Classifying the Hotel Spa Tourist: A Multidimensional Qualitative Approach

Rami F. Tawil
Philadelphia University
Faculty of Administrative and Financial Sciences
Department of Hotel and Tourism Management
Jordan.

Abstract

There is a sense of uncertainty regarding the classification of spa tourists that makes forecasting problematic. A qualitative study was undertaken to provide a greater level of insight, this required developing a framework that was divided into three dimensions based on the destination facility choice process. Coding was used as an appropriate analytical tool that resulted in developing 10 types of spa tourists. The results were further funnelled and a 4 type broad typology was constructed, its significance lies in its consideration of the spa destination choice process as a whole, rather than a heavy emphasis being placed merely on reasons people visit spas, which has dominated many of the previous spa typologies.

Keywords: Spa, Spa Tourist, Qualitative Approach, Tourist Typology, Destination Choice, Tourist Behaviour, Health Tourism.

1. Introduction

The worldwide spa industry is worth in the region of US $40 billion and has grown at a phenomenal rate in the past ten years (Haden, 2007). The growth of health food, gyms and the investment in leisure facilities proves that consumers are looking for more than relaxation during a break or holiday; this is unsurprising given time is so precious to contemporary consumers (Lynch, 2002). Harmsworth (2004: p. 173) claims that "the spa market is one of the fastest growing leisure sectors, where societal trends and aspirations find instant reflection in the developments on both the demand and supply sides. The market is very fragmented, each segment catering for different customer needs, which continuously change in line with social and lifestyle changes."

The current study aims to determine the nature and significance of spa-related tourism, and the characteristics and requirements of spa tourists in relation to the destination facility choice process. Understanding how people go about choosing a product such as a house or a travel destination has received substantial attention not only from consumer researchers, but also from tourism researchers who are interested in developing effective marketing and communication strategies (Baloglu, 1999; Litvin, Xu, and Kang, 2004).

Insights into spa tourism were mainly provided through research into related domains. As the academic study of spa tourism has progressed, spas have begun receiving far more targeted attention. However, the classification of spa tourists is limited in terms of who they are and what motives and factors are behind their visit. Previous research into spa tourists has focused on their classification with regards to *why* they visit spas. It has largely concerned itself with the behaviours; attitudes and needs of people which make them decide to take a holiday or short break at a spa in particular. This research will attempt to broaden the depth of knowledge in the field of spa tourism by establishing a classification of spa tourists, it will be based not only on why people decide to use spas but also the factors which affect their choice of spa, thus incorporating the facilities and treatments on offer, and their spa holiday experience or feedbacks.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1 Definitions

Spa tourism has many varied definitions; there is no 'officially' agreed upon definition of what a spa should or should not be – what makes it such? Many believe that the word 'spa' is an acronym based on the Latin phrase 'sanitas per aquas' - meaning 'health through water', in fact the Oxford English dictionary's definition of a spa is from the Latin 'solus per aqua' or 'health by water' defined as "a place with mineral springs considered to have health-giving properties" (Loverseed, 1998). Thornton and Brutscher (2003) maintain that the word and the concept of spa actually originated from the time of the Roman Empire when battle weary legionnaires tried to find a way to recover from their military wounds and ailments.

Therefore suggesting that traditionally, water is not only inexplicably linked to the definition of spas, but that it is the water which defines it. The European Spas Association's (ESPA) definition of a spa is also dependent upon the water element, they define a spa as 'a mineral spring or a place or resort where such a spring is found' (Jenner and Smith, 2000). Unlike the ESPA, the British Spas Federation (BSF) reviewed its definition with regard to widening its membership, which at that time consisted only of the municipal authorities of spa towns. However, the BSF was later replaced by the Spa Business Association (SpaBa) who in turn redefined the spa, returning the centrality of the role of water by defining a spa as "an establishment providing a minimum of one approved water based treatment using water of known composition. The spa should be staffed by appropriately trained therapists and have minimum standards of furnishings. The water should be enhanced with minerals, either naturally or with an additive" (Mintel, 2005).

Others, especially in the USA, hold a far less rigid view of what constitutes a spa. The Kentucky-based International Spa Association (ISPA), an organisation which claims to set the standards for the spa industry makes no mention of water in its definition, arguing that "a spa serves as an educational and cultural institution that promotes and integrates individual wellness, health and fitness as well as social well-being, harmony and balance through wellness, prevention, therapy and rehabilitation of body, mind and soul" (Loverseed, 1998: p. 48). Later, the ISPA offered an all-encompassing, holistic definition, claiming that spas are "devoted to enhancing overall well-being through a variety of professional services that encourage the renewal of mind, body and spirit" (Mintel, 2005).

The fact that there is no clear definition of spa tourism, and the wide variance of what constitutes a spa even by spa industry trade bodies causes much confusion. Some deem water a fundamental component to a spa, while others make no mention of it at all in their definition. Some spas claim to be health-focused, offering services where the emphasis is on health maintenance and illness prevention in the form of exercise, healthy eating, and relaxation designed to harmonise body and soul. It can be argued that a spa could be defined as: "a place geographically based on mineral or thermal springs or seawater, or a fitness club that offers a variety of treatments, services, and facilities aimed at achieving medicinal or leisure benefits for its clients." This definition encompasses the majority of the different views about spas; in particular the three main aspects: location, treatments and facilities provided, and the purpose of the visit.

2.2 Historical Background

It is claimed by Jenner and Smith (2000) that visiting spas is one of the earliest forms of tourism. Spas found their beginnings thousands of years ago, when ancient civilisations used them for their healing properties and as an important part of their social structure (Vierville, 2003; Spaa, 2002). The therapeutic use of baths was remarkably long-lived; such popularity was no doubt partly due to the fact that baths were both pleasant and, by the Roman imperial period at least, comparatively freely available (Jackson, 1990). It was after this time that public interest in baths began to peak (Spaa, 2002).

By the medieval period, the idea that thermal springs could have medicinal properties was firmly established. But in the 18th and 19th centuries, 'taking the waters' began being a fashionable pastime for Europe's upper classes. In fact, the popularity of this habit is what established places in the UK, such as Bath, Brighton and Harrogate, as early tourism destinations (Jenner and Smith, 2000). Today's spa is an interesting combination of ancient traditions and modern facilities; in recent years, the value of prevention, healthy lifestyles, and relaxation has been embraced by many and the spa is again finding its place in modern society as a place uniquely geared to address these needs (Register, 2005).

2.3 The Demand Side

The growth of health food, gyms and the investment in leisure facilities proves that consumers are looking for more than relaxation during a break or holiday; this is unsurprising when time is so precious (Lynch, 2002). Harmsworth (2004: p. 173) claims that "the spa market is one of the fastest growing leisure sectors, where societal trends and aspirations find instant reflection in the developments on both the demand and supply sides. The market is very fragmented, each segment catering for different customer needs, which continuously change in line with social and lifestyle changes". Hunter-Jones (2001: p. 130) comments on the fact that "today a social revolution has occurred and health [and spa] tourism now covers a wide spectrum of people with diverse interests from pure medical consumers to tourism consumers."

In this sense, the understanding of health has also turned in on itself. Today, "health is not understood as the mere absence of disease any more, but as a philosophy of life and a worthwhile goal for life and everyday" (Fisher, 1999 cited in Fontanari and Kern, 2003: p 20). This shift in attitudes towards health is echoed by the work of Messerli and Oyama, (2004) who quote the Hamburg-based trend watcher Matthias Horx, "Never before in the history of humankind has health been so highly valued... Health no longer means the absence of disease, but indicates an active lifestyle choice aimed at combating stress and, increasingly, countering psychological problems." Whilst trend-watchers are not wholly reliable sources, the change in attitudes towards health is an interesting indicator of modern society.

Changing demands of increasingly sophisticated travellers also fuel the growth in spa related tourism; spa clients are increasingly demanding and their expectations are high. According to Harmsworth (2004) after a successful visit to a spa, up to 90% of clients have returned for an additional visit. Messerli and Oyama (2004) show that those clients are looking for something new and different in their trips, but also seek meaningful experiences; they are well informed, more quality conscious, independent, and harder to please. It's these factors - along with greater health awareness, uptake of alternative therapies, and more environmental and psychological awareness, that drive demand for spa holidays addressing the need for time out, rejuvenation, and deeper experience (Grihault, 2007).

2.4 Characteristics of Spa Tourists

Traditionally it has been women who have primarily used spas. However, a consumer research conducted by ISPA in 2003 determined that 29% of spa tourists around the world are men; this figure rose to 30% in 2004. As men continue to represent a significant proportion of the spa market, more spas are offering special treatments for them and men-only spas continue to open in cities around the world (Grihault, 2007; Mintel, 2005; Messerli and Oyama, 2004). The Baby Boomer generation (45-60 years old) continues to be the core consumer base for the global spa tourism industry. According to Haden (2007) industry analysts have long known that health conscious Baby Boomers have been the main driving force behind the worldwide boom in the spa industry. However, some argue the appeal of the industry reaches a larger age-range; Swarbrooke (2000: p 78-79) claims that most visitors to spa sites are in the social classes A, B and C1 and are between 30 and 65 years of age. Mintel (2005) have a similar view, claiming it is the 25-64 year old market who dominate the customer base for spas; this group tends not to be at the family life stage, and their members are as likely to be male as female.

The average age of visitors to spas is currently 49 years (ETC, 2002). Yet Hudson (2003) argues that by 2050, 20 percent of the world's population will be sixty years or older; and by 2150, this figure will increase to over 30 percent. These claims seem dramatic; however it is clear from all the statistics available that the population is aging and that this trend is set to continue. Latest research by International Database, US Census in 2007 confirms these figures and shows the number of people aged over 55 years is projected to reach 2.6 billion or approximately 27.7% of the world's population by 2050. Thus, the number of individuals aged 55 and over is forecast to grow at a rate of about 4% per year over the next 43 years (Haden, 2007).

According to a survey carried out by the British Market Research Bureau (BMRB), 70.8% of those aged over 45 years had been on holiday in 2006, compared to 64.9% of the general UK population. A Mintel study of US travellers in 2005 revealed that those over 55 years are more inclined to take holidays lasting five days or longer. Maintaining health in retirement has become a top priority. In a 2006 study of US health and fitness clubs in May 2006, Mintel found that those aged over 55 years were far more likely to participate in some form of strenuous exercise five or more times a week than other segments of the population (Haden, 2007). If such predictions are dealt with wisely, the outlook for the industry appears to be positive; it will help to drive tourism's growth in general and health-related travel in particular. Taking this into consideration, such a shift will clearly have substantial implications for the international health and spa tourism industry.

2.5 Reasons behind the Visit

According to Horner and Swarbrooke (1998), the development of health tourism and spas has concentrated on two different market segments. The first market consists of those who visit spas for their health alone; the second segment incorporates those seeking other more varied kinds of tourism, looking for well being, beauty, and recreation. This theory is also found in the work of Hunter-Jones (2000), who attempted to segment two different types of health tourism and spa consumers: recreational consumer and medical consumer.

Many authors reject the idea that people can be split into just two categories in terms of their reasons for participating in spas (Hall, 1992; Jackson, 1990; Mackaman, 1998; Nord, 1986). Others argue that people's demands at a spa will vary from beauty health care (Gilbert and Weerdt, 1991; Goodrich and Goodrich, 1991), to more specific reasons, such as physical body satisfaction, fitness, and weight loss (Phillips and Drummond, 2001; Jenner and Smith, 2000). Becheri (1989) classifies spa tourists into four categories: people looking for relaxation, people wishing to delay their ageing, people wanting a short break weekend, and people concerned with illness prevention. Marvel (2002) argues that the motivations for spa tourists visiting a spa are be beauty, longevity treatments, relaxation, and tranquillity or a respite from hectic lifestyles. The English Tourism Council (2002), show that most people's view of health falls into two broad categories: physical and psychological.

Today, the industry players claim the number-one motivation for people to visit spas is rest and relaxation. As developed countries increasingly move towards '24/7' societies with people working longer hours than ever before, personal stress levels have increased and a higher value is placed on leisure time. The World Health Organisation warns that depression and mental health problems will be the second-largest disease burden by 2020, and this would indicate that stress, and the need to cope with increasingly fast-paced modern lives, is not going to go away (Grihault, 2007). Mintel (2005) shows that visits to spas is increasingly being seen as a necessity, not a luxury, among busy professionals. Messerli and Oyama (2004) argue that ongoing pressures and stress fuel the need to recover one's wellbeing in a relaxing atmosphere removed from everyday environments. Grihault (2007), commenting on the 2005 *Megatrends* report by the European Travel Action Group (ETAG), argues that health-consciousness will increase still further, thereby increasing demand for 'wellness' products. The ETAG suggests that a higher level of awareness and education will also lead to a greater demand for 'spiritual travel'.

According to Mary Lynch the Chief Executive of the English Tourism Council (ETC), the increasing pressure on individuals, on their time, and the cost of their busy lives in terms of stress, has led to a greater understanding of health issues and a desire to spend more time pampering and indulging themselves during a break (Lynch, 2002). The challenge for the spa industry is to continue to bring spa tourism more into the mainstream of the tourism business – to alter the perception that spas are only associated with medical products – and to appeal to the growing numbers of people who are increasingly interested in a healthy lifestyle and fitness products in general (Horner and Swarbrooke, 1998).

One of the most important barriers for providers to break through is the persisting image some members of the general public have of spas as expensive, elitist holidays. Research conducted by ISPA in a recent survey found that many people were resistant to visiting spas because they thought it would be too expensive (Loverseed, 1998). Many researchers agree there are various factors influencing people's choice of one spa destination over another; consumer's availability of time, financial circumstances, perceived value of services at a spa (service quality), the destination attractions, age, and the image of particular spas, are all important factors which ultimately affect the choice of a spa destination (Lynch, 2002; Harmsworth, 2004; Jenner and Smith, 2000).

Yet, whilst authors commonly agree that the choice of a spa destination may be closely linked to the before mentioned factors, it is clear that research beyond this is limited. For instance, the impact of low-cost airlines in choosing a spa destination, or the role of distribution channels is still to be explored, to come to a fuller understanding of the spa destination choice process (Messerli and Oyama, 2004; Goodall, 1990; Gartner, 1993; Baloglu and Mangaloglu, 2001; Konecnik, 2002).

2.6 Tourist Typologies

Tourism researchers have tried to explain tourist behaviour by developing typology of tourist roles. Many of the studies of tourism motivation and typology site a direct link between the behaviour of individuals in their own environment and the destinations they choose to visit (Hudson, 2000). Tourism literature has proposed a large number of typologies based on different variables used to segment the market such as socio-economic and demographic variables, behavioural variables, and geographical variables. According to Decrop and Snelders (2005) such typologies can be used for day-to-day marketing operations such as segmentation, targeting, destination selection, pricing, etc., but they are less useful for describing more fundamental and structural aspects of the tourist's life which are important for theoretical purposes and for strategic marketing planning. Keng and Cheng (1999) also point out those typologies that are based on such variables does not reveal underlying motivations for travel; they argue, people with similar demographics, such as age, income, and occupation, do not necessarily possess the same travel interests.

These shortcomings led tourism researchers to consider other variables in segmenting markets beyond the standard socio-demographic and geographic variables. As a result, more theoretical typologies have been proposed and these have focused on other variables of market segmentation such as psychographic variables. According to Mill and Morrison (1985), psychographics is the development of psychological profiles of consumers that lead to psychologically based measures of types resulting in profiles of distinctive modes of living or lifestyles. Decrop and Snelders (2005) argue typologies that are based on psychographic variables (motives, attitudes, interests, lifestyle, etc.) offer a more integrated view of tourist behaviour because they connect descriptive aspects of the tourist with sociological or psychological variables.

One of the most widely cited theories based on psychographic variables is the one proposed by Plog (1974). Plog has classified travellers along a personality continuum, ranging from allocentrism at one end, to psychocentrism at the other. According to Plog, allocentric travellers prefer exotic destinations and more involvement with local cultures, while psychocentric travellers are thought to prefer familiar destinations and package tours. However, some researches argue that Plog's theory is difficult to apply; Gilbert (1991) argues that tourists will travel with different motivations on different occasions, as a short holiday or short break weekend may be in a nearby psychocentric destination while the main holiday may be in an allocentric destination. Of particular importance to the tourism literature has been the work of Cohen (1972), who suggested that there were different types of tourist and classified them into four types. The first two types of Cohen's classification are defined as being institutionalised types, as they deal with the institutionalised tourist system, while the remaining two are defined as being noninstitutionalised types because they do not depend on the services offered by the tourist establishment.

Cohen classification shares some similarity with the later work of Plog, as we have seen his grouping of tourists was into two main categories with allowances for those which fall in-between. Both studies are fairly limited in their approach as they only allow for four different types of tourists at most, and certainly do not acknowledge the possibility that individuals may exhibit more than one type of classification. Although Cohen's typology has received some criticism, it has also provided an insight into tourist experiences and according to Burns (1999) has provided a framework for understanding destination impacts.

It could be argued the work of Perreault, Dorden, and Dorden (1979) offered one of the first attempts to produce a typology based on an empirical work; they produced a five-group classification of tourists based on a survey of 2000 householders, as follows: budget travellers, adventurous tourists, homebody tourists, vacationers, and the moderates (Swarbrooke and Horner, 1999). The work of Pearce (1982) is considered one of the earlier attempts to operationalise different forms of tourist behaviour. Pearce employed a 'fuzzy-set' technique to construct five major clusters of travel-related roles (Mehmetoglu, 2004). However, such typologies have been criticised by some researchers; Lowyck, Van Langenhove, and Bollaert (1992) for instance argue that most of them present the same characteristics which are based on psychographics generally using a single dimension such as motivation for travel.

It can be concluded that there should be additional empirical studies that employ a multidimensional approach based on different factors and investigating more specific fields of the tourism industry. Indeed this is the aim of this research; to develop a typology of spa tourists based on empirical research (qualitative approach) that comprises several variables based on a multidimensional approach.

2.7 Spa Tourism Typologies

Initial literature on spa tourism tended to find itself as a sub segment of health tourism, rather than presenting spa tourism as a central focus of research. Research associated with people travelling has added significantly to our understanding of the impacts of travel on people's health but it has provided much less insight into the features that distinguish the nature of spa tourism from other types of tourism. Becheri (1989) has classified spa tourists into four categories: people looking for relaxation, people wishing to delay their ageing, people wanting a short break weekend, and people concerned with illness prevention. Others argue that people's demands at a spa will vary from beauty and health care (Gilbert and Weerdt, 1991; Goodrich and Goodrich, 1991), to more specific reasons, such as physical body satisfaction, fitness, and weight loss (Phillips and Drummond, 2001; Jenner and Smith, 2000). Literature to date has focused in particular on physical and psychological reasons behind visiting a spa (ETC, 2002; Hunter-Jones, 2000).

However, further research has demonstrated the need to explore a wider range of possible reasons people have for visiting spas. Niv (1989) cited in Hunter-Jones (2001), points to the interest in spa architecture as one such driving force.

3. Methodology

The primary research sample was to be those who use spas and leisure facilities. Interviewees were to be approached at different spas across the UK. A relatively small number of spa tourists' interviews were carried with foreign tourists; it was not the researcher's aim to draw conclusions of any significance relating to differences or similarities between different cultures. The foreign tourists' interviews however, were valuable as they suggested that there may well be cultural differences between spa tourists with respect to the three dimensional framework (Figure 1).A total of 28 spa tourists and spa managers were interviewed: 9 with spa managers and 19 with spa tourists; 12 spa tourists were females and 7 were males. This gender distribution is largely a reflection of the main spa clients; of the 19 interviews with spa tourists, 4 were aged in their 20s (2 males and 2 females), 6 in their 30s (2 males and 4 females), 4 in their 40s (1 male and 3 females), 3 in their 50s (1 male and 2 females), and 2 in their 60s (1 male and 1 female).

The sample used in the study was to be a non-probability one. This decision arose from the desire to undertake a 'qualitative' study through face-to-face interviews. As a consequence the sample was to be small in number (Riley 1996). The intent was to obtain a rich, in-depth expression of people's attitudes and behaviours expressed in their own words, grounded in reality without presenting generalisations; an understanding of the attitudes and behaviours from the perspective of those involved (Gubrium and Holstein 2002; Flick 2006).

As there was no previous qualitative study in spa tourism to draw on for guidance in terms of the required number of interviews, qualitative studies in other fields that suggested figures in the approximate range of 10 to 30 informants was used as an initial guide (Brunt and Courtney 1999; Herrera and Scott 2005; Ali and Holden 2006; Mason 2004; Sedgley, Pritchard and Morgan 2006). The absolute number of interviews to be undertaken remains a subjective matter and even in a study that included over 50 interviewees, researchers acknowledged that this was a limitation with respect to generalisability of the data (Jordan and Gibson 2004). The results from such non-probability sampling cannot be claimed to be representative of a wider population. Indeed, the purpose of the study was not to achieve representativeness but to gain deeper insight into people's views.

A framework is required not only to identify research topics that can be broken down into questions, but also to identify future directions for research. By retaining a focus on spas within the destination facility choice process and taking the literature review findings into consideration it is possible to develop a guiding framework for research (figure 1).

Figure 1 provides a representation of the spa tourists' typology research framework; this is based on a multi-dimensional approach that is based on the destination facility choice process. It is divided into three main dimensions: *The Health Dimension*, which includes issues such as reasons behind a visit to a spa. *The Choice Dimension*, which includes factors affecting the choice of one spa destination over another, and *The Experience Dimension*, which includes facilities and treatments on offer at a spa and also post-visit feedback. These dimensions will be used as a guide for the questions which will be asked in the research interviews, in order to ensure no important issues are overlooked. The three dimensions will provide an important grounding for the systematic exploration of the relationships between, for example, the financial circumstances of an interviewee, the sorts of facilities and treatments they seek, and whether or not they feel their holiday provided good value for money. This concrete base will help to establish the initial platform for the classification of spa tourists, and will help to provide a structured analysis of the results.

Interviews with informants were topic rather than question-led, with the topics themselves emerging from the research aims; these topics included: spa-tourists' motivations when deciding to go on a spa holiday, factors influencing their choice of one destination spa over another and the spa tourists' holiday experience (the three dimensions framework), as well as questions that relate to their characteristics such as their age, sex, marital status, income, and place of residence, etc. Prior to the interviews with spa tourists, spa managers' and experts' views were consulted. The researcher contacted various managers and experts from the spa industry. Spa managers were consulted with the belief that the direct contact they have with their customers provides them with a wealth of information concerning demand and supply trends.

Interviews with spa managers and experts had different structure to those which addressed spa tourists. Here the questions were based on topics that were broken down into questions. These topics included the facilities and services offered and improvements and future visions.

4. Data Analysis and Results

4.1 Data Analysis

After the interviews the researcher coded the material and each line in the transcript was given a unique line number, so that parts of the data can be identified and located precisely and quickly. This stage was done manually. Coding the data involves breaking the data down into units for analysis and then categorising these units. There are no "formulas or cookbook recipes" (Yin, 1994, p.102) to advise on the 'correct' or 'best' way of inductively analysing qualitative data. Few researchers within the spa tourism field detail the exact procedures and scheduling of activities involved in their inductive analysis of qualitative data. Because of this gap in the research literature, the description which follows is useful in explaining the systematic process by which qualitative data were inductively analysed and interpreted to acquire a grounded understanding of spa tourists' typology.

This first phase in inductive analysis occurred whilst in the field collecting the data. At this stage in-depth interviews were kept broad to allow for the collection of interesting responses and perspectives around which further data collection could focus. The tape recording of interviews allowed the researcher to make written as well as mental notes of any analysis during interviews.

Immediately after in-depth interviews were recorded and transcribed, the second stage in inductive analysis involved reading and re-reading the transcripts and field notes in order to begin the process of structuring and organising the data into meaningful units. The familiarity created by reading and re-reading transcripts and field notes heightened the researcher's awareness of the "patterns, themes and categories" (Patton, 1987, p. 150) of meanings existing in the data and focused the attention on these. By making several copies of the transcripts and field notes collected at this stage, codes were attached to those sections containing data which appeared to be important for understanding spa tourists' behaviours and attitudes when going on a spa holiday. These sections were then pulled together into meaningful units or *keywords*, around which the collection of further data was planned in order to establish whether these *keywords* were important to understanding the research problem.

In this way, some chunks of data were coded in a variety of ways, others were discarded on the grounds that they were not relevant to the study and, as a whole the data collected at the initial stage was reduced to a more manageable level. This interpretation does not follow linguistic grammatical rules, but focuses on where a shift in meaning can be discerned.

The method of analysis used during this stage is called the "constant comparative method" (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). This method involved the researcher repeating the process of reading and re-reading transcripts and field notes and constantly comparing the data collected during this phase. By systematically comparing the similarities and differences between *keywords*, some codes were disregarded as irrelevant to the study, others were expanded upon and additional codes emerged. The *keywords* were then pulled together into different *core categories*.

Having grouped and organised *keywords* under *core categories*, the analysis was deepened by interpreting the relationships between *core categories* and seeking to explain why these relationships existed. In interpreting, re-evaluating and conceptualising relationships between *core categories* of data, the constant comparative method of analysis was used once again.

During this stage, the researcher engaged in a prolonged and systematic search for similarities and differences between the *keywords* contained within different categories and between core *categories* and concepts and main issues raised in the literature review. The purpose of these comparisons was to understand the meaning and nature of these relationships and resulted in some *categories* being disregarded on the grounds that, when analysed more closely, they did not fit into or work with the understanding that was emerging. Up to this point, the focus was on grouping comments into the three dimensional framework (stage one). Figure 2 below shows the process of developing a spa tourists' type; all meaning *keywords* were compared to each other and sorted under *core categories* (23 categories altogether). For instance, keywords such as: backache, pain, surgery, etc. formed the *core category* "physical". The next step consisted of relating those *core categories* into the 'three dimensional framework' constructed earlier in the study (Table 1).

Figure 3 below shows a simplified representation of the typology construction; the 19 interviewees could be categorised as determined by the *core categories* related to the three dimensions. This, however, was done without any intent or attempt to identify the number of people in each type but simply to identify types.

4.2 Results

This final phase involved presenting the findings that emerged from the data analysis process described earlier. Interviewees who had similar features or *core categories* in relation to the three dimensions were grouped together and then put in one type and those with others into another type and so on. This was used directly for developing a typology of spa tourists through an inductive process (Table 2). From table 2 it can be seen that ten types of spa tourists were identified. This typology was tested against a variety of variables such as trip motivation, needs, and factors in choosing one spa over another, as well as facilities and treatments on offer, in a process designed to cover the three dimensional framework constructed earlier. The emergence of these types offered further insight into whether they could be simplified into more broad types of spa tourists by combining their shared interests (Table 3). Based on the researcher's discretion and judgment, the interviewees' types have been combined to further funnel the results of the empirical research in order to create a broader typology containing only 4 types of spa tourists.

The Aristocrats

This type is based on a combination of the high-class type, the tactful type, and the organised type. Tourists in this type share the same interests when going to a spa; they are mainly older people with a high income looking mainly for rest and relaxation or to spend a rehabilitation period upon recommendation from their doctors. They seek well-established facilities and treatments at a spa to fulfil their needs such as massages, Jacuzzis, and steam rooms and for most of them price is not an issue. They are well organised, neat, pay attention to smaller details such as the cleanliness of the spa and its design, which could lead to their satisfaction or dissatisfaction. They are usually influenced in their choice by advertisements or through the Web but would consider what other people would say or recommend.

The Explorers

People within this type are curious about the whole spa holiday experience. They normally prefer to be on their own, are influenced in their choice by the location of a spa, mainly preferring an exotic place with surroundings that make them feel closer to nature. They seek adventure, new facilities and treatments, and to try new things that they normally cannot find in their daily environment such as yoga classes and hiking.

The Socialisers

People within this category prefer to be with company when going to spas; they do not want to be on their own. They are mainly females looking to spend quality time in a nearby spa for a short break and the majority base their choice on the reputation of the spa and what others say about it. For them the spa has to be well established with lots of facilities and treatments on offer such as massages, restaurants, cafes, and healthy food. People who are concerned about their cultural backgrounds could be included in this type as they require special features and services to be on offer based on their culture or traditions in order to fulfil their needs. For instance, some may require a 'woman-only spa' or may feel unable to stay overnight at a spa unless they are with friends or family.

The Budgeters

People within this category are relatively young and constrained by their financial circumstances; they seek affordable facilities and treatments at a spa to fulfil their desire to feel indulged by using massage and swimming pools. The majority prefer a 'quick fix' at a nearby spa such as a day spa rather than travelling long distances to a destination spa. This broad typology could, in principle, have been extended using further dimensions, but the database was not sufficiently extensive to populate a larger number of categories.

5. Conclusion

This research attempted to address the need for a more complex approach to spa tourist classification by constructing a research framework that employs a multidimensional approach. The emergence of tourists' types offered further insight into whether they could be simplified into more broad types by combining their shared interests; the broad typology of spa tourists produced offered significant advancements from existing typologies in the field; it was based on empirical research (qualitative approach) that comprised of several variables, and considering all stages of the destination choice process.

It was intended to be flexible so that others can find some utility in it; whether they are managers looking for practical solutions to real problems, or researchers in the field, they are encouraged to substitute their own themes into this framework or to make further modifications. The findings of this research have significant implications for gaining a greater appreciation of the inherent diversity of the spa tourism market. In the absence of more detailed research regarding the classification of spa tourists, it is a mistake to assume that all spa tourists are alike. Likewise it is a mistake to assume that all spa tourists are seeking the same spa experience, have the same needs and are affected by the same choice factors.

The research revealed that the majority of informants stated they were motivated to travel, in whole or in part, to cure their physical illnesses and sought facilities and treatments such as massages, restaurants and cafes, healthy food, "healthy life classes", pleasant views, and were influenced in their choice by word of mouth, reputation of spas, location of spas, or their financial circumstances. Tour operators and travel agents have been suggested as being significant information sources and distribution channels in influencing the perceived image of spas. However, the research findings did not fully support this view, in fact only few spa tourists revealed that they were influenced by travel intermediaries when choosing a spa destination. Investigating the significance of travel intermediaries on spa tourism could be suggested therefore, as a possible area for future research.

During the qualitative research the cultural backgrounds and traditions of spa tourists proved to be of great importance when choosing their spa destinations. The research findings revealed some international cultural differences; for instance, female interviewees with Middle Eastern background expressed the need for particular facilities and treatments to cater for their cultural backgrounds, such as the separation of men and women in some areas of spas. This concern for separation was not evident within the rest of the interviews. It is important therefore for spas to be aware of such cultural diversities in the ever increasing globalisation of the world, if they are to retain market strength, and increase their customer base.

A number of limitations were apparent throughout the course of the research. Although these limitations did not directly affect the results of the research, it could be argued they could provide an insight or guidance for other researchers for future research and for the industry as a whole. One of the main limitations of this study related to the literature base. During the initial stages of the research, the limited amount of publications related to spa tourism proved challenging. A further limitation of the literature regarded the interpretation of statistical data published and many of the resources relating to spa tourism are sourced from industrial trade bodies; any information gathered from such sources were considered carefully and used merely as indicators, rather than concrete evidence, as such organisations are likely to distort findings and statistics to suit their own aims.

The classification of spa tourists was limited in terms of who they are and what motives and factors inform their visit; most spa tourists' typologies produced were either based on a single dimension, such as reasons behind the visit, or were constructed using quantitative market research, which may have given less insight into the subject. A major limitation of this study was its dependence on interviews as a primary research tool. Interviews, by their very nature can be restrictive and can result in straightforward and brief answers. One of the constraints of this research was the length of the interviews and the limited responses by some of the interviewees, with some proving reluctant to fully respond to questions, resulting in some interviews garnering only a limited amount of information. A further limitation of this study was the relatively small number of interviewees. It must be acknowledged therefore, because of such a small sample, the data produced cannot be generalised. An additional limitation of the research was the time and the cost of travelling to conduct interviews; especially considering interviewees were widely distributed across a large geographical area, which incurred prohibitive costs.

A further limitation to address is the inherent subjectivity of the researcher. The role of the researcher is employed to interpret the responses of the interviewees, in this sense the interviewer is not a passive listener; occasionally replies offered to questions are brief and demand understanding and assessment. This creates limitations in terms of the possibility of the researcher's personal views or experiences, influencing their discretion and judgment. Further to this the interpretation of the results gathered in the interview stage was also subject to the researcher's subjectivity; in the development of the typology the researcher's judgment was relied upon heavily, as is the nature of the qualitative data analysis. There is considerable scope for future research in the spa industry as shown by the dearth of literature available. Further research should be encouraged into the specific needs of different types of spa tourists, which will contribute to further understanding of the nature of tourist 'attraction systems' and provide an insight or guidance for other researchers.

If such strategies are dealt with wisely by the spa industry the outlook for the industry appears to be positive. This will help to drive tourism's growth in general and health-related travel in particular. Taking this into consideration, such a shift will clearly have substantial implications for the international health and spa tourism industry.

6. Tables and Figures

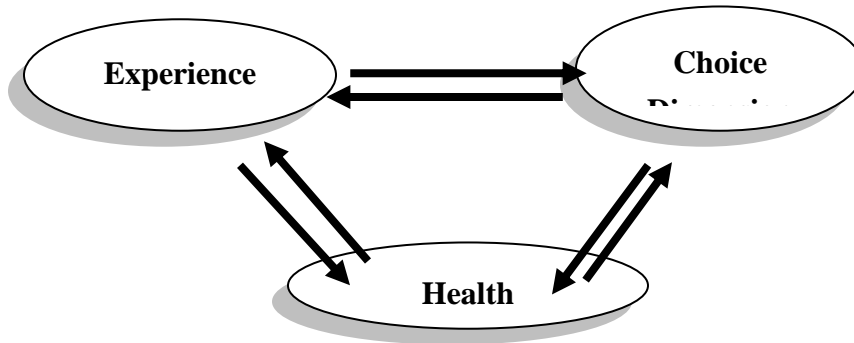Figure 1: Framework for spa tourists' typology

Figure 2: Coding Analysis Process
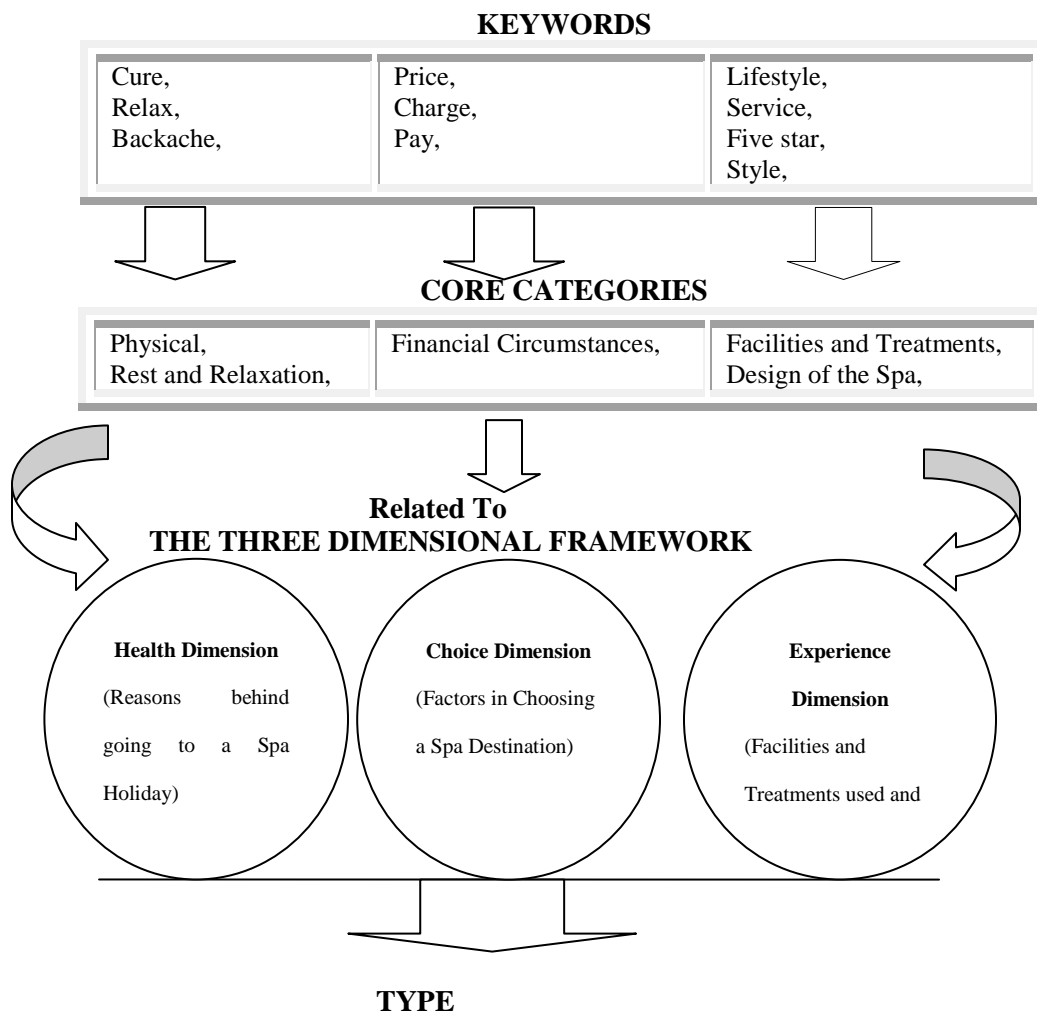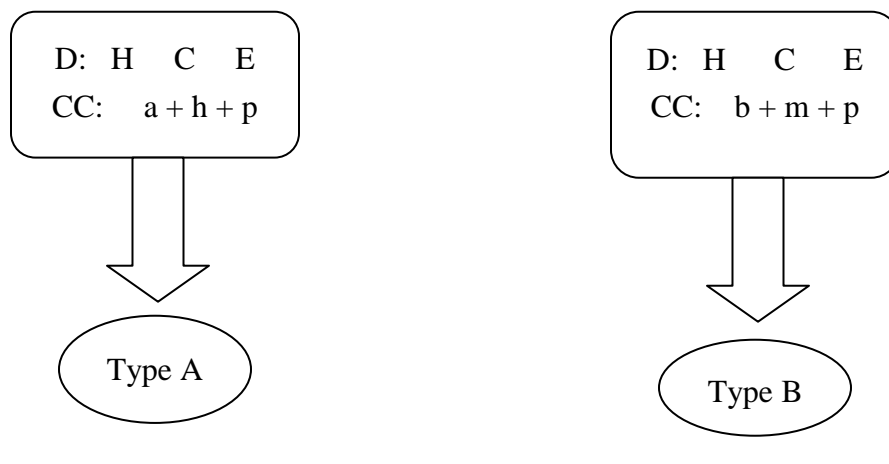*(Stage 1: grouping comments into dimensions)*

Figure 3: Simplified representation of typology construction
(Stage 2: grouping individuals into types)

```
┌─────────────────┐          ┌─────────────────┐
│ D:  H   C   E   │          │ D:  H   C   E   │
│ CC:   a + h + p │          │ CC:   b + m + p │
└─────────────────┘          └─────────────────┘
         │                            │
         ▼                            ▼
   ╭──────────╮                 ╭──────────╮
   │  Type A  │                 │  Type B  │
   ╰──────────╯                 ╰──────────╯
```

D= dimension
CC = core category where 'a' etc represent several core categories

Table 1: Coding Process/ Grouping Keywords and Core Categories together In relation to the Three Dimensional Framework

Keywords	Core Categories	Dimensions/ The Three Dimensional Framework
Pampered, backache, feel refreshed, stress, rehabilitation, fitness, ageing, changing daily routine, curious, socialising, family, friends…	• Rest and relaxation • Physical • Secondary reasons (e.g. weight loss) • Being with family and friends • Curiosity and trying new things	**Health Dimension** *Reasons behind going to a spa holiday*
Expensive, short distance, countryside, professional staff, gift vouchers, lake view, sea view, swimming pool, massage, sauna, Jacuzzi, tennis court, horse riding, yoga, healthy food, restaurant, reputation, quality, spa design, medical advice, cleanliness, time, travel agency, the web, big garden…	• Location (surroundings/distance) • Financial circumstances • Availability of time • Cultural issues • Facilities and treatments • Reputation • Word of mouth • Advertisements • Cleanliness of a spa • Being recommended	**Choice Dimension** *Factors in choosing a spa destination*
Really good, amazing, ill, holiday, activity, healthy food, satisfied, annoying, confidence, water element, health, massages, Jacuzzi, steam rooms, architecture, yoga, tennis courts, swimming pools…	• Facilities and treatments used • Design of a spa • Food served • Holiday experience successful • Holiday experience "bit weird" • Definition and type of spa • Only for 'ill' people? • Considered as a holiday or not?	**Experience Dimension** *Facilities and treatment used and Post-visit feedback*

Table 2: Constructed Typology of Spa Tourists

Types	Characteristics
(1) **The High-Class Type**	- looking for perfection - Best facilities and Treatments - Price is not an issue - Older people with high income - Seeking physical and psychological treatments - Seeking five star destination spa
(2) **Social Oriented Type**	- Socialise with friends and family - Seeking rest and relaxation - Short stay and short distance spa - Emphasised the importance entertainment facilities such as restaurants cafes with healthy food
(3) **Low-Cost Physical Motivated Type**	- Price is a major issue - Seeking physical needs - Affordable facilities and treatments - Emphasised the importance of massages
(4) **Low-Cost Holistic Type**	- Price is a major issue - Seeking psychological needs - Affordable spa holiday - Emphasised the importance of swimming pools and gardens
(5) **The Dreamers Type**	- Seeking rest and relaxation - Different cultural backgrounds - Perfect spa holiday - Affordable not expensive - Well established facilities and treatments - Good reputation
(6) **The Adventurers Type**	- Curious - Try new facilities and treatments - Exotic destination with various facilities and treatments
(7) **Image-Dependent Physical Motivated Type**	- Seeking physical treatments - Very concerned about the image of the spa - Reputation and being recommended
(8) **The Tactful Type**	- Seeking rest and relaxation - Neat and tactful - Older women with high income - Emphasised the importance of cleanliness of a spa - Reputation
(9) **Peaceful& Nature Lovers Type**	- Location of the spa and its surroundings - On their own - Connect with nature - Facilities and treatments such as hiking and yoga
(10) **The Organised Type**	- Highly dependent - Seeking rest and relaxation - Work long hours - Time is an issue - Book their own spa holiday/own experience - Facilities and treatments such as massages, Jacuzzis, and saunas

Table 3: Broad Typology of Spa Tourists

Broad Typology	Combined Types
The Aristocrats	• The high-class type • The organised type • The tactful
The Explorers	• The adventurers type • Peaceful& nature lovers
The Socialisers	• The dreamers • Image-dependent physical motivated • The social oriented type
The Budgeters	• Low-cost physical oriented type • Low-cost holistic type

References

Ali, N. and Holden, A. (2006). Post-colonial Pakistani mobilities: the embodiment of the myth of return in tourism, *Mobilities*, Vol. 1, No. 2, pp. 217-242.

Baloglu, S. (1999). A Path Analytic Model of Visitation Intention Involving, Information Sources, Socio-Psychological Motivations, and Destination Image, *Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing,* Vol. 8, no. 3, pp. 81-90.

Baloglu, S. and Mangaloglu, M. (2001). Tourism destination images of Turkey, Egypt, Greece, and Italy as perceived by US-based tour operators and travel agents, *Tourism Management,* Vol. 22, pp. 1-9.

Becheri, E. (1989). From Thermalism to Health Tourism, *Revue de Tourisme,* Vol. 44, No. 4, pp. 15-19.

Bennet, M. King, B. and Milner, L. (2003). The health resort sector in Australia: a positioning study, *Journal of vacation marketing,* Vol. 10, No. 2, pp. 122-137.

Brunt, P. and Courtney, P. (1999). Host perceptions of socio-cultural impacts, *Annals of Tourism Research*, Vol. 26, No. 3, pp. 493-515.

Burns, P. (1999). *An Introduction to Tourism and Anthropology,* Routledge, London.

Bywater, M. (1990). Spas and Health Tourism in the EC, *EIU Travel and Tourism Analyst,* Vol. 6, pp. 52-67.

Cockerell, N. (1996). Spas and Health Resorts in Europe, *EIU Travel and Tourism Analyst,* No. 1, pp. 53-75.

Cohen, E. (1979). A Phenomenology of Tourist Experiences, *Sociology*, Vol.13, pp. 179-201.

Cohen, E. (1974). Who Is a Tourist? A Conceptual Clarification, *Sociological Review,* Vol. 22, pp. 527-555.

Cohen, E. (1972). Toward a Sociology of International Tourism, *Social Research,* Vol. 39, No. 1, pp. 164-182.

Cooper, C. Fletcher, J. Gilbert, D, Shepherd, R, and Wanhill, S. (2000). *Tourism Principles and Practice, 2nd. edn.,* Longman, New York.

Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration Quarterly (CHRAQ) (1993). Who goes to spas? *Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Quarterly,* Vol. 34, No. 5, pp. 13- 14.

Crabtree, B. and Miller, W. (1999). *Doing qualitative research*, 2nd ed. London, Sage.

Decrop, A. and Snelders, D. (2005). A Grounded Typology of Vacation Decision- Making, *Tourism Management,* Vol. 26, No. 2, pp. 121-132.

Denscombe, M. (2003). *The good research guide,* Berkshire, England, Open University Press.

English Tourism Council (ETC) (2002). *Health Benefits Fact File,* London.

Featherstone, M. (1982). The body in consumer culture, *Theory, Culture and Society,* Vol. 1, No. 2, pp. 18-33.

Finn, M. Elliott-White, M. and Walton, M. (2000). *Tourism & Leisure Research Methods – Data collection, analysis and interpretation,* Essex, Pearson Education Ltd.

Fischer, I. (1999). Neu Ansatze zur positionierung im deutschen kur-und baderwesen.

Flick, U. (2006). *An introduction to qualitative research*, 3rd ed. London: Sage.

Fontanari, M. and Kern, A. (2003). The "Comparative Analysis of Spas"- An Instrument for the Re-Positioning of Spas in the Context of Competition in Spa- and Health Tourism, *Tourism Review,* Vol. 58, No. 3, pp. 20-28.

Gartner, W.C. (1993). Image Formation Process, *Journal of Travel and Tourism Marketing,* Vol. 2, no.2, pp. 191-216.

Gilbert, D. C. and Van De Weerdt, M. (1991). The Health Care Tourism Product in Western Europe, *Revue de Tourisme,* Vol. 46, No. 2, pp. 5-10.

Glaser, B.G, Strauss, A.L. (1967). *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*, Aldine Publishing, New York, NY.

Goodall, B. (1991). Understanding holiday choice. In Cooper, C. P. (eds.) *Progress in Tourism, Recreation and Hospitality Management, Vol. 3.,* Belhaven Press, London and New York, pp. 58-77.

Goodrich, J. N. (1994). Health Tourism: A New Positioning Strategy for Tourist Destinations, *Journal of International Consumer Marketing,* Vol. 6, pp. 227-238.

Goodrich, J. N. and Goodrich, G. E. (1991). Health-care Tourism reprinted in Medlik, S. (ed) *Managing Tourism*. Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann, pp. 108-114.

Grihault, N. (2007). Holistic Tourism – International, *Mintel International Group Limited.*

Gubrium, J. and Holstein, J. (2002). The handbook of interview research: context and method, London, Sage.

Haden, L. (2007). Spa Tourism – International, *Mintel International Group Limited.*

Hall, C. M. (1992). Adventure, Sport and Health Tourism. In Weiler, B. and

Hall, C. M. (eds.) *Special Interest Tourism*, London: Belhaven Press, pp. 141-158.

Harmsworth, S. (2004). The latest trends and developments in health and spa market, *Insights,* pp. 173-178.

Herrera, S. and Scott, D. (2005). We gotta get out of this place: leisure travel among gay men living in a small city, *Tourism Review International*, Vol. 8, pp. 249-262.

Horner, S. and Swarbrooke, J. (1998). The Health Tourism Market, *Insights, The Tourism Marketing Intelligence Service,* ETB/BTA.

Hudson, S. (2003). *Sport and Adventure Tourism,* Haworth Hospitality Press, Binghampton.

Hudson, S. (2000). Consumer Behaviour Related to Tourism. In Pizam, A. and Mansfeld, Y. (eds.) *Consumer Behaviour in Travel and Tourism,* The Haworth Hospitality Press, New York, pp. 7-32.

Hunter-Jones, P. (2001). *Holiday-taking and Health (A study of the perceived effects of holiday-taking upon patients treated for cancer,* PhD. Thesis, Dept. of Food, Clothing, Tourism and Hospitality, Manchester Metropolitan University, Manchester.

Hunter-Jones, P. (2000). Classifying the Health Tourism Consumer. In Robinson, M. Long, P. Eva, N. Shapley, R. Swarbrooke, J. (eds.) *Reflections on International Tourism, Motivation Behaviour and Tourist Types*, Business Education, pp. 231-242.

Jackson, R. (1990). Waters and spas in the classical world. In Porter, R. (eds.) *The Medical History of Waters and Spas*, Wellcome Trust, London, pp. 1-13.

Jenner, P. and Smith, C. (2000). Health Tourism in Europe, *Travel and Tourism Analyst,* No.1, pp. 41-59.

Jennings, G. (2001). *Tourism research,* Australia, John Wiley and Sons Ltd.

Jennings, G. (2005). Interviewing: a Focus on Qualitative Techniques. In Ritchie, B.W, Burns, P. and Palmer, C. (eds.) *Tourism Research Methods: Integrating Theory with Practice,* CAB International, UK.

Jordan, F. and Gibson, H. (2004). Let your data do the talking: researching the sole travel experiences of British and American women. In Phillimore, J. and Goodson, L. (eds.) *Qualitative research in tourism: ontologies, epistemologies and methodologies*, Routledge, London, pp. 215-235.

Keng, K.A and Cheng, J.L.L. (1999).Determining Tourist Role Typologies: An Exploratory Study of Singapore Vacationers, *Journal of Travel Research,* Vol., 37, No. 4, pp. 382- 390.

Konecnik, M. (2002). The Image as a Possible Source of Competitive Advantage of the Destination- The Case of Slovenia, *Tourism Review,* Vol. 57, no. 1/ 2, pp. 6-12.

Litvin, S.W., Xu, G., and Kang, S.K. (2004). Spousal Vacation-Buying Decision Making Revisited across Time and Place, *Journal of Travel Research,* Vol.43, No. 2, pp. 193-198.

Lofland, J. (1971). *Analysing Social Settings: A Guide to Qualitative Observation and Analysis*, Wordsworth, CA.

Loverseed, H. (1998). Health and Spa Tourism in North America, *Travel and Tourism Analyst,* No. 1, pp. 46-61.

Lowyck, E. Van Langenhove, L. and Bollaert, L. (1992). Typologies of Tourist Roles. In Johnson, P. and Thomas, B. (eds.) *Perspectives on Tourism Policy,* London: Mansell, pp. 13-32.

Lynch, M. (2002). *Health Benefits Fact File,* English Tourism Council, London.

Mackaman, D. P. (1998). *Leisure settings: bourgeois culture, medicine, and the spa in modern France*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London.

Mansfeld, Y. (1992). From motivation to actual travel, *Annals of tourism research,* Vol. 19, No. 3, pp. 399-419.

Marshall, C., Rossman, G.B. (1995). *Designing Qualitative Research*, 2nd ed., Sage, Thousand Oaks, CA.

Marvel, M. (2002). Spa Tourism – Central and Eastern Europe, *Mintel International Group Limited.*

Mason, J. (2004). Managing kinship over long distances; the significance of The Visit, *Social Policy and Society*, Vol. 3, No. 4, pp. 421-429.

Matzler, K. and Siller, H. J. (2003). Linking travel motivations with perceptions of destinations: the case of youth travellers in alpine summer and winter tourism, *Tourism Review,* Vol. 58. No. 4, pp. 6- 11.

Mehmetoglu, M. (2004). Tourist or Traveller? A Typological Approach, *Tourism Review,* Vol. 59, No.3, pp. 33-39.

Messerli, H. and Oyama, Y. (2004). Health and wellness tourism, *Mintel Group Ltd.*

Miles, M. and Huberman, A. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis,* Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage.

Mill, R. and Morrison, A. (1985). *The Tourism System: An Introductory Text,* Prentice Hall, New Jersey.

Mintel (2005). Spa Holidays-UK, *Mintel International Group Ltd.*

Morton-Williams, J. (1993). Making qualitative research work: aspects of administration. In Walker, R. (eds.). *Applied qualitative research,* Aldershot: Gower, pp. 27-42.

Mueller, H. and Kaufmann, E. L. (2001). Wellness tourism: market analysis of a special   health tourism segment and implications for the hotel industry, *Journal of vacation marketing,* Vol. 7, No. 1, pp. 5-17.

Niv, A. (1989). Health Tourism in Israel: A Developing Industry, *Revue de Tourisme,* Vol. 44, No. 4, pp. 30-32.

Nord, P. (1986). *Paris shopkeepers and the Politics of Resentment,* Princeton University Press, Princeton.

Patton, M.Q. (1987). How to Use Qualitative Methods in Evaluation, Sage, London.

Pearce, P. (1982). *The Social Psychology of Tourist Behaviour*, Pergamon Press, Oxford, England.

Perreault, W.D., Dorden, D.K., and Dordon, W.R. (1979). A Psychological Classification of Vacation Life-styles, *Journal of Leisure Research*, Vol. 9, pp. 208-24.

Philips, J. M. and Drummond, J. N. (2001). An investigation into the body image perception, body satisfaction and exercise expectations of male fitness leaders: implications for professional practice, *Leisure Studies,* Vol. 20, No. 2, pp. 95-105.

Phillimore, J. and Goodson, L. (2004). *Qualitative research in tourism,* London, Routledge.

Plog, S.C. (1974). Why destination areas rise and fall in popularity, *Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Quarterly,* Vol. 14, No. 4, pp. 55-58.

Register, J. (2005). *Spa evolution, a brief history of spas.* About, Inc. www.spas.about.com/cs/l/aa101902.htm [accessed 7 March 2005].

Riley, R. (1996). Revealing socially constructed knowledge through quasi-structured interviews and grounded theory analysis. In Fesenmaier, D., O'Leary, J., and Uysal, M. (eds.) *Recent advances in tourism marketing research*, New York: Haworth Press, p. 21-40.

Riley, R. and Love, L. (2000). The state of qualitative tourism research, *Annals of Tourism Research*, Vol. 27, No. 1, pp. 164-187.

Ritchie, J. and Spencer, L. (1994). Qualitative data analysis for applied policy research. In Bryman, A. and Burgess, R. (eds.) *Analysing qualitative data,* Routledge, London, pp. 173-193.

Seale, C. (1998). *Researching society and culture*, London, Sage.

Sedgley, D., Pritchard, A., and Morgan, N. (2006). Understanding older women's leisure: the value of biographical research methods, *Tourism,* Vol. 54, No. 1, pp. 43- 51.

Sharpley, R. (1999). *Tourism, Tourists, and Society 2nd ed.,* Cambridge: ELM.

Sharpley, R. (1994). *Tourism, Tourists, and Society*, Seaton House, UK: ELM.

Shaw, G. and Williams, A. (eds.) (1997). *The Rise and Fall of British Coastal Resorts: Cultural and Economic Perspectives*, Pinter, London.

Smith, M. Thorpe, R. and Lowe, A. (2002). *Management Research: An Introduction,* Second edit, London, Sage Publications Ltd.

Smith, S. L. J. (1990). A Test of Plog's Allocentric/Psychocentric Model: Evidence from Seven Nations, *Journal of travel research,* Vol. 28, No. 4, pp. 40-43.

Smith, V. (1977). *Hosts and Guests: The Anthropology of Tourism,* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Spa Association (Spaa) (2002). *The History of Spa*. The Spa Association www.thespaassociation.com/consumer/history.htm [accessed 24 January 2004].

Strauss, A. L. and Corbin, J. (1990). *Basics of qualitative research: Grounded theory procedures and techniques,* London, Sage Publications Ltd.

Swarbrooke, J. (2000). *The Development and Management of Visitor Attractions*, Oxford, Butterworth-Heinemann.

Swarbrooke, J., and Horner, S. (1999). *Consumer Behavior in Tourism*, Butterworth-Heinemann, UK.

Tawil, R. (2008). *Developing a Typology of Spa-Related Tourists,* PhD. Thesis, Dept. of Food, Clothing, Tourism and Hospitality, Manchester Metropolitan University, UK

Tesch, R. (1993). Software for qualitative researches: analysis needs and program capabilities. In Fielding, N. and Lee, R. (eds.) *Using computers in qualitative research,* 2nd edit, London, Sage Publications Ltd.

Thornton, F. and Brutscher, H. (2003). *What is a Spa*? International Spa Association (ISPA). www.experiencespa.com [accessed 25 January 2004].

Vierville, J. P. (2003). *American Healing Waters*. International Spa Association (ISPA). www.experiencespa.com [accessed 23 January 2004].

Walker, R. (1993). *Applied Qualitative Research,* Aldershot: Gower.

Yiannakis, A. and Gibson, H. (1992). Roles tourists play, *Annals of Tourism Research,* Vol. 19, No. 2, pp. 287-303.

Yin, R.K. (1994). *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, 2nd ed., Sage, Thousand Oaks, CA.

Yu, H. and Littrell, M.A. (2003). Product and Process Orientations to Tourism Shopping, *Journal of Travel Research,* Vol. 42, No. 2, pp. 140-150.