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## **A SALIRIS THERMÁLFÜRDŐ SZEREPE A REKREÁCIÓBAN ÉS A TURIZMUSBAN**

### **THE ROLE OF THE SALIRIS THERMAL SPA'S BATH IN THE TOURISM AND RECREATION**

#### **Összefoglaló**

Az egerszalóki Saliris Thermál fürdőt választottuk, hogy bemutassuk a fürdő kínálati elemeit és a vendéglégedettséget. A vendégek között 160 magyar nyelvű kérdőívet töltöttünk ki. 150 jól kitöltött értékelhető kérdőív született, melyet feldolgoztunk. Az adatokat SPSS 16.0-ás szoftver segítségével elemeztük. Számítottunk átlagot, szórást, Pearson chi négyzet próbát és korrelációt. Az eredményeket a cikkben közöljük.

**Kulcsszavak:** egészségturizmus, termálfürdő, vendéglégedettség.

#### **Abstract**

We have chosen the **Saliris Thermal Spa in Egerszalók** to demonstrate their supplies and guest satisfaction. We have asked the guests to fill in 160 Hungarian questionnaires. Among these there were 150 correctly filled in questionnaires. The data were analysed by using software SPSS 16.0. I have calculated mean, standard deviation, Pearson chi-square test and correlation. The results were discussed in details in our thesis.

**Keywords:** health tourism, thermal baths, guest satisfaction.

#### **Introduction**

Health tourism is the fastest growing area of tourism. Worldwide the tourism in health tourism has a rapid growth, which couple with higher investments.

Health tourism becomes a major sector in the future tourism because of the demographic changes and the elderly society. On the other hand, healthcare will be a huge role for the people in the future like a public healthcare. As a result, role of the self-financing market (complementary insurance, private insurance

contributions) increases, which will become dominant in the developed countries.

Nowadays, unique image and originality are the most determining elements in the tourism (Müller - Kórik 2009, Müller és mtsai 2009, Mosonyi és mtsai 2010, Müller - Könyves 2006,).

Because of the changes of tourism, competition between products and destinations and tourists' expectations or habits, tourist destinations have to be treated as a brand. The image of the brand has huge importance in the success of tourist destination, which has a significant impact for consumers' behavior. Tourists, who visit a destination for the first time, and usually have limited information about the place, they more likely to choose the "new" destinations which have powerful, positive, specific and good image (Asunción Beerli, Josefa D. Martín 2004). Thus, the unique image and the brand substantially affect the tourists' destination choices.

Nowadays health tourism is a current topic because Hungarian Tourism Zrt. announced the 2011 year of the „Health tourism” thematic year. The government has published new Széchenyi discussion paper, in which the healing-health industry in Hungary appears.

### **Egerszalók**

Egerszalók is an open-air spa and village (population 2,311) located in Heves County in northeastern Hungary. Egerszalók lies 133 km from Budapest, in the Lasko stream valley between the Matra and Bükk ranges.

The historical and geographical associations of Egerszalók have made it a favourite spa in Hungary. The area's waters have been in use since the 1730s, although the current spa only came into operation in 1961. Before entering the spa pools, the steaming water runs down a series of cascades backed and lined with travertine; the gleaming mineral has precipitated from the water as it interacts with air at atmospheric temperatures. The travertine is locally called "salt," and the cascade of water is called "Salt Hill. Not all of the dissolved solids precipitate. Surrounding the springs are pine trees, apple trees, and a grove of the beeches for which the nearby Bükk Mountains are known. The region grows Egri Bikavér wine, sometimes called *bull's blood* wine in English, and spa visitors sometimes enjoy the terroir experience by bathing in the spa and drinking the wine.

### **Saliris Thermal Spa**

Saliris Thermal Spa opened in 2007. Salt Hill Spa and Wellness Bath of Egerszalók, the newest and one of the most modern thermal spa resorts in Europe. Located only 6 kilometers outside of Eger and 120 kilometers from Budapest, the spa and wellness complex is surrounded by a natural environment unmatched in Europe. The thermal waters streaming down the hillside have formed layers of limestone and travertine which accumulate into a beautiful salt

hill, a natural wonder found only in two other locations in the world. The spa's thermal baths and wellness center are located at the base of the salt hill enclaved by Egerszalok's vast forest, allowing visitors to be truly at one with nature.

The Egerszalók spa pools contain water rich in calcium, magnesium, and hydrocarbonate minerals. Thermal spring water is considered one of the most important natural remedies available to mankind. Half of the 17 indoor and outdoor swimming pools include high quality calcium-magnesium-hydrogen-carbonate thermal water, rich in minerals essential to the human body. The other half of the pools include whirlpools, wave and river pools, children's pools with water slides, and numerous massage pools catering to all ages, from infants to the elderly alike.

I wanted to know the bathing guests' habits in the north-hungarian region. I examined the guests' spending free time activities habits on the spa area and their satisfaction with the spa offers.

My goal was to examine how the destination exercise an influence on tourists' motivation.

In today's busy lifestyle everybody needs a bit of recreation at homeplace and on vacation as well. A spa visit is gradually integrated into the daily program as an opportunity for regular physical activity, body care and relaxation. The baths are now not only the main annual holiday places, so to protect the well-being, health of the body and spirit.

### **Method of research**

There were 150 correctly filled in questionnaires. The data were analysed by using softver SPSS 16.0. We have calculated mean, standard deviation, Pearson chi-square test and correlation. The results were discussed in details in our thesis.

### **Questions**

I have analyzed the Saliris Thermal Spa – Egerszalók bath spa's guest, how do they spend their free time and I have also analyzed the guests' satisfaction with the spa supply elements.

I was looking for answer to these questions:

- What are the similarities and differences in guests' leisure-spending habits in relation to gender and age?
- What are the most popular leisure services in the spa?
- How do the spa services affect the run of target groups?
- How did the satisfaction of guests shape with the spa clime, quality and quantity of spa supply elements, rates relation and the offering programs.

### Hypothesis

There is a deviation in women and men's leisure spending habits and motivation in the spa visit. The beauty and popularity of the sauna program will be popular for the women, while the sports and catering services will be popular for the men.

While the youths like sports programs and spending active leisure activities, while the older generation like relaxing, peaceful, quiet environment.

The active leisure activities, outdoor recreation programs are dominant for the younger age under 25 years while the 55-year old people prefer relaxing and programs such as massages, sauna.

### Samples

1. chart: Distribution by gender (men) / A minta nemek szerinti megoszlása

Saliris Thermal Spa – Egerszalók	
Men	Women
61	89
150	

2. chart: distribution by gender and age (men) / A minta életkor szerinti megoszlása

	Saliris Thermal Spa – Egerszalók	
	Men	Women
under 18	1	3
18–24 age	10	18
25–35 age	21	27
36–55 age	25	39
above 55	2	4
Total:	61	89

3. chart: distribution of settlement (%) / A minta lakóhely szerinti megoszlása

	Saliris Thermal Spa – Egerszalók	Respondent (%)
local inhabitant	24	16
live in Eger	30	20
Live in the county	36	24
live in other county	60	40

The tables show the dominance under 35-years. A review of the distribution of respondents by gender, we can see that more women have answered than men. There is a thermal spa in Eger, however there was a high proportion of the people who live in Eger. The visiting was huge outside the county as well.

4. chart: the guests' choice influences/A desztinációválasztás motivációi

information collection	Respondent (%)	respondent (men)
favorable natural endowment	46	69
previous positive experience	52.6	79
offered by friends	19.3	29
easy accessibility	44,6	67
low cost, favorable price	27,3	41
positive image	34	51
cool place	22	33
read on the internet	29,3	44
read in an advertisement	12,6	19
saw in the brochure	14,6	22
read in newspaper	18.6	28
watched on TV or listened in the radio	12,6	19
offered by travel agency	14	21
programs of the spa	24,6	37

Most people (52, 6%) have chosen by their previous positive experiences. Also important was the favorable natural endowment (46%) and the easy accessibility of the spa (44.6%). 29,3% of respondent was informed by the internet. Programs of the spa were not very important (24,6%). Cool place and the spa programs were popular for the youths. Only 18,6% of the respondent read in a newspaper or in a brochure.

5. chart: Guests association with the spa/ a vendégasszociáció a fürdőről

association with the spa	respondent (%)	respondent (men)
sunbathing, good weather	43,3	65
calm, silence, rest	24	36
move: swimming, tennis, volleyball	12,6	19
rich experience	18	27
relax with friends, family	54	81
healing, spa, massage	34	51
relaxing in the wellnes section	22,6	34
start new relationships, make friends	10	15
beauty programs	20,6	31

The most popular category was the relax with friends and family. (54%) (81 men). The next category was the good weather, sunbathing. This category was chosen by 65 men (43,3%). The beauty programs were popular in the ladies' group.

6. chart: popularity of used spa services in the light of respondents/ népszerű fürdőszolgáltatások

using spa services	válaszadó (%)	válaszadó (fő)
outdoor pools	61,3	92
indoor pools	27,3	41
medicinal water pools	34,6	52
catering	26	39
outdoor sports activities	20,6	31
sauna, solarium	12,6	19

61,3% of the respondent like and use the outdoor pools. Medicinal water pools were also popular. (34,6%) Men preferred to use catering services. Only (20,6%) 31 men have chosen outdoor sports activities. The lowest choice was the sauna. (12,6%)

### Study of the guest satisfaction experience

I have asked the satisfaction of visitors with the spa services. Satisfaction is very important to keep guests and create frequenters. Satisfaction bases on quality of services or products.

I tested guest satisfaction with a scale method (1-5 scale)

- 1- dissatisfied
- 2- slightly satisfied
- 3- moderately satisfied
- 4- very satisfied
- 5- totally satisfied

7. chart: satisfaction with the spa elements, services/ vendégszeretettség a fürdő elemeivel

	Saliris Thermal Spa – Egerszalók
Catering supply	4,01
catering costs	3,35
clean of environment, location	4,06
hospitality of local people	4,15

	<b>SalirisThermal Spa – Egerszalók</b>
modernity	4,09
opening times	4,51
staff job	4,33
price of admission	3,58
programs	3,82
services for children	4,04

Guests were totally satisfied with the opening times. Guests were also satisfied with the staff and their job, hospitality of local people and clean environment, location. Guests were slightly satisfied with the catering cost and entrance fee. Guest satisfaction can improve with some recreational programs.

8. chart: *In what programs can guests participate at the pool area?/milyen programokon vennének részt a vendégek*

	<b>SalirisThermal Spa – Egerszalók</b>
Cultural and musical program	60,3
Folk Art market	23,5
Goods and product presentation	17,5
sport event	46,5

I wanted to get an answer to the next question which programs would guests like to participate in the spa area. (multiply choice)

The most popular was the cultural and musical program (60,3%), the second was the sport event. (46,5%). Goods and product presentation was not very popular for the guests. (17,5%)

### **Crosstables experience**

I have studied the response of emerging gender differences, which are summarized as follows:

There was not differences between men and women in choosing destination.

The spa-related associations in both men and women were very common in these answers: relax with friends and family, sunbathing, rest, healing, massage, make new friends. There were not any significant differences in these answers in men's and women's answers.

The use of holiday vouchers did not show any differences in men's and women's answers.

There was a significant deviation in:

- Men like to be informed by the internet to choose destination.
- Most of the men like reading to the destination in the newspaper before travelling.

### **Summary**

During my research I found that medical services have very high quality. The aims of the spa are families because, who filled the questionnaire, they arrive with children, brothers or parents. Only 37% of the guests arrive with friends.

In the finding destination motivation previous positive experience, friends offer, easy accessibility, favorable natural endowment and programs of the spa are very dominant.

Using outdoor pools and medicinal water pools were very popular.

To sum up guests were totally satisfied with the opening times, with the staff and their job, hospitality of local people as well.

### **Suggestions**

It is very important for the guests that they can spend their freetime with some other recreation programs. In my opinion these programs should be like exhibition or show of beach volleyball and football. These events can provide experience for the youths and elders as well.

Active leisure offers have a very great importance in the bath area, since the expansion of the health-conscious behavior we need recreation during our holiday or at homeplace.

A spa visiting has integrated into everyday's program, because with the expansion of supply items they are a good option for regular physical activity, body care and relaxation, health care.

Regular spa visitors require for the usual leisure services and their quality, and this pool of product development in tourism destinations must be validated.

Development of life-time recreational activities is priority because it is satisfy several generations' needs. The family-and child-friendly programs are also important, because the dominant target is the family. I would like to suggest some programs for children: slide competition, games in pools and kite-flying. For the elders: darts, minigolf, bowling or play with cards or board games.

Spa site development is also important. Because of the rapid growth tourism sector the result is that we need developed information technology (IT) to cope with the increasing the quantitative and qualitative requirements of the tourism. In Hungary, there are several well-known spas. It is essential that renovate thermalspas and develop their services and infrastructure.



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