

THE PECULIARITIES OF WELLNESS DAY AND RESORT SPA SERVICES IN LITHUANIA

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Received 12 May, 2011; accepted 5 November, 2011

Abstract. *The development of different kinds of wellness spa services in Lithuania is in its infancy stage. Despite economic recession, a few categories of spa services showed resistance and even growth by establishing of new wellness spa centres, engaging new spa services and attracting more and more local and foreign tourists. The article focuses on the peculiarities of the two main categories of wellness spas: day and resort services, their historical development in the world, differences and similarities of wellness spa providers, depending on supplied services, specifics of service packages, value for a customer, duration of services, facilities needed, etc. The “wellness” term is rather new in Lithuanian scientific discourse, so, in this article, the explanation of this term by different scientists is presented. On the ground of the interviews with day and spa wellness service providers survey results as well as customer viewpoints are presented. The main problems that arise from satisfying the expectations of the customers are stressed. At the end of the article, the peculiarities of day and resort wellness spa services are developed and recommendations for providers in order to satisfy the customers are presented.*

Keywords: *wellness, categories of spa, day spa, resort spa, peculiarities of services, Lithuania.*

Introduction

The topicality of the article is grounded on the providential growth of wellness spa services both all over the world and in separate countries. Despite the economic recession, a few categories of wellness spa services showed the exceptional resistance to economical fluctuations.¹ Not all wellness services, of course, grow evenly, but both poor and rich countries develop such service businesses rather successfully.² The largest amount of income is selected by day, and by resort wellness service providers, according to the surveys. The same surveys show that the value for a customer who uses the spa, is changing constantly. They want to get a value cheaper and quicker than before.³ Changing circumstances in the global economy also effect the changes in value creation for wellness service customers.

Recent research *in* wellness spa services usually stresses the idiosyncrasy of value creation for wellness service customers depending on the services accepted. It should be underlined that there are some peculiarities of wellness services depending on the country. Wellness services in countries such as USA, Canada, and Australia stress the intangible profit by such services as pampering, relaxation, etc. Western, Eastern or Central European wellness spa services are usually perceived as a service giving tangible profit, for recovery after illness, sanatorium services, medical consultations, curative massages, etc.⁴ The same specifics of value of wellness are underlined by New Zealand practices.⁵ The peculiarities of wellness spa services are disclosed by obligatory attributes of wellness spa services, as well as extra attributes, which help to create exceptional service for the customer.⁶ As spa services are not an object for investigation for a long period,⁷ there is a lack of empirical research on wellness spa services, especially depending on the kind of category of wellness: day, resort, medicine, or hotel spa, etc. The globalisation of the world, disappearing borders between countries show that wishes and preferences of customers of wellness services are changing rapidly. American people start to appreciate tangible profit, medical consultations from a provider, European people want to relax at the wellness centre, not only to recover after the illness.⁸

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- 1 Fontanari, M.; Kern, A. The “Comparative Analysis of Spas” – An Instrument for the Re-Positioning of Spas in the Context of Competition in Spa- and Health Tourism. *Journal of Tourism Review*. 2003, 58(3): 20.
 - 2 Farid, M.; Lazarus, H. Subjective well-being in rich and poor countries. *Journal of Management Development*. 2008, 27(10): 1053.
 - 3 Langvinienė, N.; Sližienė, G. Services Value Chain: Changes in Consuming Wellness Services. *Journal of Social Sciences*. 2010, 4(70): 37.
 - 4 Farsari, I.; Butler, R. W.; Szivas, E. Complexity in Tourism Policies. A cognitive mapping Approach. *Annals of Tourism Research*. 2011, 38(3): 1111.
 - 5 Hannigan, B.; Coffey, M. Where the wicked problems are: The case of mental health. *Journal of Health Policy*. 2011, 110: 221.
 - 6 Langvinienė, N.; Sekliuckienė, J. Factors of Influence on Successful Development of Lithuanian Resort Wellness SPA Services. *Journal of Social Sciences*. 2009, 4(66): 75.
 - 7 Koh, S.; Jung-Eun Yoo, J.; Boger, C. A. Importance-performance analysis with benefit segmentation of spa goers. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*. 2010, 22(5): 719.
 - 8 Cormany, D.; Baloglu, S. Medical travel facilitator websites: An explanatory study of web page contents and services offered to the prospective medical tourist. *Tourist Management*. 2011, 32: 709.

The scientific problem analysed in this article could be formulated by a few questions. What are the specifics of wellness services in the world and in Lithuania? What peculiarities of different categories of wellness spas could be excluded? What Lithuanian wellness services consuming model could be identified?

The purpose of the article is to identify the peculiarities of wellness spa services in Lithuania. The object of the research is day and resort wellness spa services as the two main categories of spa wellness.

The methods of the research used are scientific literature analysis, interview, comparative analysis, and questionnaire survey.

1. Prehistory of Wellness spa Services

The “spa” term in scientific literature usually relates to the Latin world *sanitus per aqua* which means “health through water.”⁹ Two values of the spa for customers are underlined: improvement of health (or prevention of illness) and pampering.¹⁰ Development of wellness spas dates as far back as early Roman times. The use of spas, the value of wellness spas have been changing depending on the historical period: Antiquity, the Middle Ages, Renaissance, the Modern Age. During the early stages, spas were used more or less frequently. The Modern Age was a period when the perception of a holistic spa was already known.¹¹ Kneipp scientifically proved the profit of natural products, as well as the philosophy of a holistic lifestyle.

Recently, the pattern of spas assumed a lot of uses. Spas are used for medical or wellness purposes, or combining wellness and medical. That’s why such terms as wellness spa, medical spa, and destination spa are used in order to describe the value for a customer using spa procedures.¹² Also different perceptions of spas depend on the country.¹³ Depending on the value the customer seeks, they could be divided into two categories: one such segment are consumers who want pleasures like massages, herb baths, exfoliating scrubs that give a feeling of relaxation, pleasure and satisfaction; the second segment relates to people who seek to prevent a particular health problem in order to keep the balance between the physical and the mental wellbeing.¹⁴ As earlier research on wellness was concerned more with physical value for a customer, recently more and more spiritual value provided by wellness spas is underlined.¹⁵ Explaining *wellness* as a term, different authors emphasize the value which is given to a spa customer (Table 1).

9 Smith, M.; Puczko, L. *Health and Wellness Tourism*. Butterworth-Heinemann, 2008, p. 416.

10 Langviniene, N.; Sližienė, G. Services Value Chain: Changes in Consuming Wellness Services. *Journal of Social Sciences*. 2010, 4(70): 32.

11 Gilbert, D. C.; Weerdt, M. The Health care Tourism product in Western Europe. *Journal or Tourist Review*. 1991, 46(2): 7.

12 Langviniene, N.; Sližienė, G. Services Value Chain: Changes in Consuming Wellness Services. *Journal of Social Sciences*. 2010, 4(70): 34.

13 Gilbert, D. C.; Weerdt, M., *supra* note 11, p. 10.; Frost, G. J. The spa as a model of an optimal healing environment. *The Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine*. 2004, 10(1): 85–92.

14 Bhanich, A.; Barrows, D. A. Canadian Health and Wellness Tourism: Obstacles Impeding International Competitiveness. *The Innovation Journal the Public Sector Innovation Journal*. 2007, 12(3): 1–18.

15 Klerk, J. J. Spirituality, meaning in life, and work wellness: a research agenda. *International Journal of Organizational Analysis*. 2005, 13(1): 67.

Table 1. Concept of “wellness”¹⁶

Author	Description of wellness
Dobson, Lepnum (2000)	Wellness involves activities of preventive medical counselling, clinical work with other professionals, training, teaching and research, delivering of health care
Müller (2002)	Wellness or health includes a number of training courses in tourism activities segment.
Rayle (2005)	Wellness is a process and state of a quest for maximum human functioning that involves the mind, body and spirit; incorporates six major life tasks: spirituality, self direction, work, leisure, friendship and love.
McIntyre, Fallu, Konarski (2006)	Wellness is the optimal outcome in the management of chronic medical and psychiatric disorders
Krout (2007)	Wellness is healthy functioning; personal health environment; capability to manage stress and relaxation
Tanigoshi, Kontos, Remley (2008)	Wellness includes five second-order factors (essential, social, creative, physical, coping self) and 17 separate distinct wellness dimensions (thinking, emotions, control, work, positive humour, leisure, stress management, self-worth, realistic beliefs, exercise, nutrition, spirituality, gender identity, cultural identity, self care, friendship and love); what makes an indivisible model.
Zender, Olshansky (2009)	Wellness is an individual’s subjective experience of overall life satisfaction in relation to physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, social, economic, occupational and environmental dimensions
Armstrong (2010)	Wellness includes nutrition-specific elements, meal requirements that meet or exceed the dietary guidelines, expanded physical education programmes, fund wellness programs, physical exercise is recommended.
Gössling, Peeters, Hall, Ceron, Dubois, Lehmann, Scott (2011)	Wellness is a tourism form which uses water for tourism purposes

- 16 Dobson, D.; Lepnum, D. Wellness activities address inequities. *Social Science & medicine*. 2000, 50: 108; Müller, H. Training in Swiss Tourism – Analysis and Strategies. *Tourism Review*. 2002, 57(1+2): 46; Rayle, A. D. Adolescent gender differences in mattering and wellness. *Journal of Adolescence*. 2005, 28: 754; McIntyre, R. S.; Fallu, A.; Konarski, J. Z. Measurable Outcomes in Psychiatric Disorders: Remission as a Marker of Wellness. *Clinical Therapeutic*. 2006, 28(11): 1883; Krout, R. E. Music listening to facilitate relaxation and promote wellness: Integrated aspects of our neuropsychological responses to music. *The Arts of Psychotherapy*. 2007, 34: 135; Tanigoshi, H.; Kontos, A. P.; Remley, T. P. The Effectiveness of Individual Wellness Counseling on the Wellness of Law Enforcement Officers. *Journal of Counselling & Development*. 2008, 86: 65; Zender, R.; Olshansky, E. Promoting Wellness in Women across the Life Span. *Nursing Clinics of North America*, 2009, 44(3): 282; Armstrong, A. Weighting Wellness Initiatives: Having a Policy isn’t enough. *Education Digest: Essential Readings Condensed for Quick Review*. 2010, 76(4): 38; Gössling, S.; Peeters, P.; Hall, M.; Ceron, J. P.; Dubois, G.; Lehmann, L. V.; Scott, D. Tourism and water use: Supply, demand, and security. An international review. *Tourism Management*. 2011.

As we can see, scientists researching the wellness underline various values given by wellness — from medicine to well-being of the customers, from nutrition to exercise, treatment programmes. People start to evaluate a holistic pattern of spas, as an opportunity to improve health (body), relief from pain and stress (spirit), educate the well-being concept of all life (mind).¹⁷ The balance between body, spirit and mind becomes the main goal of all visitors of day or resort spas, medical or destination spas, etc. Wellness service contributes to the general harmony of a person's health and is related to the change of lifestyle or possibilities of a healthier life.¹⁸ Development of a spa depends on a lot of preconditions. Providing the resort spa selection of the resort area, which would have a rather good infrastructure with transport roads, public transport, variety of entertainment outlets, souvenir shops, bars and restaurants, tourist-attracting places like museums, trip organizers, bicycle, car, water transport rentals, etc., is indispensable; while providing the day spa it is important that the provider should not be far from the job or home place of customers. Next, equipment for short beauty and care procedures must be available.

Summarizing the prehistory of wellness spas, it should be noticed that the concept of spas has been known already for long. The use of spas has been changing. A large impact on the perception of spas could be dated back to Roman times when people used baths for entertainment and for curing purposes. The zone of spas was understood as a place where people can relax after work, improve their health or meet other people. Modern economy shows that spas are a service which values its customers, using a spa enables prevention of illnesses (medical spa), recovery after disease, resting by staying away from home (hotel spa), taking short beauty procedures (day spa), going for tourism purposes (tourism spa, cruise spa), combining exercise and spa (sport club spa), etc.

2. Peculiarities of a Day and a Resort Wellness spa: Similarities and Differences

There are many of kinds of wellness spas. Some of them are oriented more towards pleasure (escapists), others towards relief from stress (neutralists), others towards pampering with family, friends.¹⁹ First customer category values services provided by medical, destination spas; second by day spas, as customers prefer personal care, the last by hotel spas, as these customers want a lot of entertainment at the spa. The specifics of the view on wellness spas depends on the resources of literature. Wellness spas in European classification schemes usually develop services related more towards medical profit, tangible value for a customer: 1) classic health-care services, 2) specialized

17 Smith, M. K. Holistic holidays: tourism and the reconciliation of body, mind, spirit. *Journal of Tourism Recreation Research*. 2003, 28: 15–24.

18 Hopenienė, R.; Bagdonienė, L. Lithuanian wellness cluster: pros and cons. *RESER 2010* [electronic issue]: *The Resilience of the Global Service Economy: 20th Anniversary Conference*, 30 September - 2 October, 2010, Gothenburg, Sweden. Gothenburg: University of Gothenburg, 2010: 1.

19 Koh, S.; Jung-Eun Yoo, J.; Boger, C. A. Importance-performance analysis with benefit segmentation of spa goers. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*. 2010, 22(5): 727.

health-care services, and relaxation services.²⁰ The first two mentioned spa classes include medical programmes, treatment programmes with the main task of improving health. The last three spa classes have already discovered the value of pampering a customer with no tangible benefit required. Other resources of wellness spas, related more to American, Canadian spas, underline the pampering position in wellness.²¹ Recent research on wellness spas combine profit given by wellness: both medical and pampering. People, going to wellness spa centres usually have a clear task to improve health and to prevent illness. But after that they notice that pampering in the relaxing zone also gives value, such as relaxation, relief from pains, communication with the family members away from home, etc.

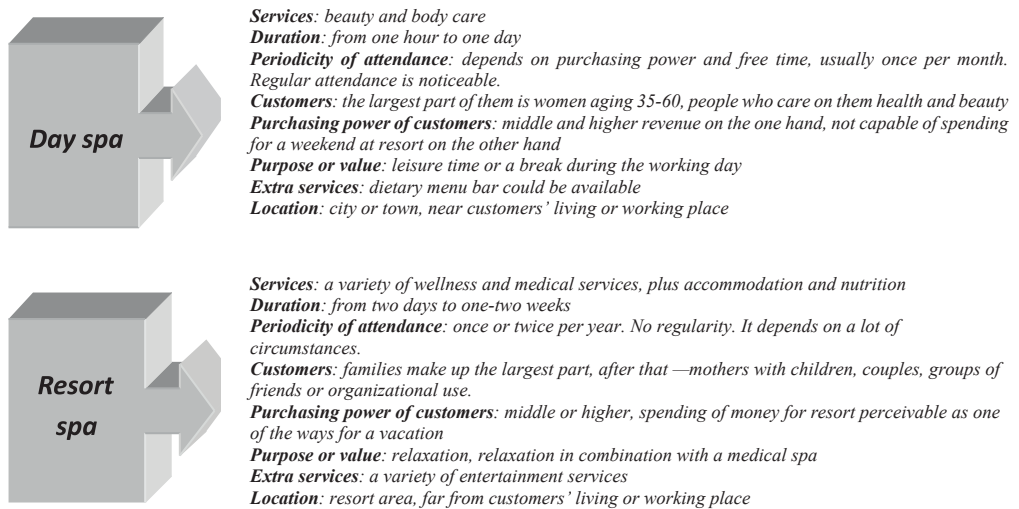


Figure 1. Peculiarities of two main categories of wellness spa: day and resort spa services

There are many kinds of providers of wellness spas. Some of them are more often attended, these are day spas, resorts, club spas. Some of them less often, these are medical, destination spas, cruise ship spas, etc. There are two main classes of wellness spas which bring the largest part of revenue from wellness: day and resort or hotel spas. Peculiarities of day and resort wellness spas are presented below (Figure 1). Main differences between day and resort area wellness spas relate to the duration of service procedures and services provided by suppliers. Day spa visitors usually can decide to use the services the same day, as he or she does not need to go far from their home or place of work. He or she can go to a day spa even during work breaks; as one hour usually is enough for a procedure. Resort wellness spa services are provided already far from home. Resort areas are located far from industry districts. One of the most urgent

- 20 Gilbert, D. C.; Weerdt, M. The Health care Tourism product in Western Europe. *Journal or Tourist Review*. 1991, 46(2): 7.
- 21 Frost, G. J. The spa as a model of an optimal healing environment. *The Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine*. 2004, 10(1): 85–92.

facilities of resort wellness spas are accommodation services, as well as a guarantee of nice ambience, quietness, possibility to choose not only from beauty and care services, but also from accommodation, restaurants, night clubs, treatments. There is a possibility to get professional consultation. Resort and hotel spa services are hardly isolated. Firstly, customers, seeking resort wellness, should be accommodated; after that they are free to choose any procedure of spa, etc. Customers are even able to book a service in hotel's room. Relaxation possibilities, as well as variety of medicine, doctors, dietary consultants, wellbeing educators all these factors could be attractive for customers. As well as day spa wellness services which are accessible in the largest towns, near the customers' location and requires less money for using one or two services.

In conclusion it should be noticed that, on the one hand, day and resort wellness spas are diverse, but on the other hand, the services, included into the resort package, could be supplied in a day spa centre, and on the contrary, day spa procedures could be included into the package of resort wellness spa. Services, "borrowed" from resort areas, could be developed, expanded in day centres wishing to win a niche in the market. Services from day spa centres can be supplied in resorts, hotels wishing to widen the assortment in place, where people stay for two or even more days.

3. Results of the Survey

3.1. Methodology

The task of the empirical research was to underline the peculiarities of Lithuanian day and resort (hotel) spa wellness centres. The opinion of customers and suppliers were inquired. Customers were inquired by the written form questionnaire, suppliers by the semi-structured interview.

Survey of customer opinions include 100 customers of day spas and 100 customers of resort spas. In the day spa centre Femina Bona 30 respondents, in Sauleja SPA 70 respondents were inquired. For the survey in Druskininkai (resort area) 33 respondents were questioned at Egle Sanatorium, 34 in SPA Vilnius SANA and 33 respondents in Grand SPA Lietuva. During the interview two managers of day and resort wellness spas were questioned. One of them worked in the day spa centre in Kaunas "Saulėja Spa namai", the second worked in the resort spa in Druskininkai "SPA Vilnius Sana."

Evaluating the benefit of wellness spa services for a customer (customer viewpoint), such main elements were underlined: 1) quality of beauty procedures (facial and body); 2) quality of wellness services procedures (balance between body, spirit and mind); 3) variety of services inside the wellness spa centre (supply of services); 4) price of services (as well as price adequacy to a quality); 5) assortment of extra services (not core services); 6) loyalty (loyalty programmes and their efficiency); 7) quality of servicing (administrative staff and massagers); 8) accessibility of the centre (infrastructure, transport, parking places, working hours, etc.); 9) friendliness of staff. For estimation of quality of services, a Likert scale from very well (1), average (2) to bad (3) was used. Describing the peculiarities of attendance, a question with whom a centre is

attended was given. Identifying the opportunities to enlarge the visiting, the reasons why customers do not attend the centre more often were: too expensive, a lack of time, and no need for repetitive visits. Gaps of wellness services quality were identified according to Parasuraman's model.²² Trying to deepen the quality of quantitative survey, also open style questions for the customers of wellness spa services were given what advantages and disadvantages of the centre they are able to identify.

The instrument of interview was based upon the explanation of what factors are crucial for day and resort wellness spa service providers improving their services; what opportunities they see depending on peculiarities of their centre and the main condition—are they day or resort wellness spa services providers; what obstacles are arising and what guides for improvement of their services could be formulated.

The peculiarities of day and resort spas wellness services are analysed via the comparative analysis method.

3.2. Customer Viewpoints

This part of the article present the analysis of customer viewpoints. Demographical characteristics of customers, questioned during the survey, showed, that day spas are attended by women (81%); while resort wellness spa both by women (43%) and men (57%) relatively similarly. The age of the respondents was mostly 41–50 years (43% of day spa and 39% of resorts). It should be noticed that resorts are visited by older people, 51–60 (42%), while people of this age are not visitors of day spas (6% only). The next group of customers of day spas were aged 31–40 (26%).

Value for customer or criteria in evaluating wellness spa services differs by the category of spas (Table 2). Comparing day and resort wellness services customer responses we can see that their preferences differ a lot. The most important issue for day wellness spa customers is quality of beauty procedures; while in resort spas it is the quality of wellness services. Second most important criteria for day spa customers is price, and in the third place price and quality of servicing. Second most important for resort wellness spa customers also is quality of provided service, as well as wellness procedure quality. Service price importance for customers of resort services is in the third place.

Estimation of quality of services depending on category of services differs. Day spa service customers highlighted baths, massages and spa procedures; while resort wellness spa customers evaluated bathhouses, and facial care procedures. For evaluation of quality of services three variations were available: very well, average and bad. This should be expanded on. The majority of procedures were labelled by customers as average level. Even baths in resort wellness spa centres were estimated as bad by 7% of customers and massages by 2%. Also approximately 5% of resort and day spa customers estimated the bathhouse as being bad.

22 Teng, C. C. Commercial hospitality in restaurants and tourism accommodation: perspectives from international consumer experience from Scotland. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*. 2011, 30: 867.

Table 2. The most important criteria of value creation—a customer’s viewpoint

Importance of value (1 - most important)	Beauty procedures quality		Wellness quality		Variety of services		Price of services		Assortment of extra services		Loyalty		Quality of servicing		Accessibility of centre		Cosiness	
	D	R	D	R	D	R	D	R	D	R	D	R	D	R	D	R	D	R
1	(57)		(31)	(34)	5	16	7	24					(26)					
2	21		22	(30)	19	14	24	22	1				13	34				
3	3		6	24	13	26	(35)	(30)	17				26	20				
4	4		2	13	(34)	(36)	19	22	24			2	17	20				8
5	2		1		17	8	12	2	(36)		4	(39)	(28)			25		26
6	2				11		3		19		27	(34)	16		6	(36)	16	(30)
7					1				2	2	(28)	25			27	(37)	(42)	(36)
8		(38)								(60)	20				(46)	2	(33)	
9	11	(62)	(38)						1	21					21	9		

There are a lot of differences in wellness spa customers that visit a centre, depending on the category of a spa (Figure 2). Day spa wellness customers usually use services alone; while resort wellness spa centre customers attend with as a couple or family. Another aspect for evaluation of the consuming trends is regularity of attendance. There is a difference in how often customers use day and resort spa services. One third of day spa customers (37%) visit a centre once per month and resort wellness centres are visited (39%) once per half-year. The equal part of day and resort wellness customers were first-time users.

Reasons, why respondents do not use services more regularly, do not differ very much. The majority of respondents answered that more regular use of spa is limited by costs (32% of resorts and 42% of day spa). The second answer in regard to the frequency was the lack of time (25% of resorts and 26% of day spas). Lack of demand for more frequent use was marked by 15% of resorts and 11% of day spa customers.

Problems in booking wellness spa services also do not differ depending on the category of the spa. A little bit less than half of customers of both day or resort spas mentioned that they have had no problems in booking a service. After that, approximately one quarter of respondents mentioned that they have not booked a service, as they had no free time for a procedure; the same part of customers marked that the time offered by staff was not suitable. The smallest part of the respondents mentioned that they could not access the desirable specialist as he (or she) was busy.

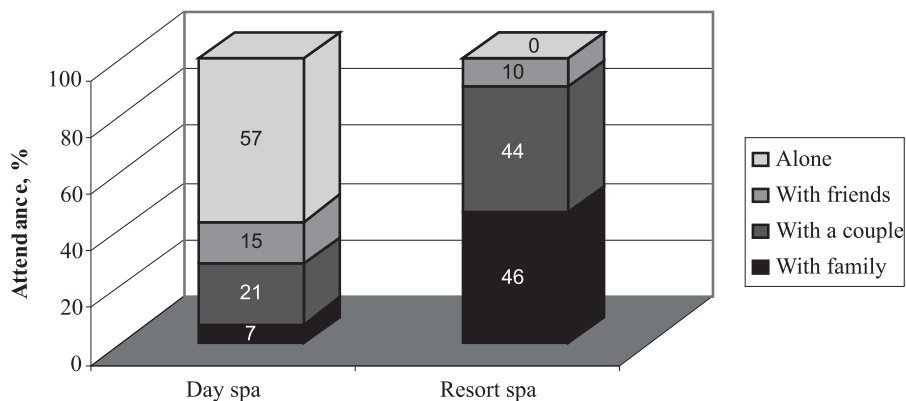


Figure 2. Attendance of wellness spas: day and resort centers

Staff of wellness spa services enterprises was evaluated rather similarly, except for the staff of baths. 62% of day spa service customers and 48% of resorts evaluated the jobs and quality of staff as well. Other staff working as receptionists, massagers, cosmetologists, and beauty care personnel were evaluated well similarly between customers of day and resort wellness.

An open style question investigating advantages of day wellness spas showed that as an advantage were mentioned a wide assortment of services, good specialists, “everything under one roof,” all physical facilities like towels, bathrobes, hairdryers, etc. available at the centre. Advantages of resort wellness spas for a customer were a wide assortment of inside and outside entertainment services: bicycle rentals, recreation parks, aqua parks, bowling, billiards, etc. Also nice ambience and clean air were appreciated.

Customers of day and resort wellness spa services more seldom mentioned disadvantages of the centre. Day spa service customers as disadvantage marked, for example, a zone of baths where there was no swimming pool inside. Also a lack of training equipment was mentioned, sport halls, yoga or exercise training. Resort wellness spa service customers would like a escalator inside the building, better air conditioning in some of the rooms and in the sport hall. Customers also listed obstacles to reach the resort centre, booking services. Not everybody was satisfied with accommodation.

In summary, the largest part of visitors of wellness spas are people aged 41–60. Day spa wellness is used by women, resorts by men or women. Day spa services are bought by people for individual use, resort wellness services by families, couples. Price of services is very important for day spas, quality of services for resort spa customers. Assortment of services usually satisfies the customer, but wellness service providers should guarantee more quality in baths, qualification of baths staff and cosmetologists, beauty specialists.

3.2. Provider Viewpoint

This part of the article analyses the provider viewpoints. Factors, influencing the improvement of wellness services for representatives of resort spas are the changing needs of customers “wishing to satisfy customers’ needs.” They also mentioned that “it is possible to seek new markets, but they need special conditions, mineral waters and other healing factors, as only in such a territory it is possible to create resort wellness enterprises.” This requires research, analysis, which specifies additional costs, upon the arguments of representatives of resort wellness suppliers in Druskininkai. A day spa provider mentioned also wishes of customers “we always reflect the wishes of a customer. If we get any claims or comments, we always try to eliminate mistakes and improve services after that for other consumers.” A representative of a day spa centre mentioned that the wishes and needs of the customer changes very quickly, thus they improve services regularly on the basis of the request of customers.

An interviewee from a resort wellness spa first stated that there are no opportunities to develop in Lithuania. After that he argued that “recession in economy influences that we should concentrate on activities which were already done before and do not leave place for others.” He also underlined a lack of finances “<> of course, subsidies for projects are provided, but not for everybody and only half of the costs.” A development of resort centres was made recently, and now half of the costs (half were subsidies of European Structural Funds) should be worked off. Interviewee of a day spa centre mentioned that here are a lot of centres supplying similar services, and “it is very important to stand out among competitors.” Usually spa service providers compete in price, supplies and assortment of diverse services, or “even similar to ours.” She mentioned also that “<> it is necessary to create a service which is not supplied by other centres and to attract consumers by idiosyncrasy.” It could be that new services are not supplied elsewhere, new niches or new supplying methods of earlier services increase the idiosyncrasy, according to the interviewee.

Improvement directions firstly mentioned by the interviewee was quality “we are able to analyse from a philosophic point of view. One restaurant in England survives for long years already. They have only one dish in their menu a steak. And they always have a lot of customers for it. Who will say what is the limit for our business?” It is possible to include all procedures in one place, according to the resort spa provider, but “<> so what? We are not capable of supplying them in the proper way, because we do not have the appropriate staff, and customers will not be able to choose from such a great variety.” Quality was mentioned as the main development direction which will be maintained; after that, staff, education and regular improvement of their competence is important. No new markets will be evaluated as this needs extra money. A day spa manager repeated that exceptional services are important “we think about procedures based on Lithuanian traditions or something like that, whatever is unknown to customers.” Besides that an interviewer mentioned that a few of services will be refused because of high costs and prices, as they are not popular enough among consumers of day spa. “Quality, of course, very important for services’, as selective consumers appreciate a quality. Thus, quality

control will be extended and quality improved, as “<> customer with bad experience brings with him negative information and does not return back, as well as puts off other potential customers.”

As an obstacle for resort spas, the actions of the Government and Municipalities were mentioned. “We have had earlier thoughts about development in Neringa, but with our Government it’s impossible.” Managers of resort spa centres have said that the Government is more likely to create a museum instead of a business on the seashore of the Baltic. Besides, that “all society endagers resort area; people should be educated that they shape an image of resort, too. Everybody who engages in any kind of business should communicate with visitors of resort very kindly, despite nationality,” Interviewer underlined that resort wellness spa image depends on nice ambience, cleanness of resort and a lot of other factors. Day spa services provider underlined the main obstacle – the lack of money. This stops any initiative. “Wishing to supply qualitative service, equipment also is necessary, as well as competitive staff. Training of staff also costs additionally.” Also regulation of Government was mentioned by day spa centre’s manager “new licences for new activity also necessary that is not so easy in our country.”

On balance, there are some opportunities to improve the activity of resort and day wellness spas. However, it usually requires additional investment into the centre. The starting point of resort wellness spa service providers is better, as they have prepared already for growing demand of services before the crisis. Day spa centres should refuse expensive services and include new ones, which increase the idiosyncrasy of centre and creates advantage before competitors. Additional attention for education of staff is also necessary for both categories of suppliers. Partnership with Government institutions and Municipalities should be improved too.

Conclusions

Answering the problematical questions formulated in the article, such main points should be underlined. Wellness services have been developed for a long period of time. Wellness differs depending on the value preferred by customers. European wellness spa service consumers prefer tangible benefit, Americans and Canadians intangible benefit. World globalization forces us to look through preferences given to wellness. Consumers appreciate getting a mixed package of services through wellness spas. This depends, of course, on the category of spa. Day spa centres are oriented more towards short term procedures, tangible or intangible benefit, as centres facilities, short duration of visiting and attendance alone usually limits the variety of services. Resort spa service providers are able to expand the assortment of services, as a centre is visited usually for a longer period, attended by a couple, a group, etc.

The peculiarities of day spa wellness compared to resort spa wellness could be identified as shorter consuming, less assortment, good accessibility to the city centre, no accommodation services inside the centre, etc. Resort spa centres stress the variety of services and accommodation facilities, nice ambience. That is why accessibility of the centre becomes a less important factor for value. Mixed package of medical and

pampering procedures, guaranteeing the balance between body, spirit and mind wellness is provided. Expanding of assortment of services is related to the changing needs of customers, as well as attending of a centre by different categories of customers: women wishing to relax, men, wishing to train, child or young, wishing for entertainment.

As a model of consuming of wellness spa services showed that price, quality, accessibility and more traditional (as well as cheaper) services are preferred in the day spa centre providers of day spa wellness in the towns of Lithuania should eliminate expensive procedures that bring no profit to the business, and implement more various procedures for facial and body care. Resort wellness spa providers should guarantee the best quality accommodation or accommodations adequate to the price of these services, as well as cooperate with government institutions, tourism associations, etc., enabling to expand infrastructure of resorts facilitating to reach a resort area for tourists. Partnership with other suppliers located in the same resort area also would be useful in order to organize all resort services in one place.

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SVEIKATINGUMO DIENOS IR KURORTŲ SPA PASLAUGŲ LIETUVOJE YPATUMAI

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Santrauka. Straipsnio aktualumas grindžiamas neįtikėtinu sveikatingumo spa paslaugų augimu tiek visame pasaulyje, tiek atskirose šalyse. Nepaisant ekonomikos krizės, keletas sveikatingumo spa paslaugų parodė išskirtinį atsparumą ekonomikos svyravimams. Ne visos sveikatingumo paslaugos, savaimė suprantama, augo vienodai, tačiau tiek vargingesnės, tiek turtingesnės šalys šių paslaugų verslą plėtojo gana sėkmingai. Remiantis tyrimais, didesnė

pajamų dalis yra surenkama iš dienos, po to – iš kurortų sveikatingumo paslaugų. Minėti tyrimai rodo, jog sveikatingumo paslaugų vertės suvokimas nuolat kinta. Vartotojai nori gauti didesnės vertės paslaugas greičiau ir pigiau nei anksčiau. Besikeičiančios sąlygos globalioje ekonomikoje taip pat turi įtakos ir vertės vartotojui kūrimumui.

Pastarųjų metų sveikatingumo spa paslaugų tyrimai paprastai pabrėžia vertės kūrimo sveikatingumo paslaugų vartotojui, priklausomai nuo vartojamų paslaugų, išskirtinumą. Reikėtų pažymėti, jog egzistuoja tam tikrų sveikatingumo paslaugų ypatumų, priklausančių nuo šalies. JAV, Kanadoje ir Australijoje pabrėžiama neapčiuopiama sveikatingumo paslaugų nauda – poilsis, lepinimasis ir pan., Vakarų, Vidurio ir Rytų Europoje sveikatingumo spa paslaugos paprastai suvokiamos kaip paslaugos, duodančios apčiuopiamą naudą, kaip reabilitacija po ligos, sanatorijos paslaugos, medicininės konsultacijos, purvo vonios ir kita. Panaši sveikatingumo specifika pabrėžiama ir Naujosios Zelandijos praktikoje. Sveikatingumo spa paslaugų ypatumai yra išryškunami būtinais sveikatingumo spa paslaugos elementais, taip pat ir papildomais elementais, kurie padeda sukurti išskirtinę vertę vartotojui. Kadangi spa paslaugos kaip tyrimų objektas dar gana naujas, empirinių tyrimų, analizuojančių sveikatingumo spa paslaugas, ypač atskirų sveikatingumo kategorijų – dienos, medicinos, viešbučių spa, kurortų spa – trūksta. Pasaulio globalizacija, nykstančios ribos tarp šalių rodo, kad sveikatingumo vartotojų norai ir teikiamos preferencijos keičiasi ypač sparčiai. Amerikos gyventojai vertina apčiuopiamą naudą, medicininės paslaugų teikėjo konsultacijas, Europos gyventojai nori pailsėti sveikatingumo centre, ne tik atsigausti po ligos.

Mokslinė problema, analizuojama straipsnyje, galėtų būti formuluojama keletu probleminių klausimų. Kokia yra sveikatingumo paslaugų šalyje ir Lietuvoje specifika? Kokie yra skirtingų kategorijų sveikatingumo spa ypatumai? Koks galėtų būti identifikuotas vartotojų Lietuvoje sveikatingumo paslaugų vartojimo modelis?

Šio straipsnio tikslas yra identifikuoti sveikatingumo spa paslaugų Lietuvoje ypatumus. Tyrimo objektas yra dienos ir kurortų spa sveikatingumo paslaugos kaip dvi pagrindinės sveikatingumo spa paslaugų kategorijos.

Tyrimo metodai yra mokslinių šaltinių lyginamoji analizė, interviu, palyginamoji analizė, anketavimas.

Tyrimo rezultatai parodė, jog sveikatingumo spa paslaugos apima gana daug paslaugų, orientuotų į fizinę, mentalinę, psichinę ir kitą žmogaus gyvenimą, gerovę. Naudodamasis sveikatingumo paslaugomis vartotojas gali pailsėti, išsivaduoti nuo streso, skausmų bei priklausomai nuo spa kategorijos, gauti kitokios naudos. Dviejų pagrindinių spa kategorijų – dienos ir kurortų – paslaugų apimtys vietiniams gyventojams ir turistams yra didžiausias, taigi jos duoda ir didžiausias pajamas. Nors tarp šių paslaugų kategorijų yra daug panašumų, kaip vandens procedūros, grožio ir kūno procedūros, masažai, konsultacijos ir kt., galima išžvelgti ir nemažai skirtumų. Dienos spa paslaugų vartotojai pirmenybę teikia kūno ir veido procedūroms. Procedūros atliekamos reguliariai. Pasirenkant centrą svarbus veiksnys yra kainos. Svarbu ir kad centras būtų lengvai pasiekiamas, jis turi būti netoli vartotojų gyvenamosios ar darbo vietos. Platus asortimentas nėra toks svarbus, kaip specializuotų paslaugų galimybė. Žvelgdami į ateitį paslaugų teikėjai stengiasi specializuoti savo teikiamų paslaugų pasiūlą, rasti nišą, teikti ką nors neįprasta, suteikti vieną dvi paslaugas, teikiančias centrui išskirtinumą. Kurortų spa paslaugų vartotojai pirmenybę teikia plačiam paslaugų

paketui po vienu stogu, kadangi paslaugos vartotojams teikiamos dvi ir daugiau dienų. Dėl šios priežasties itin svarbu pagerinti apgyvendinimo paslaugų kokybę. Graži aplinka, vietovė, papildomos pramogų paslaugos sukuria patrauklų šių paslaugų paketą. Tiek išskirtinės ir brangios, tiek tradicinės ir pigios paslaugos yra paklausios. Fizinė kurortų spa centrų plėtra mažai tikėtina, kadangi šių centrų skaičius išaugo iki krizės. Teikėjai ieško galimybių padidinti paslaugų vertę vartotojui, bendradarbiaudami su kitų paslaugų teikėjais. Siekdami kurortinėje vietovėje pasiūlyti daugiau paslaugų, išspręsti kylančias problemas dėl spa paslaugų klasifikavimo, prastos infrastruktūros kurortų zonose ir pan., bendradarbiauja su savivaldybe ir vyriausybe.

Reikšminiai žodžiai: sveikatingumas, spa kategorijos, dienos spa, kurortų spa, paslaugų ypatumai, Lietuva.

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