17679	Reception requirements (facilities)		.8250	4.190	0.545			
	Reception requirements (services)		.8390	3.956	0.499			
	Requirements Treatment area	in	.8510	3.940	0.519			
	Requirements Equipment	in	.7600	4.194	0.513			
	Hygiene good practices requirements		.7170	4.119	0.451			
	Staff requirements		0.779	4.259	0.419			
The Service requirements according to ISO 17679			0.991	4.112	0.388	0.804	0.936	0.533
Servicescape	Substantive staging of servicescape	of	0.747	4.211	0.440			
	Communicative staging of servicescape	of	0.892	4.409	0.527			
Servicescape			.8850	4.309	0.435	0.97	0.844	0.952
Service Quality			.8290	4.448	0.638	0.776	0.752	0.54
Customer satisfaction			.8130	4.287	0.489	0.794	0.830	0.614
Behavioral intentions			.5400	4.283	0.365	0.727	0.700	0.579

Model goodness of fit indices: $\chi^2= 13.117$, $df=3$, $p= 0.000$, $\chi^2/df= 4.372$, $GFI= 0.924$, $RMSEA=0.08$, $CFI= 0.931$, $RMR= 0.243$.

Table 4.7 displays the internal consistency of the constructs, comprising composite reliability (CR) values and Cronbach's alpha values that surpass 0.70, indicating satisfactory reliability, as per the guidelines established by Hair et al. (2006). The assessment of construct validity encompassed both convergent and discriminant validity evaluations. Convergent validity criteria, encompassing factor loadings and average variance extracted (AVE), surpassed the recommended threshold of 0.5, while reliability exceeded 0.7, following the recommendations by Fornell and Larcker (1981). The confirmation of discriminant validity was derived from the correlation matrix and comparisons of the square root of AVE values as outlined in Table 4.8. The hypothesized measurement model exhibits dependable and meaningful relationships for subsequent structural tests.

Table 4.8. Discriminant Validity

	Service requirements according to ISO 17679	Servicescape	Service Quality	Customer satisfaction	Behavioral intentions
Service requirements	0.73				
Servicescape	0.314	0.976			
Service Quality	0.624	0.644	0.735		
Customer satisfaction	0.379	0.243	0.594	0.783	
Behavioral intentions	0.461	0.205	0.473	0.085	0.761

Diagonal elements are the square root of AVE.

4.2.3 Structural equation model and hypotheses testing

The structural equation model (SEM) was estimated with a Maximum Likelihood Estimation method and a Correlation Matrix as input data. The overall structural model fit indicates that $\chi^2 = 13.117$, $df = 3$, $p = 0.000$, $\chi^2/df = 4.372$, $GFI = 0.924$, $RMSEA = 0.08$, $CFI = 0.931$, $RMR = 0.243$. The details of the SEM analysis are displayed in Table 4.9 and Figure 4.1, which include parameter estimates, R² values and the results

of the hypotheses tests. According to the model validity measure presented by (Chin et al.,2008), the endogenous latent variable can be classified as strong, moderate or weak based on R2 values of 0.67, 0.33 or 0.19, respectively. Accordingly, servicescape (R2= 0.391), service quality (R2= 0.581), customer satisfaction (R2= 0.572) and behavioral intentions (R2= 0.270), which are all endogenously latent, can be described as moderate for servicescape, service quality, and customer satisfaction, and weak for behavioral intentions.

All hypotheses were supported (see Table 4.9). Service requirements had significant positive effects on servicescape, service quality and customer satisfaction ($\beta = 0.66, p < 0.01$; $\beta = 0.43, p < 0.01$; $\beta = 0.26, p < 0.01$). Thus, H2, H5 and H1 were supported. Servicescape, as hypothesized, had significant positive effects on customer satisfaction and service quality ($\beta = 0.33, p < 0.01, \beta = 0.72, p < 0.01$). Thus, H3 and H4 were supported. As hypothesized, service quality had significant positive effect on customer satisfaction ($\beta = 0.29, p < 0.01$), supporting H6. Finally, customer satisfaction had a significant positive effect on behavioral intentions ($\beta = 0.37, p < 0.01$), supporting H7.

Table 4.9. *Hypotheses Test Results*

Hypothesis	Independent variables		Dependent variables	Standardized estimates	t-values
H1	Service requirements	→	Customer satisfaction	0.26	2.364**
H2	Service requirements	→	Servicescape	0.66	6.044**
H3	Servicescape	→	Customer satisfaction	0.33	2.059**
H4	Servicescape	→	Service Quality	0.72	4.730**
H5	Service requirements	→	Service Quality	0.43	2.912**
H6	Service Quality	→	Customer satisfaction	0.29	2.291**

Table 4.9. (Continued) Hypotheses Test Results

H7	Customer satisfaction	→	Behavioral intentions	0.37	4.595**
Total variance explained (R²):					
R ² for Servicescape = 0.391, R ² for Service Quality= 0.581, R ² for Customer satisfaction= 0.572, R ² for Behavioral intentions = 0.270.					
H8a:	Service requirements	→	Servicescape → Customer satisfaction	Indirect Effect	β = 0.2178**
H8b:	Service requirements	→	Service quality → Customer satisfaction.	Indirect Effect	β = 0.1247**
H8c	Service requirements	→	Servicescape → Service quality → Customer satisfaction.	Indirect Effect β =	0.137808**
Total Effect on Customer satisfaction:					
β (Service requirements → Customer satisfaction) = 0.740308**					
β (Servicescape → Customer satisfaction) = 0.5388**					
β (Service quality → Customer satisfaction) = 0.29**					

Model goodness of fit indices: $\chi^2= 13.117$, $df=3$, $p= 0.000$, $\chi^2/df= 4.372$, $GFI= 0.924$, $RMSEA=0.08$, $CFI= 0.931$, $RMR= 0.243$.

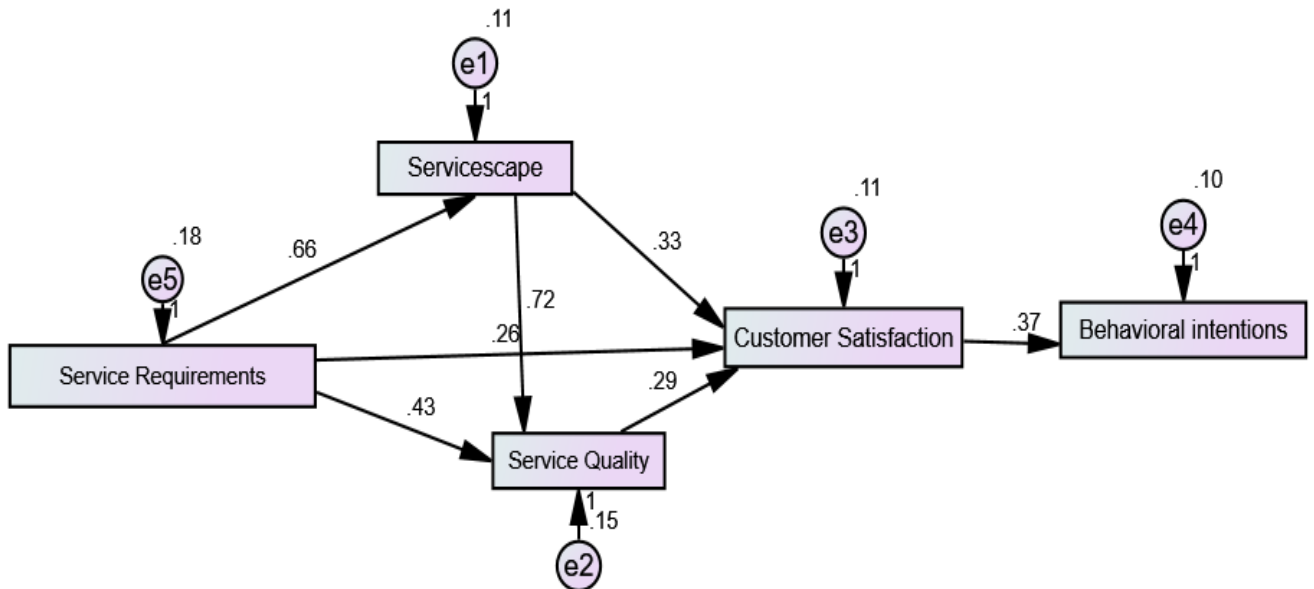


Figure 4.1. Estimated results of the research model

To investigate the mediating effect, the direct, indirect, and total effects between the variables were measured. Table 4.9 and Figure 4.1 shows that the total indirect effect of service requirements on customer satisfaction is 0.480308, which constitutes 64.9% of the total effect of 0.740308. This could be an indicator of a mediating effect.

As hypothesized, Table 4.9 and Figure 4.1 shows that the indirect effect of service requirements on customer satisfaction via only servicescape (β (H8a) = 0.2178, $p < 0.01$), via only service quality (β (H8b) = 0.1247, $p < 0.01$), and via the combination of servicescape, and service quality (β (H8c) = 0.137808, $p < 0.01$) were significant, supporting H8a, H8b, and H8c. These results imply that servicescape, service quality, and both of them jointly acted as important mediators within the proposed theoretical framework. Thus, H8a, H8b, and H8c were supported.

The total impacts of the latent constructs were also examined. The findings from the structural equation modeling (SEM) testing showed that service requirements ($\beta = 0.740308$, $p < 0.01$) had the greatest overall influence on customer satisfaction, followed by servicescape ($\beta = 0.5388$, $p < 0.01$), and service quality which had, as hypothesized, only a direct effect on customer satisfaction ($\beta = 0.29$, $p < 0.01$).

As well as the direct effect of service requirements on customer satisfaction was found to be significant (β (H1) = 0.26, $p < 0.01$) indicating the presence of partial mediation.

Chapter 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Overview

This study stands out as one of the few research endeavors that specifically examines SPA service requirements in the Sultanate of Oman. It sheds light on the significance of service requirements in relation to customer satisfaction and the subsequent formation of positive behavioral intentions. Furthermore, the study underscores the mediating functions of servicescape and service quality between service requirements and customer satisfaction, adding to the understanding of these interrelated constructs.

Building upon the ISO17679 standards, this research identifies and examines six key factors of service requirements. These factors encompass reception facilities requirements, reception services requirements, treatment area requirements, equipment requirements, hygiene good practices requirements, and staff requirements. Notably, this study represents the pioneering research that investigates the significance of service requirements and their impact on customer satisfaction in alignment with the ISO17679 standards. By addressing this research gap, the study contributes to the existing body of knowledge in the field.

In addition, this study employs multiple serial mediation models to investigate the impact of service requirements on customer satisfaction. Specifically, it explores the individual mediating roles of servicescape and service quality, as well as their combined

influence, in the relationship between service requirements and customer satisfaction. By employing these comprehensive serial mediation models, the study offers a nuanced understanding of the underlying mechanisms that connect service requirements to customer satisfaction.

5.2 Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate the interconnectedness of various marketing concepts. Specifically, **H1, H2, and H5**, which were supported by the results, highlight the positive influence of providing service requirements based on ISO 17679 on the quality of service delivered by a wellness SPAs and its supporting processes. These findings align with the principles of ISO 17679. The standard seeks to ensure effective monitoring, provide guidelines for selecting appropriate measurement methods, and ensure the overall effectiveness and adaptability of wellness SPA services (ISO 17679, 2016). Thus, the study's results corroborate the principles and objectives outlined by ISO 17679 in promoting quality in wellness SPA services.

The supported **H3** in this study underscores the positive impact of servicescape on customer satisfaction. This finding aligns with previous research conducted by Amato (2016), which suggests that wellness facilities with well-designed servicescape tend to evoke more positive emotions compared to those with less successful designs. It is also consistent with the findings of Choi et al. (2016), who identified Servicescape as a factor contributing to customers' positive wellness service experience. Their study proposed that servicescape has a positive relationship with service experience and can strengthen the effects of emotions and trust. Furthermore, the findings of this study are consistent with earlier research conducted by Reimer & Kuehn (2005) and Wakefield & Blodgett (1996), emphasizing the importance of creating a pleasant and innovative

atmosphere, as part of the physical environment, for the success of a firm. These studies provide additional support for the notion that a well-designed servicescape positively influences customer satisfaction (Han & Ryu, 2009). Overall, the findings of this study, along with the cited research, validate the relationship between servicescape and customer satisfaction, highlighting the significance of a well-crafted and appealing physical environment in enhancing customer experiences and satisfaction in wellness SPA settings.

The supported **H4** in this study demonstrates the positive influence of servicescape on service quality. This finding aligns with the research conducted by Chang (2016), which suggests that the tangible facilities and intangible services within resorts interact to create value for customers. This concept is consistent with Levitt's (1981) notion of "marketing intangible products and product intangibles." The study by Chang (2016) further reveals that employee behaviors play a crucial role in service delivery, and the perceived servicescape and customer emotions significantly impact customer consumption experiences in a service firm. These findings are in line with the results of H4 in the present study, highlighting the positive relationship between servicescape and service quality. Collectively, these findings emphasize the importance of a well-designed Servicescape in contributing to the overall quality of services delivered. They also support the notion that both tangible and intangible aspects of the servicescape, along with employee behaviors, play key roles in shaping the customer experience and perception of service quality.

The supported **H6** in this study demonstrates the positive influence of Service quality on customer satisfaction. This finding aligns with previous research conducted by Virabhakul & Huang (2018), which suggests that satisfaction acts as a mediator in

the relationship between service experience and behavioral intentions. Additionally, the findings are consistent with the study by El-refae (2012), which found that service quality, particularly tangibles and empathy, had the strongest influence on customer satisfaction and behavioral intentions. Furthermore, the findings of Durmaz et al. (2018) indicate that service quality positively affects customer satisfaction and hotel image. This supports the idea that delivering high-quality services leads to increased customer satisfaction. Additionally, Dagger et al. (2007) emphasize the importance of health service quality as a determinant of patient satisfaction and behavioral intentions. Their findings highlight that high levels of perceived service quality result in higher customer satisfaction (Clemes, 2020). The consistency of these findings is further supported by studies such as Anderson et al. (1994), Cronin & Taylor (1992), and Zeithaml et al. (2006), which all highlight the role of service quality as an antecedent of customer satisfaction (El-refae, 2012). In summary, the results of this study, along with the cited research, provide robust evidence for the positive relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction. They underscore the importance of delivering high-quality services to enhance customer satisfaction and subsequently influence behavioral intentions.

The supported **H7** in this study indicates a positive relationship between customer satisfaction and behavioral intentions. This finding is consistent with previous research, such as the study conducted by Chen et al. (2015), which showed that positive and negative emotions have differential effects on diners' loyalty towards restaurants. It suggests that customer satisfaction plays a crucial role in shaping loyalty and behavioral intentions. Similarly, the findings of Durmaz et al. (2018) align with this study, as they indicate that customer satisfaction has a positive impact on the intentions to revisit and recommend. These findings suggest that satisfied customers are more likely to engage

in repeat business and actively promote the service or product to others. Moreover, the alignment with studies conducted by Cho et al. (2004), Cronin et al. (2000), Kelly & Turley (2001), Tian-Cole et al. (2002), Bitner (1990), Patterson & Spreng (1997), and Yoo et al. (2003) further reinforces the relationship between customer satisfaction and behavioral intentions (El-refae, 2012). These studies consistently highlight the role of customer satisfaction as a reliable predictor of repurchase intentions and reduced customer complaints. Furthermore, the findings are consistent with the study by González et al. (2007), which clearly demonstrates the influence of customer satisfaction on behavioral intentions in the tourism industry. Overall, these aligned results emphasize that customer satisfaction has a positive impact on behavioral intentions, loyalty, repurchase intentions, and reduced complaints. They highlight the importance of prioritizing customer satisfaction to foster positive customer behaviors and intentions in various industries.

The supported **H8a** in this study indicates that servicescape mediates the relationship between service requirements and customer satisfaction. This finding is consistent with previous research, such as the study by NasarAmini et al. (2022), which states that the experiences of hotel customers are influenced by the servicescape, including both the physical and communicative aspects. It suggests that the quality of the servicescape plays a crucial role in shaping customer satisfaction. The alignment with the study by Inthasang et al. (2019) further supports this result, as they found that servicescape significantly contributes to place attachment, which, in turn, positively affects customer satisfaction. This indicates that servicescape acts as an antecedent to customer satisfaction. Additionally, the findings align with the study by Vilnai-Yavetz & Gilboa (2010), which emphasizes the impact of cleanliness in the servicescape on customer responses in various service contexts. It highlights that a clean servicescape

can prevent service failures and support service recovery, ultimately influencing customer satisfaction. The study by Lee & Kim (2014) further reinforces the relationship between servicescape and customer satisfaction. Their findings indicate that elements of the servicescape, such as cleanliness, layout, and comfort, are crucial factors for service quality and satisfaction. These elements have a direct impact on user satisfaction and an indirect impact on loyalty and repeat usage in public service facilities. Furthermore, the alignment with the study by Ariffin et al. (2013) supports the positive influence of hotel hospitality on guest satisfaction and the moderating effect of servicescape. It suggests that servicescape can enhance the impact of hospitality on customer satisfaction. Overall, these aligned results highlight the mediating role of servicescape in the relationship between service requirements and customer satisfaction. They emphasize the importance of a well-designed and clean servicescape in shaping customer perceptions, experiences, and ultimately, their satisfaction.

The supported **H8b** in this study illustrates that service quality mediates the relationship between service requirements and customer satisfaction. This finding is consistent with previous research conducted by Gonzales and Brea (2005), Hsieh et al. (2008), Tsai et al. (2012), Giritlioglu et al. (2014), Lo et al. (2015), and Choi et al. (2015). These studies highlight the relevance of service quality in achieving customer satisfaction and subsequently influencing behavioral intentions (Clemes et al. 2020). The alignment with Caruana (2002), Dandis et al. (2021), and Myo et al. (2019) further supports this result, as they emphasize the mediating role of customer satisfaction in the relationship between service quality and service loyalty. This implies that service quality acts as an antecedent to customer satisfaction. Furthermore, the alignment with Rashid (2013) indicates a significant relationship between the perception of service quality and customer satisfaction, leading to positive customer loyalty in the hotel

industry. The results also align with the study conducted by Aburayya et al. (2020), which found a positive correlation between customer orientation, service quality, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty. It suggests that customer satisfaction has a more substantial impact on consumer loyalty than service quality. Additionally, the results align with Kaura et al. (2015), indicating that customer satisfaction mediates the relationship between service quality dimensions, perceived price and fairness, service convenience dimensions, and customer loyalty. This supports the notion that service quality serves as an antecedent to customer satisfaction. Overall, these aligned results emphasize the mediating role of service quality in the relationship between service requirements and customer satisfaction. They highlight the importance of delivering high-quality services that meet customer requirements to enhance customer satisfaction and ultimately influence customer loyalty and behavioral intentions.

The supported **H8c** in this study clearly illustrates that servicescape and service quality jointly and respectively mediate the relationship between service requirements and customer satisfaction. This finding is consistent with the research conducted by Siwi (2016), which concluded that servicescape and quality of service significantly influence customer satisfaction. Siwi found that these two variables, along with price (not examined in this study), account for 89 percent of consumer satisfaction. The alignment with Widyawati & Widowati (2021) further supports this result by identifying a new relationship between service quality, online servicescape, customer satisfaction, and loyalty. This suggests that service quality and servicescape together play a role in strengthening customer satisfaction and loyalty. The alignment with Parasuraman, Zeithaml, Berry (1985), Kant & Jaiswal (2017), Sanjuq (2014), and Ananth, Ramesh, Prabaharan (2010) emphasizes the importance of tangibility in service quality. These studies highlight the influence of tangible facets of the servicescape, such

as equipment, physical facilities, and visual appeal, on customer satisfaction (Pakurár, 2019). Considering the findings of this study, where service requirements have a significant effect on servicescape (H2) and servicescape has a significant effect on service quality (H4), it confirms that servicescape and service quality jointly and respectively mediate the relationship between service requirements and customer satisfaction. Overall, these aligned results highlight the combined and separate mediating roles of Servicescape and service quality in shaping the relationship between service requirements and customer satisfaction. They emphasize the importance of creating an appealing servicescape, delivering high-quality services, and meeting customer requirements to enhance customer satisfaction.

Based on the findings of this study, the main findings can be summarized as follows:

1. Level of implementation of ISO 17679 standards in wellness SPAs within 5-Star thermal hotels investigated by this study, revealing a high level of implementation (82.2%).
2. Service requirements based on ISO 17679 have a significant direct effect on servicescape, service quality, and customer satisfaction.
3. Servicescape has a significant direct effect on service quality and customer satisfaction.
4. Service quality has a significant direct effect on customer satisfaction.
5. Customer satisfaction has a significant direct effect on behavioral intentions.
6. Servicescape partially mediates the relationship between service requirements and customer satisfaction, indicating that it plays a role in connecting these variables, but not to the extent of full mediation.

7. Service quality partially mediates the relationship between service requirements and customer satisfaction, suggesting that it acts as a mediator but does not fully explain the relationship.
8. Servicescape and service quality jointly and respectively partially mediate the relationship between service requirements and customer satisfaction. This means that both variables have a combined and separate mediating effect on the relationship.
9. Service requirements have the greatest overall influence (total effect) on customer satisfaction comes from service requirements (β (service requirements \rightarrow customer satisfaction) = 0.740308**), followed by servicescape (β (servicescape \rightarrow customer satisfaction) = 0.5388**), and then service quality (β (service quality \rightarrow customer satisfaction) = 0.29**).
10. The mediation roles between service requirements and customer satisfaction are ranked as follows (in descending order):
 - a) Service requirements \rightarrow servicescape \rightarrow customer satisfaction (β (H8a) = 0.2178, $p < 0.01$).
 - b) Service requirements \rightarrow servicescape \rightarrow service quality \rightarrow customer satisfaction (β (H8c) = 0.137808, $p < 0.01$).
 - c) Service requirements \rightarrow service quality \rightarrow customer satisfaction (β (H8b) = 0.1247, $p < 0.01$).

These findings highlight the importance of meeting service requirements , creating an appealing servicescape, and delivering high-quality services to enhance customer satisfaction. They also emphasize the role of servicescape and service quality as partially mediators in the relationship between service requirements and customer satisfaction.

5.3 Conclusion

By consolidating the findings of this study, it is possible to construct a relationship model that illustrates the mediating role of servicescape and service quality in the relationship between service requirements and customer satisfaction. Notably, previous studies have not examined the serial mediating relationships of these variables while considering service requirements as the starting point for achieving customer satisfaction.

Furthermore, this study highlights that the relationship between service requirements and customer satisfaction is established through two interconnected mediators namely servicescape and service quality. Both mediators play a role individually and jointly in shaping customer satisfaction, as mentioned earlier. Additionally, a significant direct effect of service requirements on customer satisfaction was identified, underscoring the importance of meeting appropriate service requirements as a fundamental step toward achieving customer satisfaction.

Moreover, the study reveals that the largest total effect on customer satisfaction originates from service requirements, followed by servicescape, and then service Quality. Furthermore, the study identifies the most effective path between service requirements and customer satisfaction is the path that involves only servicescape which is H8a, followed by the path that involves both servicescape and service quality jointly and respectively which is H8c. The path involving only service quality, which is H8b, follows thereafter.

Overall, this model emphasizes the central role of service requirements in the pursuit of customer satisfaction, while recognizing a partial mediating influence of servicescape and service quality.

5.3.1 Theoretical implications

Prior studies have extensively explored a broad range of factors that influence customer satisfaction and behavioral intentions, such as servicescape, service quality, service experience, emotions, perceived value, perceived quality, and more. However, these studies have often overlooked the significance of service requirements as a fundamental precursor to these antecedent variables of customer satisfaction and behavioral intentions.

The findings of this study hold significant theoretical implications as the proposed extended causal chain relationship model of (service requirements - servicescape - service quality - customer satisfaction - behavioral intentions) demonstrates a satisfactory model fit. This indicates the validity and reliability of the model, adding to its theoretical significance.

Consequently, this study integrates the operational standards proposed by ISO 17679, which suggest that adhering to ISO 17679 in providing service requirements and supporting processes positively influences the quality of service delivered to clients, with the prior studies that investigated the factors that influence customer satisfaction and behavioral intentions.

This integration fills a gap left by previous studies that investigated the effects of variables such as servicescape, service quality, emotions, and perceived value on customer satisfaction and behavioral intentions, without considering the importance of service requirements. For instance, Loureiro (2017) examined the impact of servicescape and credibility on emotions, perceived quality, and image. Amato (2016) investigated the effect of servicescape on consumers' emotions and sensations, while Choi et al. (2016) explored the relationship between servicescape and service

experience. Similarly, Chang (2016) examined the influence of perceived servicescape and customer emotions on customer consumption experiences.

Virabhakul and Huang (2018) investigated the mediating role of emotions, perceived value, and satisfaction in the relationship between service experience and behavioral intentions. El-refae (2012) examined the impact of service quality on satisfaction and revisited behavioral intentions, while Chen et al. (2015) explored the influence of stimuli in luxury restaurants on customers' emotions and loyalty.

Durmaz et al. (2018) studied the effect of service quality on customer satisfaction and hotel image, as well as the impact of hotel image and customer satisfaction on the intentions to visit and recommend. Han and Ryu (2009) examined the relationships among physical environment components, price perception, customer satisfaction, and customer loyalty in the restaurant industry.

Moreover, Dagger et al. (2007) investigated the effect of health service quality on patient satisfaction and behavioral intentions. While Tsai et al. (2012) explored the relationships between environmental service, experience, service quality, value reliability, overall satisfaction, likelihood to revisit, and likelihood to recommend (Clemes et al., 2020).

Gonzalez et al. (2007) demonstrated the influence of service quality and customer satisfaction on behavioral intentions in the tourism industry. Anderson et al. (1994), Cronin and Taylor (1992), and Zeithaml et al. (2006) investigated the impact of service quality on customer satisfaction (El-refae, 2012).

Despite the extensive research conducted on a wide range of antecedents of customer satisfaction and behavioral intentions, the significance of service requirements has been largely overlooked.

The examined causal chain (service requirements - servicescape - service quality - customer satisfaction - behavioral intentions) can be applied to elucidate the services offered by wellness SPAs of 5-star thermal hotels within the context of the Sultanate of Oman, as investigated in this study. The results offer a comprehensive perspective on the services offered by wellness SPAs in 5-star thermal hotels within the Sultanate of Oman, as examined in this research study.

A causal relationship can be established between service requirements , servicescape, service quality, customer satisfaction, and behavioral intentions, highlighting the pivotal role of service requirements as a foundational element prior to servicescape and service quality. This sequential relationship ultimately shapes customer satisfaction and subsequently influences behavioral intentions. Prior research has not explored the sequential mediation relationship beginning with service requirements within the context of SPA services. Serial mediation can offer a deeper understanding of the linkage between service requirements and customer satisfaction, unveiling the mediators involved in this sequential chain. Furthermore, this study emphasizes that the association between service requirements and customer satisfaction is partially mediated by servicescape and service quality within wellness SPAs in 5-star thermal hotels in the context of the Sultanate of Oman. Additionally, this study validates the direct impact of customer satisfaction on behavioral intentions. This causal interplay among service requirements, servicescape, service quality, customer satisfaction, and behavioral intentions substantiates the theoretical foundation underpinning this research, particularly drawing from Customer Expectation-Perception Theory, Expectancy-Disconfirmation Theory, Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), and Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB).

5.3.2 Practical implications

- Importance of service requirements:

The study highlights the significance of adhering to service requirements based on ISO 17679 standards. SPA managers should prioritize meeting these requirements to ensure the delivery of high-quality services, as they directly influence customer satisfaction which, in turn, generates positive behavioral intentions.

- Focus on servicescape:

The research emphasizes the role of servicescape in influencing customer satisfaction. SPA managers should pay attention to the design and layout of the SPA facilities, reception areas, treatment rooms, equipment, and overall ambiance to create a positive and pleasant environment for customers. This can contribute to enhancing their satisfaction and overall service experience.

- Emphasis on service quality:

The study underscores the importance of service quality in shaping customer satisfaction. SPA managers should strive for excellence in service delivery, including factors such as staff competence, professionalism, responsiveness, and empathy. By consistently providing high-quality services, managers can enhance customer satisfaction and foster positive behavioral intentions.

- Customer loyalty strategies:

The findings suggest that by focusing on service requirements, servicescape, and service quality, SPA managers can develop effective customer loyalty strategies. By meeting customers' expectations and creating positive service experiences, managers

can increase customer satisfaction, which in turn leads to favorable behavioral intentions such as repeat visits and positive word-of-mouth recommendations.

- Customer experience as a key factor:

The study highlights the importance of the overall customer experience in SPA marketing. SPAs managers, especially in 5-star thermal hotels, should aim to provide a holistic experience that goes beyond individual service interactions. By considering all aspects of the customer journey, from the moment they enter the SPA until they leave, managers can create a memorable and satisfying experience for customers.

Overall, the research underscores the need for SPA managers to focus on service requirements, servicescape, and service quality to enhance customer satisfaction and drive favorable behavioral intentions. By understanding and implementing these findings, managers can improve their service offerings and customer loyalty strategies, ultimately leading to business success in the wellness SPA industry.

5.3.3 Limitation and future research directions

This study has certain limitations and provides opportunities for future research.

Firstly, the study exclusively focused on SPAs customers in Muscat, the capital of Oman. Consequently, the generalizability of the findings to SPA customers in other thermal hotels across different Omani cities may be constrained due to potential variations in the implementation of ISO 17679 among these locations.

Secondly, the current research utilized the convenience sampling technique, a widely used approach in the hospitality and tourism field. However, for future studies, it is recommended to explore alternative sampling methods beyond convenience sampling. Due to the unavailability of official data on the consumption of spa services in thermal hotels in Oman, determining the population size of customers using SPAs

services was infeasible in this study. Adopting other sampling techniques could enhance the depth and accuracy of investigations in understanding customer behaviors and preferences related to SPAs services in Oman's thermal hotels.

Thirdly, the current research did not gather demographic data from respondents, as the main focus of this study was not to investigate differences among participants. However, for future studies, it is suggested to collect demographic data from respondents. This would allow researchers to explore potential variations among respondent groups concerning factors such as age, gender, education level, income, and cultural background. Analyzing these demographic variables could provide valuable insights into how different segments of tourists perceive and engage with the tourism experience, contributing to a deeper understanding of the dynamics in the field of tourism management.

Finally, as previously indicated, service requirements exert the most substantial influence on customer satisfaction ($\beta = 0.740308^{**}$), followed by servicescape ($\beta = 0.5388^{**}$), and then service quality ($\beta = 0.29^{**}$). Consequently, there are likely other variables that can impact customer satisfaction. Hence, it is recommended that future studies investigate additional variables that might mediate the relationship between service requirements and customer satisfaction.

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