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**The influence of servicescape on creation of sensitive and emotional
experiences in wellness consumers**

Master thesis

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Introduction

Since ancient times, people tended to visit places that offered opportunities for improving their health, only in Rome for example, there were more than 800 thermal baths during the glorious Roman Empire. Gradually this tradition of taking waters has evolved into the modern tendency of visiting various spa and wellness facilities and in the last decade became a really strong trend. The result of this phenomenon is that the number of facilities offering wellness and spa services have vertiginously grown therefore the competition among companies is quite intense. The desire to differentiate themselves from the other competitors is extremely important and one of the main possibilities to do it is to focus on the human emotional side through the use of servicescape elements.

Nowadays consumers' purchase decisions and desires are increasingly driven by emotions. Experiential marketers believe that consumers are also emotional and along with functional features, therefore having a pleasant experience is also important (Schmitt, 1999). Traditional marketing theories undermine the impact that sensory cues can have on consumers' perception, attitude, emotions and consumption experience. The idea that consumers are rational decision makers who care about functional features and benefits of a product was always the main path to follow, studying and consideration about the effect of senses in marketing, in fact, are relatively new. Krishna defines sensory marketing as "marketing that engages the consumers' senses and affects their behaviours" (Krishna, 2009).

Consumers' emotions, perceptions, choices, decisions and consumption habits are affected by touch, taste, smell, sound, and look of the products and /or services.

Using a variety of tools, sensory marketing enhances the message of a brand, enable customers to have a positive experience, help to build long lasting relationships between customers and brand giving to it a sustainable competitive advantage. Five senses play an important role in forming marketing strategy, differentiating the product or service and in positioning it in the customers' mind (Hulten, Broweus and van Dijk, 2009).

The environment influence on behaviour has long been studied by retailers, architects and interior designers (Baker et al., 1992; Tai and Fung, 1997; Gilboa and Rafaeli, 2003). Servicescape is a major component of the store image and it reflects its services, pricing and its products. It is essential for the physical environment of the store to

complement the store image, store design, merchandise and other elements of the retail mix. It is also critical for the atmospheric elements to be in congruence with each other. Bitner's Servicescapes Model (1992) proposes that compatibility between the elements of the retail environment helps to increase consumers' satisfaction (Vaccaro, Yucetepe, Baumgarten, Lee, 2008). A company's atmosphere contributes to customers' perceptions and also affects customers' purchasing behaviour and satisfaction level.

Previous research carried out in this area, suggests that sensory cues, such as colours, background music, or ambient scents, influence consumers' evaluation of the retail environment and the merchandise, affecting consumers' behaviour. However most of these studies have focused on influence of one sense or one element of servicescape at a time, and thus ignored the joint impact of sensory cues. The impact of multisensory cues in retail environments has been examined recently, but empirical literature in this area is still limited. Several scholars like D Angelo, Adams, 2013; Ali & Amin, 2014; Kellert, 2005 discussed the importance and influence that servicescape has on the facilities aimed at relaxation, but all of them considered elements of design separately. Some authors highlight the importance of lighting (Custers et al. 2010, Quartier, Vanri and Van Cleempoel, 2014), others concentrated on music and influence that can have on consumers (Jain and Badgare, 2011, Sullivan, 2002). Other scholars focused their studies on the choice of materials and furniture (Nyrid, Bringslimark & Busheim, 2014; Dazkir & Read, 2012), and others were attracted to study the influence of odour (Kotler 2012; Dreyfuss et al., 2007; Assadi, 2012). Thus, none of the authors demonstrated a complex approach towards the issue of servicescape and wellness facilities; therefore, the author of the current thesis chose this topic for further exploration in order to fill the existing gap. The author has come up with the following research question: in what way can the servicescape of wellness facilities influence consumers' emotions and therefore their preferences?

In order to reach the set goal, the author has stated the following objectives:

- Based on knowledge gained through critical reading reveal the main elements of servicescape and the different scholars study about it.
- Based on knowledge gained through critical reading understand the possible interrelation between servicescape and consumer emotions.

- To make several proposals for improvement of servicescape elements of chosen Italian wellness facilities, based on consumers preference as well as research of main principles.

Important to mention that according to Turley and Milliman (2000) the author decided to based his research on some specific servicescape elements: customized lighting; well-planned acoustics, which implies both music choice and level of noise; facilities temperature; level of cleanness; customized materials and state of equipment.

The author decided to relate all those elements with emotional consumer responses that according to Bitner (1992), Zeithaml et al. (2009) can have two dimensions: pleasure or displeasure and degree or arousal. In addition the author decided to take into considerations also consumers psychological and cognitive responses in order to make research much more detailed and interesting.

There has been mounting evidence over the years that environmental variables can substantially influence consumer behaviour and emotions in physical environments (Mehrabian and Russell 1974; Donovan and Rossiter 1982; Turley and Milliman 2000). During the last few decades, the importance of the environment has become prominent in the study of service environments, with researchers beginning to study the influence of the store environment on consumers' behaviour (Gilboa and Rafaeli, 2003). The majority of this work has focussed on the effects of the physical attributes of the customers' external environment, or as Kotler (1974) referred to it as 'atmospherics. Based on the theoretical material related to the interrelation of physical environment, customer satisfaction and behavioural intentions, the author came up with a hypothesis that servicescape strongly influence the consumers sensitive and emotional responses and plays an important role in determining customer 's opinions concerning spas and wellness facilities. To test this hypothesis a sample of 100 customers of particular wellness facilities was chosen. To add, for the purpose of the current research the questionnaire for obtaining both quantitative and qualitative data will be used. The aim of the questionnaire is to find out the opinions of customers concerning the different servicescape elements of the particular facilities to reveal their strengths and weaknesses and understand customers' responses and preferences in order to suggest future improvement of the existing servicescape.

1 Literature review

1.1 The importance of consumers sensorial and emotional experiences in a wellness context

Nowadays peoples look for involving and enriching experience and more active role during their life. Pine and Gilmore (1998) claim that experience are taking an important place in today's economy, engaging customers and creating memorable events connecting them emotionally to the company or the brand, in particular, experiences came from customers interaction with one or more elements of the company context and, as a result, extract sensations, emotions, or cognitions that will connect them to the brand in a personal, memorable way. (Gupta, and Vajic, 2000; Pine, and Gilmore, 1998).

Talking of this correlation between experience – brand, Baker Parasuraman Grewal and Voss (2002) claim that specific aspects of the brand context, such as store atmosphere or human elements influence customer experience. However, customer experience is defined holistically, from Verhoef, Lemon, Parasuraman; Roggeveen Tsiros and Schlesinger (2009), company should orchestrate an integrated series of “clues” that will, collectively, determine how customers experience the brand. Berry; Carbone; Haeckel 2002 and Meyer; Schwager (2007).

More and more often consumers looking for innovative experiential products are able to satisfy their needs of strong emotion, high involvement and unusual situations, avoiding mass experiences and standard tourist packages. McCannell. (1973) described this product, focusing on providing sensory input, which allow customers to be completely immersed in authentic experiences. Aspects of consumption like quality, efficiency, image are really important for customers that are looking for active service and products that can stimulate and involve them not only physically but also emotionally, socially, psychologically and spiritually. For this reason, according to the research of Schmitt, (1999) and Ferrari, (2006) consumers look for products and services which involve their senses and grant holistic, unique and memorable experiences. As a consequence, firms are more frequently than ever striving to create unique and memorable experiences ties with their clients (Schmitt 2003: 18); offering thematic settings, therefore service

organizations are trying to transform place of consumption into *spectacular simulations, cathedrals of consumption, hyper-realities* (Aubert-Gamet and Cova, 1998; Baudrillard 1993 ;Eco 1986;Urry 1990).

Customer emotions have not been given much attention in hospitality research until recent years because traditional research studies about customers' responses to hotels concentrate primarily on satisfaction. The dominant paradigm is the disconfirmation model which states that a customer's level of satisfaction with a hotel's performance is the result of disconfirmation between his or her expectations and perceived service quality of the hotel (Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry, 1994). As hospitality researchers seek alternative approaches in understanding and enhancing customer experience, emotions have recently become the new research frontier. Some studies in hospitality settings demonstrated the strong impact of emotions on customer satisfaction, loyalty behaviours and willingness to pay more (for example, Mattila, 2001; Barsky & Nash, 2002; Mattila & Enz, 2002; Pullman & Gross, 2004; Tu, 2004). In light of this, emotions have emerged as a theme, which is gradually taking precedence over satisfaction in hospitality research (Torres & Kline, 2006).

The intangible and sensitive nature of the wellness sector highlights the particular importance of value and unique experience in this service sector. Hirschman and Holbrook, (1982) and Addis and Holbrook, (2001) considered the services offered by wellness centres as *aesthetic products*, as they evoke fantasies, feelings and fun as ends in themselves creating strong emotional involvement, even before the service encounter. These are forms of consumption that require some personal involvement of the consumer and whose purchasing process differs from that of other kinds of products, because it is mainly based on highly subjective and intangible elements, in short, therefore according to O'Sullivan and Spangler (1998), this mean a complete involvement of the individual during the consumption experience. Wellness product should take into consideration the subjective reaction of the single customer in order to offer unforgettable and valuable experiences. Considering that wellness is an aesthetic product which involves the five senses is possible to understand the importance to design service process with physical environment that favours the opportunity for every customer to live unique and personal experiences based on subjective use of servicescape.

1.2 Consumers' behaviour and responses

The study of how individuals or groups buy, use and dispose of goods, services, ideas or experiences to satisfy their needs and wants is called consumer behaviour (Kotler, 2012).

Kotler lays the foundations of consumer behaviour and then explains that this area is a big part of marketing studies. Indeed, understanding customers' behaviour can help companies to respond to consumers' needs toward segmentation and targeting (Solomon, 2013). Furthermore, according to Kotler (2012), buyers' decisions can be influenced by several things such as culture, social groups and personal test. This influence can affect consumer behaviour at different degrees; indeed consumer behaviours can be conscious or unconscious.

Talking about conscious behaviour lots of studies try to demonstrate that consumers are rational, and that they make conscious decisions. Martin and Morich (2011) based on Persky (1995) suggest that human is a rational actor focused on his own self-interests. A term is specifically used to refer to this type of consumer "homo-economicus". This concept is relate with context of the rational choice theory developed for the study of sociology and economy. It explains that humans are focused on their self-interests, they do a rational evaluation of the different possibilities before making a decision, and the purpose of this process is to get to the best solution for them (Dacko, 2008).

Consumers buy to respond to their needs in the best possible way and according to Lamb et al. (2010), there is a process, which precede the purchase. Following this idea, explain that a decision making process exists and that it follows five steps: (1) need recognition, (2) information search, (3) evaluation of alternatives, (4) purchase, and (5) post-purchase behaviour (cited in Martin and Morich, 2011). This process can reinforce the idea of the conscious consumer, it proves a logical process where consumers have needs and they try to respond to it making the right decision after an evaluation process. Also Dijksterhuis et al. (2005) explain that people are more likely to make a rational decision in certain situations about some products, for example when a product is expensive, or the purchase important (like a car purchasing) consumers particularly tend to think about the pros and the cons of the purchase, and consequently make a rational choice.

According to Woodside and Brasel (2011) sometimes some mental process happens outside of human conscious awareness but humans prefer to believe that their attitudes, behaviours and beliefs are conscious. Moreover, according to Dijksterhuis et al. (2005), even if a conscious process happens before a customer chooses, decides and buys, unconscious behaviour may happen. Very often consumers do not think particularly about what they buy and why they buy it. In a grocery store, or other shops, some stimuli directly affect consumers' decisions and behaviours. Dijksterhuis et al. come with the idea that the store environment has an impact on consumers' behaviours and consequently to this article, several authors agree to say that unconscious behaviours are possible, and may guide some people's actions.

The increase of the consideration of automatic or unconscious responses in consumers' choices and behaviours is underlined by Bargh (2002), because, very often consumers make purchase decision without a reflexive process (Dijksterhuis et al., 2005). Martin and Morich (2011) following those studies come with the idea of unconscious behaviours, not only in purchase but also in everyday tasks. They explain that maybe some actions are the result of automatic responses. For instance, when we are thirsty or angry we do not think about going to the fridge and getting a bottle of water or food, we just do it. In his article, Bargh (2002) explores the idea that unconscious influences are hedonic impulses, and that an impulsive behaviour is a sign of "a failure of volitional control or a weakness of will". He seeks to enlarge the consideration of unconscious motivations beyond hedonic impulses and physiological needs to the operation of any type of goals or motivations a person can have consciously.

Studying unconscious behaviour is an opportunity for companies because it can help marketers to describe, predict and control consumer's thoughts and non-conscious behaviours (Woodside and Brasel, 2011). Moreover, Woodside and Brasel add that through this study consumers can understand pressure and schematic responses due to marketing stimuli and so can help them to make more effective decisions and be less manipulated. Indeed, Bargh (2002), in his reflection and review, talks briefly about the fact that companies exploit the unconsciousness of consumers as well, he explains that researchers have recently started to take into account the needs and the goals of consumers.

1.3 Servicescape

The environment or setting where a service is delivered is defined from Bitner (1992) as a servicescape. In her article she lays the foundations of this concept and explains that servicescape can be considered as one of the tools used in the area of consumer behaviour. Baker (1986), (cited in Bitner, 1992) talks about the store environment taking into account three dimensions: physical, social and ambient dimensions. Indeed, the environment in which a service is provided takes into account a lot of things including the ambiance, the space, the symbols of the interior and exterior of a selling point and the human relationships, and this whole environment is considered like having an impact on customers. In 2009 servicescape is defined from Zeithaml et al. (2009) as the environment in which service is delivered and in which the firm and the customer interact, and contain any tangible commodities that facilitate performance or communication of the service. Here Zeithaml et al. reinforce Bitner's idea with the thought that servicescape acts as a facilitator. Different scholars later, in 2011, complete Bitner's and Zeithaml's definitions, explaining that servicescape includes several dimensions: a physical, a social, a socially-symbolic and a natural dimension. As it is shown, servicescape is a complete concept, which includes a wide range of variables. Rosenbaum and Massiah (2011) argue that the social dimension is the easiest to understand because it is more perceivable. Moreover, some environmental stimuli of the physical dimension may be linked for different reasons (as crowd and layout, explored later). Consequently, the research is focused on two dimensions: physical and social dimension.

Talking about physical dimension Bitner (1992) argues that different complexities of servicescape exist but that the physical environment has three main managerial implications: first servicescape is a facilitator, that means that it has to make the customer's task achievement easier, second that physical environment acts as a package and last that can be differentiator regarding other stores as well. Based on Zeithaml et al. (2009), Rosenbaum and Massiah (2011) explain that the physical dimension is the easiest dimension to understand because it is observable and measurable. It includes the conditions of the atmosphere such as temperature, air quality, noise, music, perfume, but also the space and the function of the equipment, the layout, the furniture as well as other symbols or artefacts like signage or design.

Different research proved that ambience may have an impact on consumers (Cockrill, Goode and Emberson, 2008; Bitner 1992; Rosenbaum and Massiah, 2012). The different studies about the atmosphere try to examine the effects of the interaction between store design, employees and music on the way a retail store is perceived. Researchers establish five broad categories of atmospheric cues: (1) external cues, (2) general interior cues, (3) design and layout cues, (4) decoration displays and point of purchase, and (5) finally the human variable.

Ballantine, Jack and Parsons, (2010) argues that those five categories gather in different specific cues. Light is one of those and according to Custers et al. (2010) takes into account several variables: brightness, contrast, glare and sparkle, decorative lighting and lighting installation. In their article they explain that lighting can not only influence emotions, moods, and cognition but also the atmosphere and the spatial impression, good lighting in fact should provide for the needed level of visual performance, but it also determines spatial appearance ...provides for safety and... contributes for wellbeing (Knez and Kers 2000 p. 825). Some studies show that customers are drawn toward the light but also that light can draw the attention to particular products. Indeed according to Quartier, Vanri and Van Cleempoel, (2014) lighting can increase the attractiveness of a product in a store, for example in wellness facility aimed at providing relaxing effect, soft and warm light are allow in order to create darker places than those made for conducting energizing and invigorating activities.

Acoustics also need to be considered an important element of servicescape, the musical environment is defined by Jain and Badgare (2011) with the word musicscape; it is an important part of numerous studies in the retail environment context. Music is used for several reasons: awareness, identification, association, remembrance, and because it can also have an impact on the customers' service experiences. It can influence purchase act, cognitive and affective feeling, and service evaluation, therefore consumer responses: All of this shows that music is one of the most important variable in the retail environment (Jain and Badgare, 2011). Four variables have to be taken into consideration when talking about music: the volume, the tempo, the style and the absence (Sullivan, 2002). Volume is the most important factor according to Sullivan's research and he explains that it is not the presence of music, which is important, but the perception of it; indeed the music has to fit with the environment. However, music can also distract consumers and so reducing its cognitive process quality of time evaluation.

According to Kotler (2012) there can be a 65% chance of mood change when someone is exposed to a positive sound. Hence, background music is used to produce some specific attitudes and behaviours among employees and consumers (Milliman, 1982). A study from Morrison et al. (2011) shows that music has the power to impact consumers' arousal with the increase of pleasure level as well as to influence consumers' behaviour and subsequently make consumers have approach behaviour and stay longer in a store. In the case of wellness and spa facilities, inappropriate music or noise are unacceptable. Customers come to such places, in order to relax and escape from daily routine. Therefore, excessive noise should be minimized, and music thoroughly considered, in order not to destroy the experience and create peaceful atmosphere. This idea is further broadened by Reddy et al. (2012) who claim that "musical sound with harmony can result in positive emotions and peace while interrupted noises can have adverse influence in a ...space" (p. 1076). The noise issue can be really a problem in a facility where people go to relax, in fact it is of a high importance to carefully plan the location of various areas designed for different purposes. For example, it is necessary to avoid disposing swimming pools for children next to the pools for relaxation, or aerobics room next to the massage or meditation rooms.

Regarding temperature and humidity, Reddy et al. (2012) argue that "maintenance of a comfortable indoor climate with appropriate temperature and humidity is essential for wellbeing and performance at maximum efficiency" (p. 1076). In addition, according to D'Angelo (2010) it is important to distinguish two types of spaces, namely, dry rooms and wet rooms. Thus, dry rooms are those that do not contain water services or hydrotherapy equipment with the exception of a sink basin, while wet rooms are those that imply provision of water services. The temperature and humidity must correspond to the function of the space. For instance, in bigger spa centres with large pool areas it is crucial to maintain a higher temperature than, for example, in smaller centres where all the facilities, such as pools and saunas are situated close to each other.

Scent is another important servicescape element that has to be taken into consideration, according to Kotler (2012) 75% of emotions during the day are influenced by smell. Odours can mix emotions (sadness, monotony) or have a comforting effect (happiness, contentment, pleasure). They can call up memories or relieve stress. Indeed, unconsciously customers can associate a good or a bad feeling with odours. Many

studies (Schiffman, 1995; Ludwigson et al, 1989; Knasko, 1995, cited by Dreyfuss et al., 2007) show that human behaviours are driven by the sense of smell, and that pleasant odours can improve mood. Scent is used also in a marketing point of view with two main objectives in mind. The first objective is to impact on consumer behaviour; the second is to aim the marketing positioning and differentiation of a store. Odours have to be in harmony with the value and the environment of the company. From a behavioural point of view, odours can create a message, an emotion; they can put customer in an olfactory smell situation and so influence their purchase decision. Like background music, odours can have an impact on customers' time perception, and so expand the shopping duration and increase the potential purchases. However scent has some practical and ethical issues because everybody has his or her own perception of odours and difficult to isolate behaviour due to odours in a real context and so evaluate emotions due to odours.

The choice of colour depends not only on inner associations but also on other various factors, adding that "it is a matter not only of the visual performance but also of psychology, aesthetics and...even climatic, social and cultural factors" (Bellia et al. 2011 p.1985). Also Moller, Elliot and Maier (2009) claim that "colour is usually considered in terms of aesthetics alone; however, it is possible that the reds', greens', blues' and yellows' that we perceive on a daily basis are not only pleasing to the eye, but also carry meaningful associations that have direct implications for psychological functioning" (p. 898). All those studies underline how important can be the choice of colour in order to influence the peoples' sensory and emotional feelings, in some cases people have very intimate and specific associations with a concrete colour, however there are a number of common positive associations. According to D'Angelo (2010) for example each colour has is association:

- Red is associated with high energy, passion, excitement, danger, sensuality.
- Orange is stimulating, invigorating, cheerful
- Blue tends to evoke peace calm and trust
- Green is rejuvenating, soothing, natural, refreshing
- Yellow evokes compassion, sympathy, happiness
- Brown is associated with organic and stable
- Purple evokes royalty, power, richness, spiritually
- Black grief, mourning, sophisticated

- White purity, safety, cleanliness

Elliot and Maier (2013) also suggested considering human perception of colour not in relation to aesthetics but in connection to its influence on psychological functioning in humans. They proved that colour could impact people's affect and cognition, determine attraction and affiliation, and influence consumer behaviour. The colours in spa and wellness facilities should be chosen in such a way that they would have a relaxing, rejuvenating and inspiring effect (Yan, 2007). The author in his research suggests several colour schemes appropriate to wellness facilities where the basic colour for inducing relaxation is green which is known to be as the most calming from the whole range of colours and the base colour is combined with reserved lighter shades of green and saturate colour that could be used for flooring or carpeting. Blue is used by Yan (2007) for the vitalizing colour scheme to symbolize vitality and energy and also Stuart (2015) supports the topicality of vitalizing colour scheme saying that blue evokes feelings of calmness and spirituality as well as security and trust, however using it too much can create a cold, disengaged feeling (Stuart, 2015). Alongside previous authors, Reddy et al. (2012) assume that, for example, the same colour will be interpreted differently depending on its place in a space (floor, ceiling, or walls), type and size of a space where it is used. It can create either the feeling of comfort or discomfort depending on how successfully it was applied on a certain type of space. Elliot and Maier (2013) also suggest "colour meanings and...colour effects are context specific" (p. 109). Moreover, they found out that the same colour might have various meanings in different contexts, which could lead to different implications. Finally, it should be also kept in mind that the context can be either physical or psychological.

In addition to physical dimension there is the social dimension that can be considered as the link between employees and customers. Relationship is an important part of social dimension especially in hospitality companies. Rosenbaum and Massiah (2001) based on Bagozzi (1975) explain the fact that customer approach/avoidance decisions are influenced by social humanistic stimuli and not only by physical stimuli. In addition, Edvardsson et al. (2010) (cited in Rosenbaum and Massiah, 2001) put forward three social elements which, in a service setting, influence customers' experience: (1) customer placement, (2) customer involvement, (3) interaction with employee. They

define social servicescape as the relationship between customers, employees as well as customers and employees. However, Johnstone (2014) argue and include another point, that the social dimension of servicescape embraces the customers' relationship with the place itself. Studying this relationship, Johnstone tries to understand why customers make repeated visits. He concludes arguing that some consumers will become attached to retail locations for the social connection.

Indeed sometimes, it is not the place itself that matters to consumers but the relationship customers have with the place taking into account the quality and the style of service delivery. Johnstone includes employees in the concept of place and reinforces the idea that social interactions shape the customers' experiences.

1.4 Servicescape impact on consumers behaviour

Bitner (1992) and Greenland & McGoldrick (2004) claim that consumer can have three different way to responses to the environment stimuli: cognitive emotional and physiological. The cognitive response is the impact of the environment on customers' beliefs about the place or the products in-store. Servicescape gives the nature of the service provided, by the aesthetic of the environment but also by the physical goods (Bitner, 1992; Hightower, 2003). As a result, servicescape may help customers to categorize a firm. For instance, some environmental cues can suggest that a restaurant is either an elegant sit-down restaurant or a fast-food (Ward, Bitner, and Barnes 1992, cited in Bitner 1992), or also recognize it with mnemonic techniques, and it can increase the chance that customers adopt specific behaviour in the case of a positive experience (Chua et al., 2010). Talking of wellness centres cognitive response can have a strong effect on consumer segments and differentiate luxury spas from normal day spa.

More than a cognitive reaction, servicescape can also provoke an emotional response (Bitner 1992, Zeithaml et al. 2009). Some research shows that they are two dimensions to emotional responses: (1) pleasure or displeasure and (2) degree of arousal (Bitner, 1992). Pleasure can be defined as feeling good in the place, and arousal as feeling excited or stimulated (Sullivan, 2002). When customers feel pleased in an environment, they are more likely to spend time and money in this environment, on the other hand they tend to

avoid unpleasant environments and so spend the least time possible in those places where they feel uncomfortable. The atmospheric factors such as music, noise, odour or colour are really powerful in terms of impact on mood, arousal and pleasure or displeasure (Ferreira and Oliveira-Castro, 2011; Assadi 2012; Herrington and Capella, 1996, Sullivan, 2002). But all these emotional reactions depend on customers' interpretations. The perception of the environment and the emotional responses are subjective because everybody has its own perception of servicescape. Ferreira and Oliveira-Castro, (2011) explain for example that the same background music could be pleasant for one customer and not for another one. The same thing can happen with perfume or other servicescape's elements. The interpretation may result in an approach or an avoidance reaction, according to the individual's perception of the environment (Bitner, 1992, cited in Rossembaum and Massiah, 2011). So emotional responses are extremely important because through reactions of different degrees of feeling, for example pleasure, displeasure, calm or noisy, can lead the desire to spend time in a place or the need of get away from it. Mano and Oliver (1993) through a graphically describe the emotional dimensions of consumption related to environment physiology, proving the desire to get close the place of consumption, explore for long time, make purchase, be faithful and return to it.

Servicescape can trigger physiological responses as well. Inappropriate temperatures, poor air quality, low lighting or a noisy environment may cause a physical discomfort in customers and employees, and then result in a stress state (Kryter, 1971). All these physical responses may drive customers to adopt avoidance behaviour. Indeed, customers have to enjoy the environment in which a service is provided to draw positive physiological responses and to be more likely to first enter in the environment and then expand their time in the servicescape (Zeithaml et al., 2009).

With all the different types of responses servicescape brings, we can argue that it can induce a positive impact but also a negative one. Bitner (1992) demonstrates that servicescape should act as a package and a facilitator for the customers' tasks but also as differentiator among competitiveness. Its purpose is to have the best possible impact on consumers. Brady and Cronin (2009) studied how a firm oriented on the customers' satisfaction can have an impact on their evaluation of firm's performance but also on customers' behaviour. In this research, they show that the perception of the quality of a service is highly associated with the physical goods provided and the physical

environment. This positive perception is linked to the value given by the customer to a service or a firm. This research proves that the components of servicescape evoked before (physical and social components) are strongly linked to the perception of customers, and consequently linked to their behaviours. Moreover, servicescape gives the nature of a service when it is in an equation with the company's values, messages, and environment. According to Dagger and Danaher (2014) stores are modelled to attract and retain customers. A positive perception of servicescape should create approach behaviour. This approach response includes a motivation to move toward the place, the environment, and consequently through the servicescape (Sullivan, 2002). A positive environment in which customers are feeling good and excited has the possibility to increase their potential purchase behaviour. Moreover, we can argue that servicescape's elements, such as music or odour, possibly will change the time perception of customers (Assadi, 2012; Sullivan, 2002) and this falsified time perception increases the time spent in a facility. The more time customers spend in a store, the more likely they are to purchase a good or a service. Also, servicescape may have an impact on customer re patronization. If customers feel good and not stressed in a place, if they are happy with their experience, the chances they will come back increase.

Servicescape provides the image of an organisation to customers before their interaction with the services provided (Lin, 2004 cited in Chua et al., 2010). It also has an impact on perception and should facilitate re-patronage behaviour (Wakefield and Blodgett, 1999, cited in Chua et al., 2010). The types of responses to servicescape can differ. Indeed Daunt and Harris (2012) suggest that servicescape can lead to a functional or dysfunctional behaviour. They explain that a dysfunctional behaviour is a comportment that intentionally violates the commonly accepted norms and conducts within an exchange. The terms deviant customer behaviour (Mills, 1981), consumer misbehaviour (Fullerton & Punj, 2004), and jay customer behaviour (Lovelock, 2001) can also be used to refer to this concept (cited in Daunt and Harris, 2012). The target of these behaviours can be other customers, employees, merchandises, properties or financial assets. According to Bitner (1992) the physical servicescape (the interior and exterior environment) affects the five senses and the social dimension can impact behaviour as well.

When customers have a bad perception of servicescape, avoidance behaviour can be adopted: people might want to move away from the place and reduce their participation, which decreases their potential purchase behaviour. This negative experience may provoke some bad reviews from consumers. Unfortunately, according to some studies people are more inclined to share bad experiences than good ones (Bennett, 2014). An unpleasant servicescape tends to be avoided. Hence, it should be a priority for companies to create, manage and improve servicescape (Hightower, 2003). However, servicescape can fail sometimes in different ways, and so causes a problem in service delivery, service product, service facility, employees' and customers' behaviour. The causes of servicescape failure are various: bad odours, slippery floors, broken air-conditioning or unpleasant staff, among others factors. When a servicescape failure happens, and customers experience a dissatisfying interaction with servicescape, they expect a servicescape recovery. Servicescape has different types of recoveries: emphatic responses or corrective and compensatory interventions from the authority. Sometimes, a servicescape failure has no recovery (Chua et al., 2010). Fixing the failure of servicescape by recovery is essential in order to manage to bring consumers back even if they already had a bad experience. Indeed, chances of seeing customers coming back increase with just the fact to try to fix the failure.

Nonetheless, customers expect a certain level of recovery and everyone has its own perception regarding what is appropriate and reasonable to do in any situation. So a dissatisfactory recovery can occur if the recovery does not meet the customer's expectations, and then situation may get worst. In this case, the repatronization chances are meagre (Chua et al., 2010). In the case of a bad servicescape, customers tend to change their behaviour and give a bad response to servicescape especially if the firm does not adopt recovery (Keaveney, 1995; cited in Chua et al., 2010).

For any company, it is really important to listen and understand the responses of the consumers in order to provide the best servicescape possible to enhance positive responses. It is good for the customers, the employees, but also for the firm itself, for its brand image in order to differentiate the place among competition (Hightower, 2003).

More than having an impact on customers, servicescape is also used to give a real experience. In case of wellness facilities servicescape can refer on the exterior and interior design of the facility, even if interior elements like temperature, scent, light, music, are more important in order to influence consumers' emotions and behaviour.

The first aim for the people that decide to go to spend time in wellness facility is for sure relaxation, so is extremely important that servicescape is designed to help consumers to reach this goal, moreover elements of physical and environment can be used in order to create different and specific service and products called rituals. Interesting is the consideration of Grove and Fisk (1992) than analysing the importance of physical environment described that is more relevant when consumer is not familiar with service or company and when servicescape may represent an important tool for differentiate the company and attract specific segment market. Although those researches is obvious that the subjective sensitive approach is strongly present in all servicescape elements and different preferences of men and women in wellness place or the use of colour and smells and however, the combination of interior design with environmental psychology is challenging, according to Puczkó (2011) in fact interior designers are not psychologists and does not equal experience. Despite everything wellness centres should focus on creating unique sensory atmosphere, giving to the environment sense of exclusive luxury and authentic servicescape, (Pine and Gilmore 1999).

2 Methodology

2.1 Method, Sample, Data Collections Practicalities

The current chapter will provide an overview of the method used for the current research. In addition the author will describe the sample chosen for the questionnaire. Finally, data collection practicalities will be mentioned.

For the purpose of the current research the author has chosen 4 different wellness facilities, which are currently the members of Federterme that is the Italian thermal federation. All the facilities are well-known and have quite a high rate of visiting, moreover, they offer similar services starting from thermal water, massages, facials and ending with different pools and saunas. Due to the fact that the customer base of these spas is very multifaceted and involves not only couples, individual visitors, but also families with children and big companies, these two facilities could be suggested to be used as representatives of many other Italian spas.

In order to answer to the question research strategy is used as a plan of action; it is the link between the research philosophy, the chosen method and the data collection and analysis. According to Saunders et al (2012), there are different types of strategy in order to know how to respond to the research question: experiment, survey, archival research, case study, ethnography, action research, grounded, theory, narrative inquiry. For technical, financial and time issue the author used only survey. This method is associated with deductive approach that has principles the test of theory established with literature, through a rigorous data collection. Survey design involves two steps:

- First a sampling plan must be developed. The sampling plan is the methodology that will be used to select the sample from the population (Levy and Lemeshow 1999). The sampling plan describes the approach that will be used to select the sample, how an adequate sample size will be determined, and the choice of media through which the survey will be administered. Survey media include telephone and face-to-face interviews, as well as mailed surveys using either postal or electronic mail (Salant & Dillman, 1994, p. 3).

- Second, procedures for obtaining population estimates from the sample data and for estimating the reliability of those population estimates must be established. This process includes identification of the desired response rate and the preferred level of accuracy for the survey (Salant & Dillman, 1994, allow the respondent the greatest latitude in pace and sequence of response (p. 18). p. 3).

There are different survey media and according to Salant and Dillman (1994) the choice of it is determined by the resources that are available. Written surveys require minimum resources (staff, time, and cost) and are best suited to eliciting confidential information and allow the respondent the greatest latitude in pace and sequence of response. Among the disadvantages of written surveys are their subjectivity to certain types of error, for example coverage error where population lists are incomplete or out of date or nonresponse error, for example less educated, illiterate, and disabled people are particularly less likely to respond to written surveys (Isaac & Michael, 1997, p. 138) or where some questions may be inadvertently or intentionally skipped (Salant & Dillman, 1994, p. 35).

Another different survey is the verbal that includes telephone and face-to-face interviews. The face-to-face interview can capture verbal inflexion, gestures, and other body language. A skilled interviewer can obtain additional insights into the answers provided by observing the respondent's body language (Isaac & Michael, 1997, p. 140), but are, however, subject to measurement error when untrained interviewers are used (Salant & Dillman, 1994, p. 42). They are also resource intensive in terms of staff, facilities, and time. Findings from face-to-face interviews, in particular, are difficult to summarize and incorporate in data analyses (Isaac & Michael, 1997, p.140). Salant and Dillman (1994) espoused the use of mixed mode where written surveys are usually the first method used, followed by verbal survey methods. The authors noted that mixed mode surveys generally reflect higher composite response rates than single medium surveys (p. 50).

All those methods can help the researcher to explore and describe a phenomenon and evaluate relationship between variables. Surveys are capable of obtaining information from large samples of the population. (McIntyre, 1999, p. 74). Are inclusive in the types and number of variables that can be studied, require minimal investment to develop and

administer, and are relatively easy for making generalizations (Bell, 1996, p. 68). One good advantage of survey is also that can elicit information about attitudes that are otherwise difficult to measure using observational techniques (McIntyre, 1999, p. 75).

Combining another method with survey can be usually useful because according to Bell (1996) biases may occur, either in the lack of response from intended participants or in the nature and accuracy of the responses that are received and avoid intentional misreporting of behaviours by respondents to confound the survey results or to hide inappropriate behaviour.

The method chosen for this research is questionnaire, mixed methods as already explained could be better for the quality of research but cause cost and time the author decided to use only the written method. The basis for questionnaire is compiled by the author and is illustrated in the Table 1 below. The author took the ideas mentioned by the scholars below and interpreted them during the creation of her own questionnaire. Overall, the questionnaire has been divided into different sections concerning to the servicescape elements: lighting, acoustic, temperature, scent, cleanness, colour and texture, equipment and materials.

Table 1. Basis for the questionnaire

Part of the questionnaire	Resource
Lighting	Custers et al. (2010), Knez and Kers (2000) Quartier, Vanri and Van Cleempoel, (2014)
Acoustic	Jain and Badgare (2011), Kolter (2012), Sullivan, (2002), Morrison at all (2011), Milliman, (1982)
Scent	Schiffman, (1995); Ludwigson et al, (1989); Knasko, (1995), Dreyfuss et al., (2007)
Temperature	Reddy et al. (2012), D Angelo (2010), Kryter, 1971).
Colours and Texture	Bellia, L., Bisegna, F. & Spada, G. (2011), D'Angelo, J. (2010), Elliot, A.J. & Maier, M.A. (2009), Vandermeulen, N. (2014), Jan, A. (2007), Stuart, A. (2015),

Questionnaires can be considered as a quantitative and qualitative method, depending on the number of open or closed questions that have their advantages and disadvantages. For example, “close-ended questions limit the respondent to the set of alternatives being offered, while open-ended questions allow the respondent to express an opinion without being influenced by the researcher” (Foddy, 1993, p. 127). As a result, “the quality of survey data could be influenced. One advantages of the open-ended questions is the possibility to discovering the responses that individuals give spontaneously, and thus avoiding the bias that may result from suggesting responses to individuals, a bias which may occur in the case of close-ended questions” (Reja, Manfreda, Hlebec & Vehovar, 2003, p. 161). Scholars often prefer to combine these two types of questions.

Taking the above-mentioned information into consideration, the author of the current thesis conducted questionnaire consisting of both, open-ended and close-ended questions. To be more precise the questionnaire is composed of 18 questions: the first one is open question and all the other are close. In 4 of those 17 the participant has the possibility to write different answers from those suggested by author. This way of data collection was selected, as it is relatively inexpensive, allows accessing many respondents and providing their anonymity. Moreover, the author experienced some difficulties due to the fact that the questionnaire had to be translated into 2 languages, namely, Italian and English before being distributed. Different issues were provided especially from world that express emotions and feeling in fact in a lot s of them meaning in the contest was completely different. English version of the questionnaire can be found in the Appendix. The questionnaire was compiled by the author based on the literature review and distributed to the 3 facilities in the period between 5 of February and 5 of April. In that time each facility printed it and distributed personally to the guests. The people selected to participate in the sample must be selected at random; they must have an equal (or known) chance of being selected (p. 13) even if Attewell and Rule (1991) suggested that a theoretical sample may be used to select organizations that exhibit the desired features that are the focus of the researcher’s study (p. 300). Although the theoretical sample is not randomly selected, individual respondents from within that sample can be selected at random to achieve an approximate effect. Due to the fact that the author of paper was limited in time and that the period from February to

April is considered as low season it was not easy to get a reasonable number of respondents.

Analysing the different elements of servicescape by the mean of questionnaire the author examined costumers emotional and sensitive responses provoked from physical environment of chosen facilities. Those results allowed the author to understand the consumers' preferences and, after that, introduce several suggestions on improvement of the servicescape based on the analysis of the questionnaire.

The sample size of the current research is 100 taking from 4 different facilities, sample is considered as a group of people chose out of a large number and is asked questions or tested in order to get information about large group (Kothari 2013). The participant of the questionnaire were consumers of the four different Italian Facilities where the questionnaire were distributed from the employees of each facility, to make easier this process the author decided to adopt only Italians questionnaire therefore all the respondents were Italians. The equal number of respondents: 25 for each facility, was involved in the research in order to make further data analysis more reliable. Due to the fact that February and March is considered for Italians wellness centre as a low season was not possible to reach the initial number of 200 participants that author was expecting.

2.2 Data analysis

During the period from 5 February until 5 April 100 responses were gathered from four different facilities that for the convenience of analysis were numbered and named in the following way: facility 1, facility 2, facility 3, facility 4.

The majority of participants were women (55%) while the remaining were male respondents (45%), concerning the age, 48% of participant were more than 40 years old from those 25% were women and 23% male, this confirms the research of Istat (The National Institute for Statistics in Italy) that argued that the principal target of wellness tourism in Italy are over 40 years old. The remaining (52%) were 26% 30-39 years old and 26% 19-29 years old. Figure 1 below shows the percentage of the different respondents' ages.

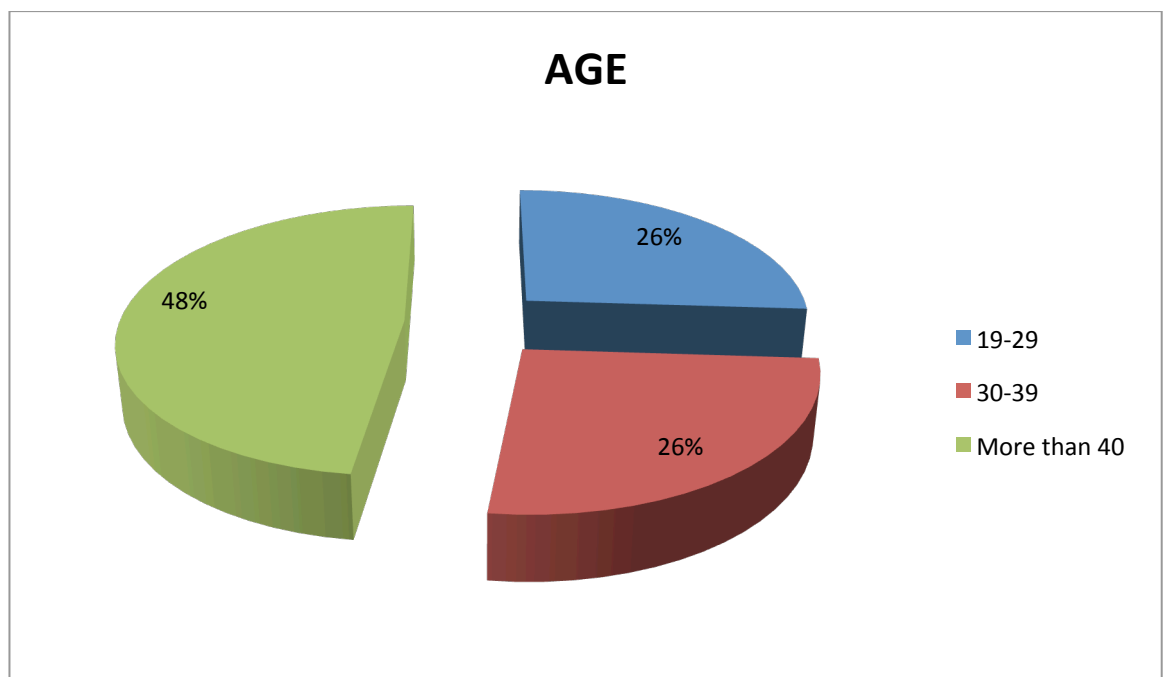


Figure 1. Respondents' ages. (n= 100)

In the first questions the visitors were asked to describe the first 2-3 words that came in their mind thinking about the external architecture of the visited facility. From the analysis of responses it became evident that the first impression of facility strongly influences consumer expectations and emotions. The common words used by participants were: modern, cosy, bright, relaxed, warmth, small, old, quiet, essential.

The word cloud shows the result of the most used words mentioned by respondents. The size of the words indicates how important they were. Figure 2 below



Figure 2. Consumers' first impression. (n=100)

Taking into consideration each facility separately it is more understandable how consumers' perceptions and expectations can be influenced by the external design and architecture. From the analysis of the data in fact, even if all facilities got more positive than negative adjectives, it became evident that the first impression of facility 1 and facility 4 was positive that facility 2 and facility 3, that were described as small, old and essential. The words chosen from participants to describe their first impression are related not only to the design (modern, old, bright, cosy) but also to the sensations and emotions (relax, warmth, quiet). This means that architecture and external design can be interpreted like emotional input and from the beginning of experience consumers' mood can be easy influenced. Taking into consideration for example that one of the most

popular reasons for visiting wellness facilities is relaxing, it is extremely important and positive that the first consumers impression, is relate to relaxation, quiet and peace of mind. From the correlation of data it's came out that all the not “properly positive” adjectives came from participant from 30-39 and more than 40 years old. This result could suggest that young wellness facility visitors (18-29 years old) are more easily influenced positively.

The second question was concerning the lighting and according to the results most participants were satisfied about it, namely 77%, arguing that lighting was appropriate in each area, while only a few responses admitted that there was too much light in the facility (4%), or not enough light (1%). The remaining 18% argued that the use of light was appropriate only in some areas. It's important to mention that more than one answer was allowed in the current question even if all participants chose only one option. Use of lighting in a wellness facility is important because it has to be designed to give consumers the opportunity to see and be safe but also to create a relaxed atmosphere; lighting for wellness areas has to create also a variety of moods. For example in areas where guests want to relax the lighting needs to be soft, indirect and coloured. In fitness areas however high brightness levels motivate guests to be active. The requirement in ancillary areas such as changing rooms and corridors is for safety and security. The data mentioned above is illustrated in figure 3.

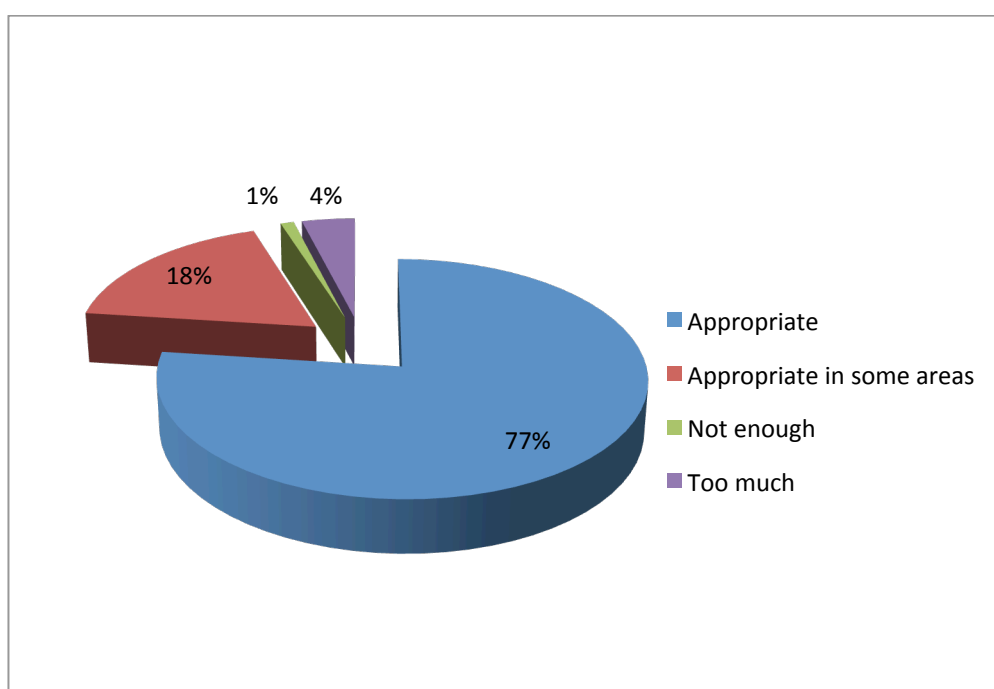


Figure 3. The level of light in the facilities. (n= 100)

Asking the following question the author of the current thesis was interested in getting information concerning how consumers perceive the lighting. Also for this question more than one answer was allowed. Taking into consideration all participants of the 4 facilities and according to the word cloud (figure 4), it came out that the most selected were positive adjectives: warm, cosy and relaxing that appears respectively 44 times 34 and 36 times, following by melancholic 8 times, cold 6 times. It is possible to find also words like spiritual, stimulating and stylish. The general positive conditions of lighting is reflected in the general consumers' emotions and sensations



Figure 4. Customers' perception of lighting (n= 100)

Taking into consideration the result of the second and third question the author was interested in getting information concerning the correlation between lighting and emotions perceived by participants. With the help of the graphic in figure 5 it is easier analyse the different correlations: the 77 participants that considered the lighting

appropriate in each area perceived it mostly with warm and cosy sensations, those words are repeated respectively 39 and 31 times, lighting in fact can be used not only to make in evidence a product or service, according to Areni & Kim, (1994) Summers & Hebert, (2001) but also to evidence somethings like for example under ‘bright lighting’ conditions products are more often examined and touched than under ‘dim lighting’ or determinate special appearance (Knez and Kers 2000). Other word associations with appropriate use of lighting and used a lot, namely 30 times, was relaxing, using soft light and neon in fact it is possible to create darker and spiritual places where consumers can relax and/or meditate more easily. The results of 3 participants were strange because even though they considered the lighting appropriate in each area perceived it as melancholy and cold. When analysing the data in more depth it came out that they all were consumers of facility 1, which makes the author think that even if the light was well used in the interior design of this facility there were something that made visitors feel cold or melancholy, as one of the three, already used the word cold in the question about the first impression. The author thinks that the use of more natural light through specific windows (rooftop windows) and glass wall in determinate areas of the facility could be a good solution in order to make the atmosphere feel less cold and melancholy. Continuing with the data analysis, participants that in question number 2 considered lighting appropriate only in some areas, namely, 18% can be divided into two groups, in fact eight of them used negative words like melancholic 5 times, cold 3 and uncomfortable 1 time demonstrating that the not appropriate use of lighting in some areas influenced negatively them mood, on the other hand, ten of them perceived positive emotions like cosy 5 times, relaxing 4 and warm 2 times even if lighting was not appropriate in all areas. Concluding with the analysis about lighting, it is interesting to note that excessive use of light was perceived with positive sensations like stimulating, relaxing, spiritual and warm, even if as already explained before one of the main reasons to visit wellness facilities is relaxing so stimulating could be interpreted also as not really positive adjective. Considering that in wellness facility soft light and dark places are essential, it is easy to understand why only 1% of participants argued that there was not enough light and associated it with a melancholic and cold feeling. According to the results of questions 2 and 3 lighting can influence consumer moods causing sensations such as a warm, cosy and relaxing feeling when it is used in an

appropriate way, and cold, melancholy and uncomfortable when it is used in the wrong way.

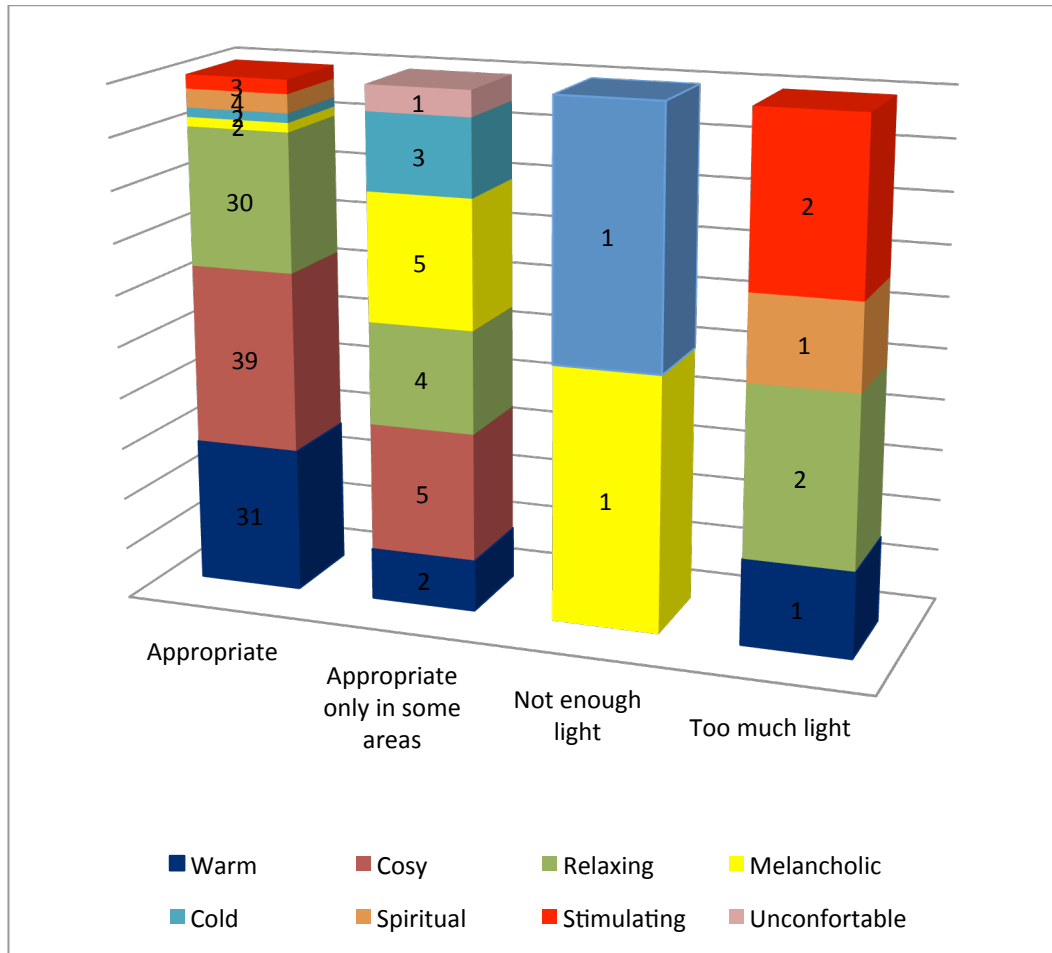


Figure N 5. Emotional influence relate to the appropriate use of lighting.(N=100)

Concerning another element of servicescape the level of scent in the different facilities was analysed. It is important to know that for this question more than one answer was allowed even if all participants decided to choose only one option. The result of question four evidenced that only 52% of participants considered the scent used from the facilities nice, while the remaining respondents argued that it is too strong (10%), unpleasant (10%), soft (5%) and 23% of respondents didn't perceive any scent. The results of this question demonstrated that there is inappropriate use of fragrances; in all of the different facilities in fact all of them have some problems with smell. The facility 1 had 5 consumers that didn't perceive scent, and 4 that claimed it was unpleasant,

facility 2 had 6 visitors claiming that smell was unpleasant for 2 it was too strong, for 1 it was too soft and for 3 it was not noticeable. The results of facility 3 underlined that there was not enough use of scent, in fact 8 consumers didn't perceive it and 3 claimed that was too soft, while the last facility namely facility 4 had 4 consumers arguing that the smell was too strong, 1 that it was unpleasant and 7 that didn't perceived it. Not having a noticeable scent is not considered be a positive thing, smell in fact is one of the top rated stimuli for triggering a memory or feeling and is used a lot to create connections between consumer and brand.

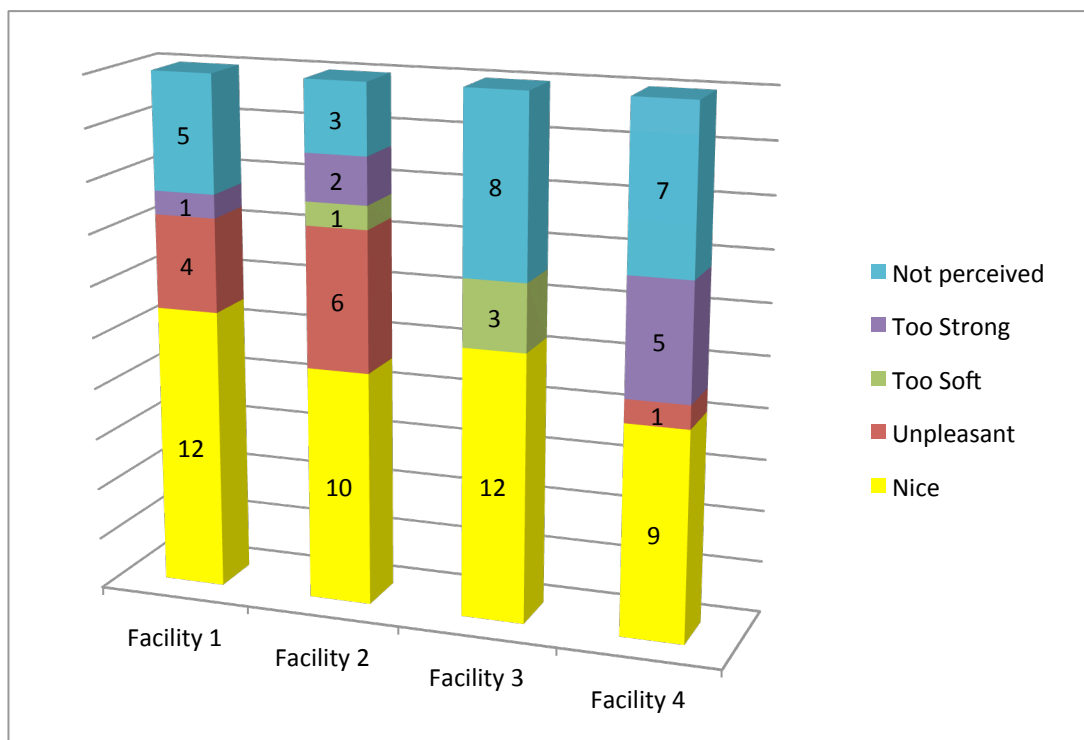


Figure N 6. Conditions of scent in the different facilities (N=100)

Considering the results of question 4 and correlating it with question 5 the author wanted to analyse the consumers' emotions provoked by scent. Also in this question more than one answer was allowed in order to describe better the consumers' emotions. With the help of figure 7 it is easier to understand the results. 52% of participants considered scent appropriate, associated it with relaxation and peace of mind respectively used it 42 and 22 times while 10% thought that the smell was too strong and felt annoyance 7, anxiety 1 and relax 2 times. Annoyance (7times) was the most

chosen adjective also from the 10% that considered scent unpleasant. It is interesting the number of visitors that considered smell as not noticeable namely 23%, and did not use negative adjective for this situation, 16 of them just skipped the question, while 4 used the word relax, 2 happiness and 1 excitement. The remaining 5% that considered scent too soft associated it with melancholy and annoyance respectively 3 and 1 times and relax and peace of mind both of them used 1 time. The correlations between the two questions created a result that even if according to Hunter (1995) and Amodio (1998) aromas from lavender, basil, cinnamon and citrus flavour aid relaxation, peppermint, thyme and rosemary invigorate and raised combats depression. For the majority of participants lack of smell in wellness facilities did not provoke bad emotions and/or sensations.

Focusing on the group of consumers that considered scent as not noticeable 15 of 23 were over 40 years old and also 3 out of 5 who argued smell was too soft were of the same age, which could explain the high percentage of not perceived scent in fact olfactory functions decline with the passing of years.

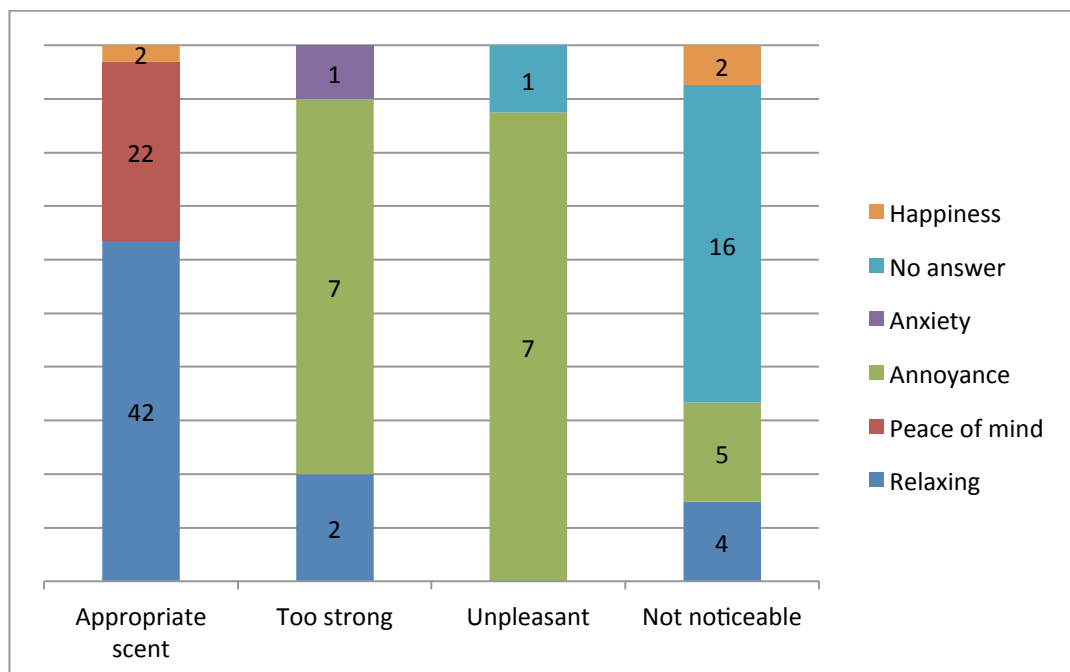


Figure 7. Consumers' perceptions of different scent. (N = 100)

The next important issue examined by means of the questionnaire was the temperature and the influence that it has on consumers' mood. As he already did with the other

elements the author first examined what participants thought about the temperature in the different facilities (question 6) and then comparing the data with question 7 tried to find how different temperature can change consumers' mood. According to the results of question 6 (figure 8) most of the participants considered temperature perfect in each area, namely 52% while 14% argued that it was too hot, only 2% that was too cold and the remaining 32% considered that it was good only in some areas. From this 32%, the author got important suggestions about the different facilities, in fact the participants were allowed to write in which area the temperature was good and it came out that in facility 1 it was good only in the changing room and in the entrance according to 4 people, in facility 3 the same number of participants and facility 4 two consumer, pointed out that the inside of the spa was cold, while there was not specific feedback for facility 2. Examining the different facilities was evident that temperature was slightly better balanced in facility 1 and facility 4.

It is interesting that the majority of women were satisfied with the temperature 35 participants, while only 17 males out of 45 considered temperature appropriate in the facilities. Mostly of the consumers who were not happy were 30-39 and more than 40 years old.

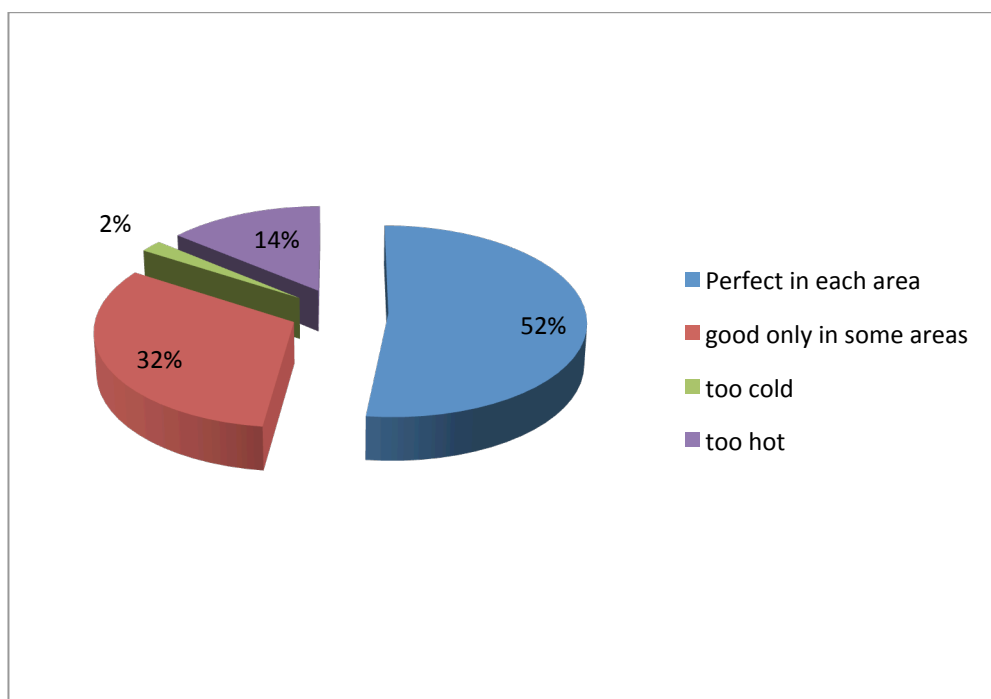


Figure 8. Temperature of facilities. (N=100)

With the help of the graphic in figure 9 it is easier to analyse the correlations between question 6 and 7. The group of consumers that considered temperature perfect (52%), admitted that this favoured relaxation and made them feel comfortable while two people who felt cold argued that this condition did not help to relax and made them feel uncomfortable. Interesting results came from the 14 consumers who considered the temperature too hot, in fact, 6 of them argued this factor favoured the relaxation and helped them to feel comfortable and only the remaining 8 considered it as a negative condition. An important consideration is that 4 of the 6 participants who considered the too hot temperature as a positive factor were more than 40 years old and 2 were 30-39 years old, due to the age and to the nudity that is requested in wellness environments, is evident that older consumers need and appreciate hot temperature.

Continuing with the analysis, for the majority of the remaining 32%, namely 19 participants, the inappropriate temperature did not affect in a negative way their mood, therefore only 13 consumers complained that these conditions did not help them to relax and made them uncomfortable. This data could make the author think that even if the temperature was not perfect in each area was not that bad to affect negatively the consumers mood, this could happen for example if the same environment is too cold and according to the results only 2 consumers perceived it.

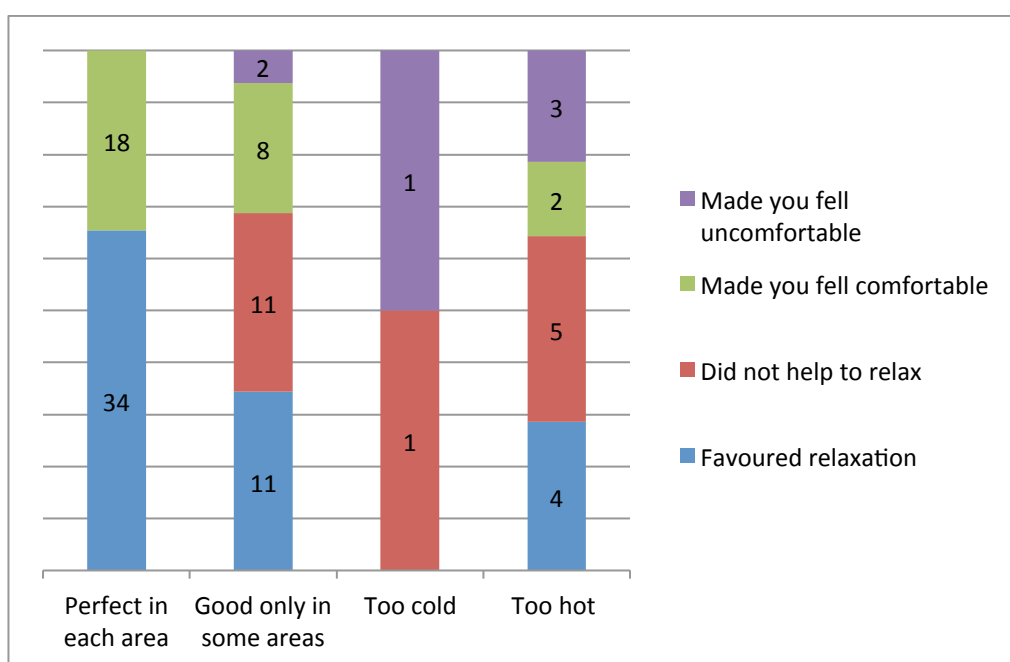


Figure 9. Influence that temperature had on the consumers' mood. (N=100)

In order to get information concerning the customers' musical preferences, the author of the current thesis asked about the type of music a visitor would like to hear in a wellness facility. It is important to add that more than one answer was allowed.

Among numerous answers the most frequent ones were: "music with no words", meditative, followed by classical. These types of results were quite predictable due to the fact that in such facilities people want to escape from the daily routine and stressful lifestyle. The chosen music allows relaxation and reaching harmony with oneself. Is important to add that music genres like jazz and blues were also chosen respectively 13 and 12 times, this could be due to the fact that some consumers aim was not only relaxation or that contrary to the mass for some people jazz and blues allow relaxation more than other kinds of music. The opinion of the author according to those results was that music taste and attitude is extremely personal and wellness facilities could arrange some service that guarantees that each consumer could have his/her own music through personal headphones following the innovative phenomenon of disco club where everyone can choose and dance to the music they want while adjusting also the volume through personal headphones. No significant differences were noticed among ages or sexes. Figure 10 below represents the data about the consumer music preferences.

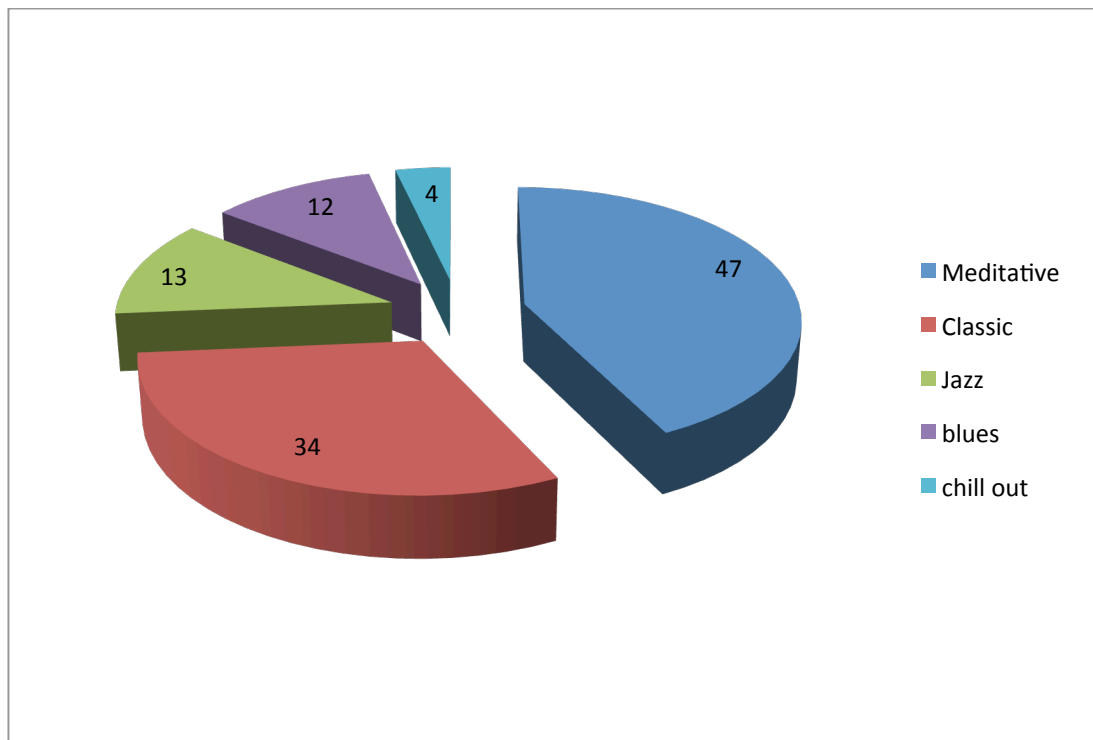


Figure 10. Consumers' music preferences. (N=100)

The following question was aimed at finding out whether the problem of excessive noise is present in any of the facilities and which kind of reactions provoked in the consumers. It was revealed that only 22% of participants faced the problem of excessive noise, those were concentrated overall in facility 1 and facility 2. According to the result of question 1 about consumers' first impression facility 2 was described like old, so maybe the dated interior design has some problems to isolate the noises between the different environments, while facility 3 which was described as small and so more predisposed to noise problems had only 3 consumers out of 25 that complained about it. Concerning the difference between gender there was no difference between males and females while from the 22 consumers who complained about noise 12 were more than 40 years old, so also for the noise the older consumer need special attentions.

Taking into consideration the participants that experienced noise in the facilities and evaluating their reactions, the majority of them were annoyed, nervous and therefore with big difficulties to relax, while only two of them argued that this problem made them leave the facility early. In places aimed for relaxation noise is really an important problem and is also challenging to manage it in such a place where people tend to gather and spend time in companies. The results are illustrated in figure 11 below.

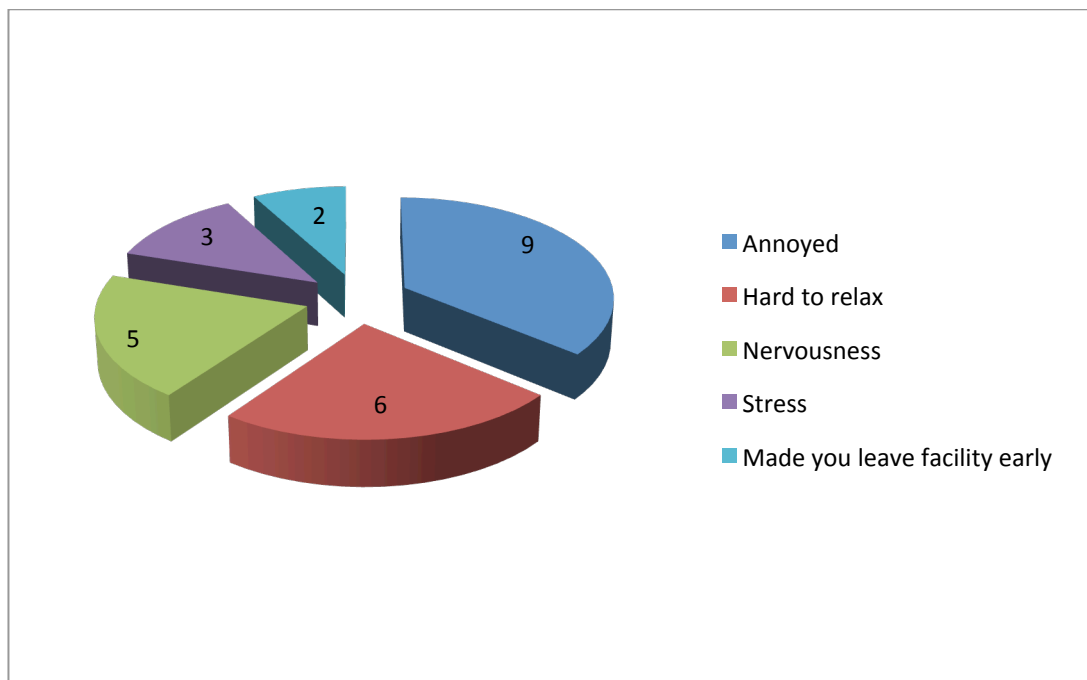


Figure 11. Consumers' reactions to the problem of excessive noise. (N=100)

A specific question was also provided in order to analyse another important element of servicescape that is the cleanness in the facility. According to the results 67% of consumer considered facilities to be clean in each area and 18% did not note the level of cleanliness while 9% argued it was clean only in some areas and only 1% claimed that the facility was dirty, the remaining 5 % did not answer the question. Going more deeply into the analysis facility 3 was the one that had more problems with 5 consumers claiming that was clean only in some areas and 1 that it was dirty. It is important to add that participants were allowed to specify that facility was clean only in some areas. Taking into consideration consumers' feedback, was revealed that treatment rooms were the place where cleanliness was good. Considering the gender differences, strangely women were happier about cleanness 39 of 67 participants considered that the facilities were clean and also the majority of women did not note the cleanliness level 11 of 18, while men were more demanding with 6 participants who claimed facilities were clean only in some areas and 1 that was dirty. The data mentioned above is illustrated in figure 12.

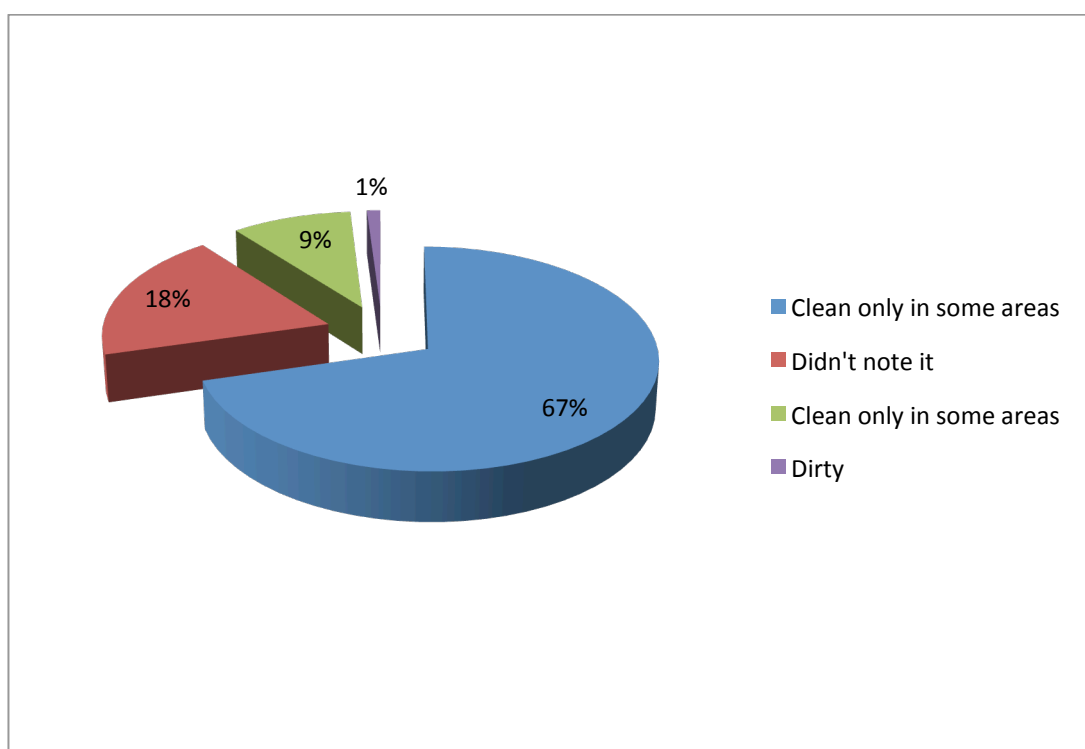


Figure 12. The level of cleanness in the facilities. (N=100)

Following the analysis of this servicescape element question 12 was designed to analyse the importance that consumers give to the cleanness. As it can be seen in figure 13 the results evidenced that for 64% it was extremely important, for 11% very important and for another 11% important enough. Only for 3% it had little importance and for the remaining 11% had no importance. The result underlines the importance of cleanness especially in wellness environments where consumers are mostly almost naked and barefoot and therefore in close contact with facilities environment. Analysing the age differences most participants who argued that cleanliness has a low importance were more than 40 years old.

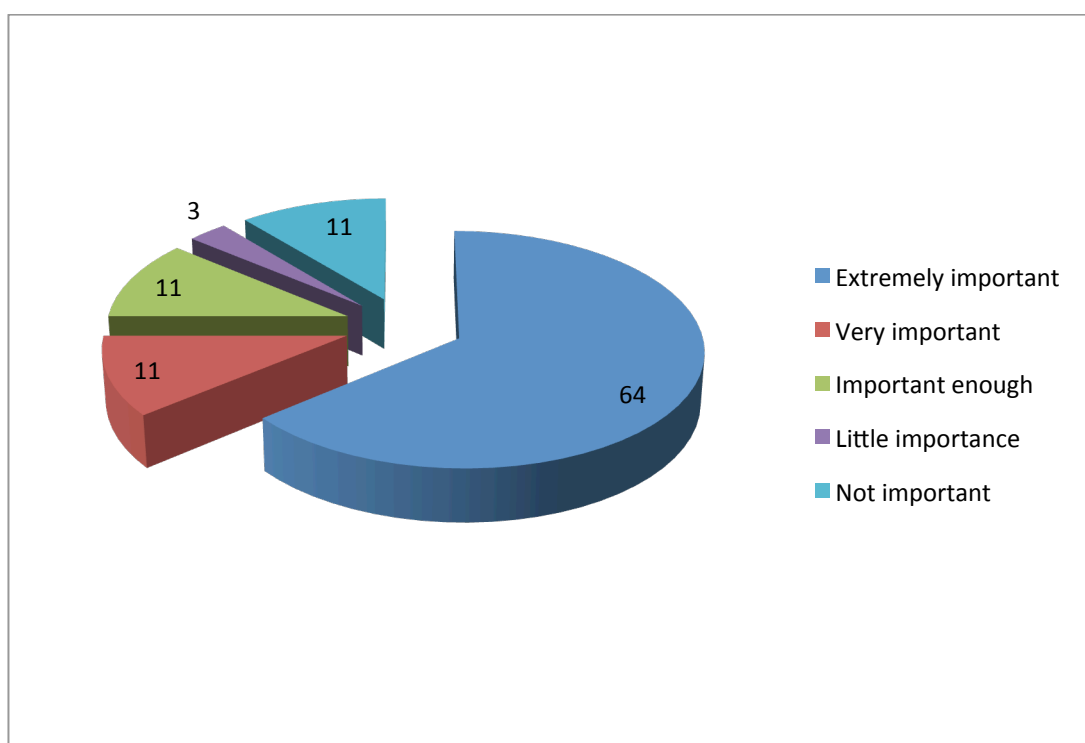


Figure 13. Cleanness importance. (N=100)

The same analysis done for the cleanliness was done also for the equipment that is another elements of servicescape. The question 13 investigate on what participants thought about equipment in the different facilities, and 48% argued that was good working and 38% that was modern and efficient, while 9% that some equipment didn't work properly and only 3% that was old and in bad conditions, 3 participants didn't answer to this question.

Analysing individually each facility it is evident that facility 2 has the worst equipment, with 2 of the total 3 consumers who mentioned about old and bad equipment conditions and 4 that considered some of them not working properly, this could be explained comparing this data with question 1 where participants' first impressions already described facility 2 as old and therefore also equipment should be not really modern. Analysing and crossing the data with gender difference again appeared that men are much more demanding and critical than women in fact all 3 consumers who complained about the bad conditions were men and also 5 out of 9 who signalled that some equipment did not work. The data above is illustrated in figure 14.

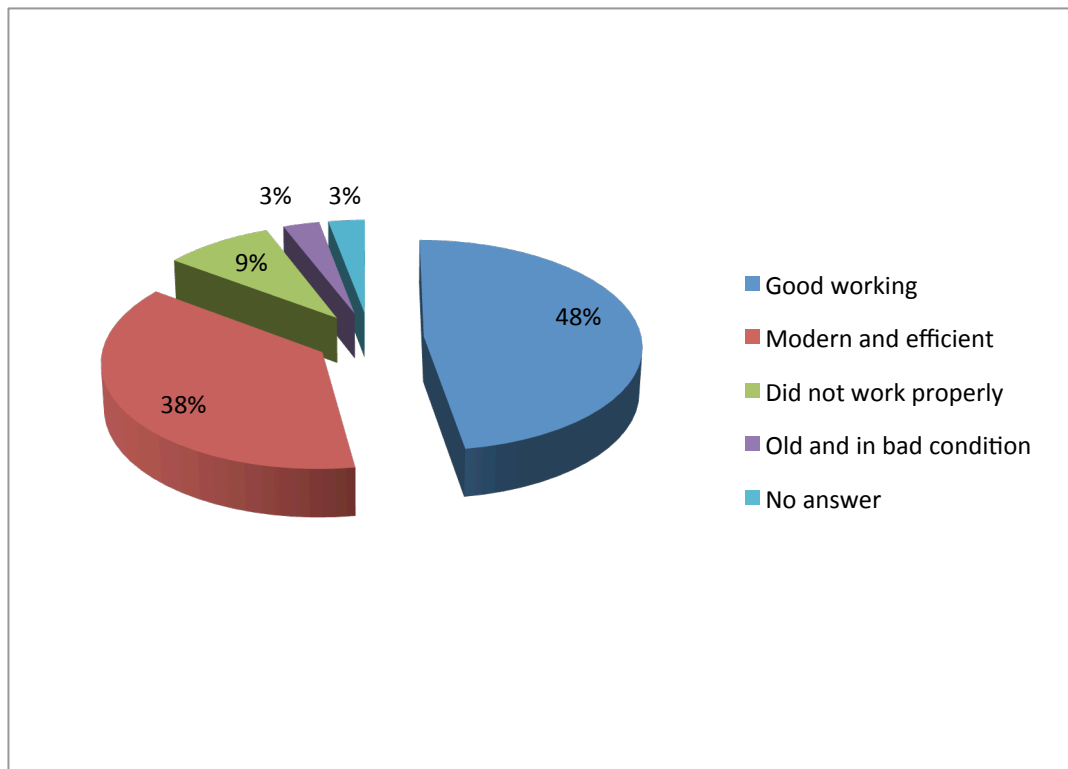


Figure 14. The level of equipment in the facilities. (N=100)

Through the following question the author wanted to investigate how much bad and old equipment can influence consumer mood. With the help of figure 15 it is evident that the majority of consumers considered that it has a really strong influence namely 44% and strong influence 20% while, 19% argued that old and bad equipment had enough influence, 9% low influence and only 7% no influence, 1 participant didn't answer. Crossing the data it come out that consumers aged 30-39 years and more than 40 years old are less influenced by equipment problems, new generations in fact give strong

importance to the equipment especially if they are relate to technology. In fact it's has become one of the most important day-to-day elements. Concluding with the equipment issue the results showed that womens' mood are less depend on old and bad equipment than mens' one.

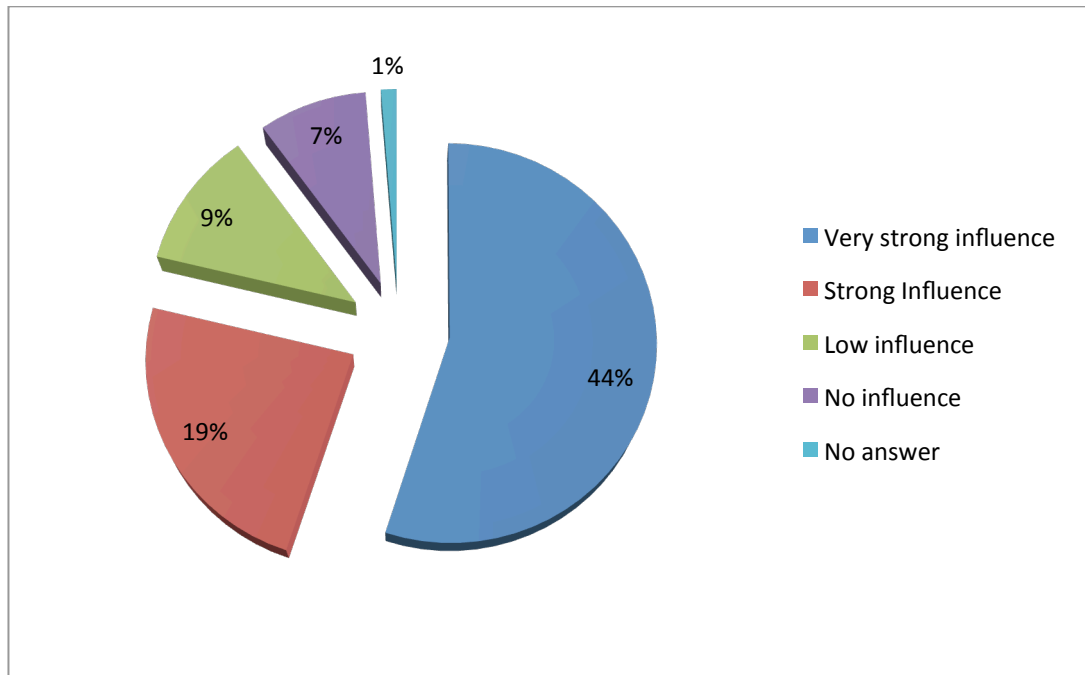


Figure 15. Old equipment influence on consumers' mood. (N=100)

The next important issue examined by the means of the questionnaire was the most preferred materials used in the wellness facilities. It is important to mention, that more than one option could be chosen in the current question. The results indicate that people tend to choose the materials which can be classified as natural more often namely, wood 60 times and stone 53 times, according to Nilsson, and Hansen (2007) in fact nature is an important factor in the physical environment, and different research showed that humans are dependent on nature and there are positive links between the natural environment and human health. In this sense, a study made by the Health Council of the Netherlands and Dutch Advisory Council for Research on Spatial Planning, Nature and the Environment (2004) highlights the indirect connections that can be made between human health and nature, by looking at how nature influences actions or mechanisms which in turn influence health. Interestingly those materials are followed by glass 38 times. Such a choice could be probably explained by the desire to see more “light” and

spacious rooms in the facilities. Only a few people preferred metal and plastic, respectively used 8 and 4 times. The result can be seen in figure 16 below.

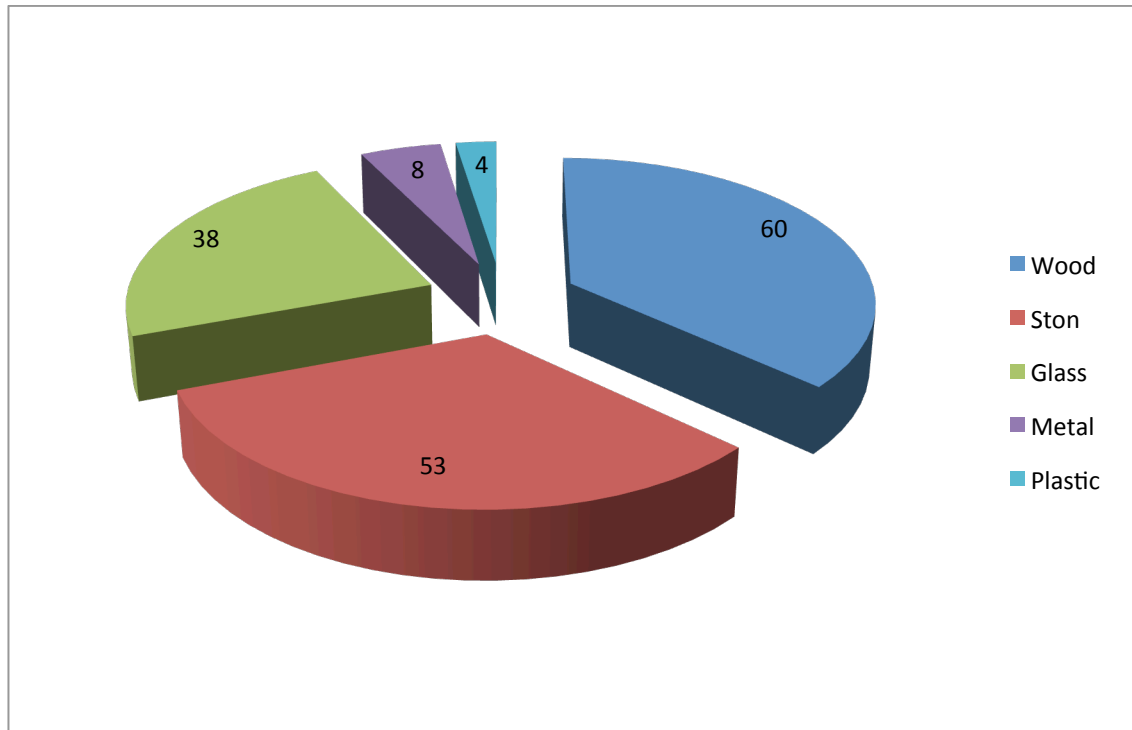


Figure 16. Preferences towards materials. (N=100)

Concerning the colours, it was revealed that the most common in the facilities were neutral colours (white, grey and black) 53% the second by popularity were earthy colours (beige and brown) 21%, these are followed by cool colours 14% (combination of blue, green and purple), and in the end warm colours 12% (combinations of red, orange and yellow).

Those results were compared with question 17 in order to discover which sensations were provoked by the different colours. Having a look figure 17, it came out that white, grey and black namely neutral colours that were the most present in the facilities provoked mostly relaxation, pleasure and confidence but also melancholy. It is interesting in fact is that 6 consumers claimed it and 5 of them were over 40. Analysing the sensation provoked by the second most popular colours it is evident that earth colours were associated mostly with relaxation and pleasure but also with confidence and creativity. It is important to take into consideration that only one consumer felt negative sensations namely melancholy. Mostly the women preferred Earth colours.

Following this analysis, cool colours provoked relaxation; confidence and pleasure but also anxiety for 2 participants out of 16, and both of them were males. Warm colours were the least present in the facilities and were associated only with positive sensations like pleasure, relaxation and confidence. The most common sensations were again relaxation, this underline how wellness consumers' first aim is relaxation and this might also be found in the colours.

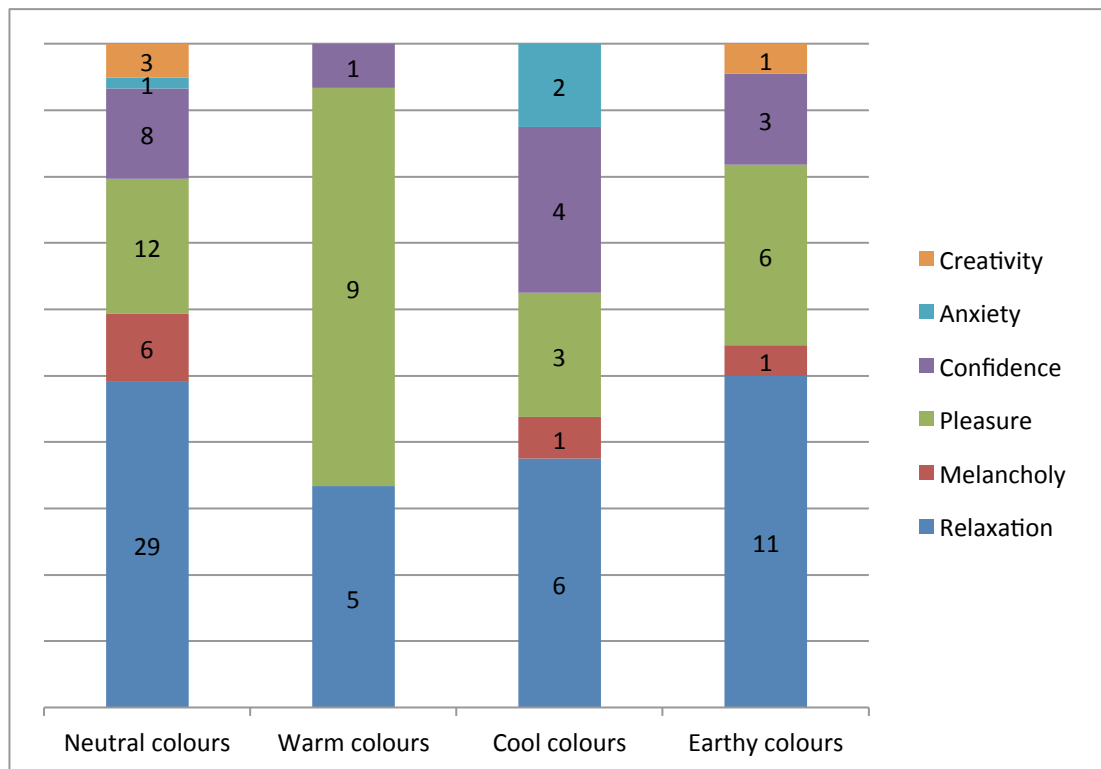


Figure 17. Sensations provoked by colours. (N=100)

Finally the respondents were asking to rank the three elements considered the most influential for consumers' mood. Consulting the word cloud it is evident that the most influencing element for the participants was the temperature considered 69 times, following by cleanness and scent respectively 51 and 52 times. It is important to observe also that the least influential servicescape elements according to the results are the colours and equipment.

Analysing the gender and age differences it came out that temperature and cleanness were considered important for the majority of women and consumer aged 40 years old, while the men's preferences were concerned with different elements.

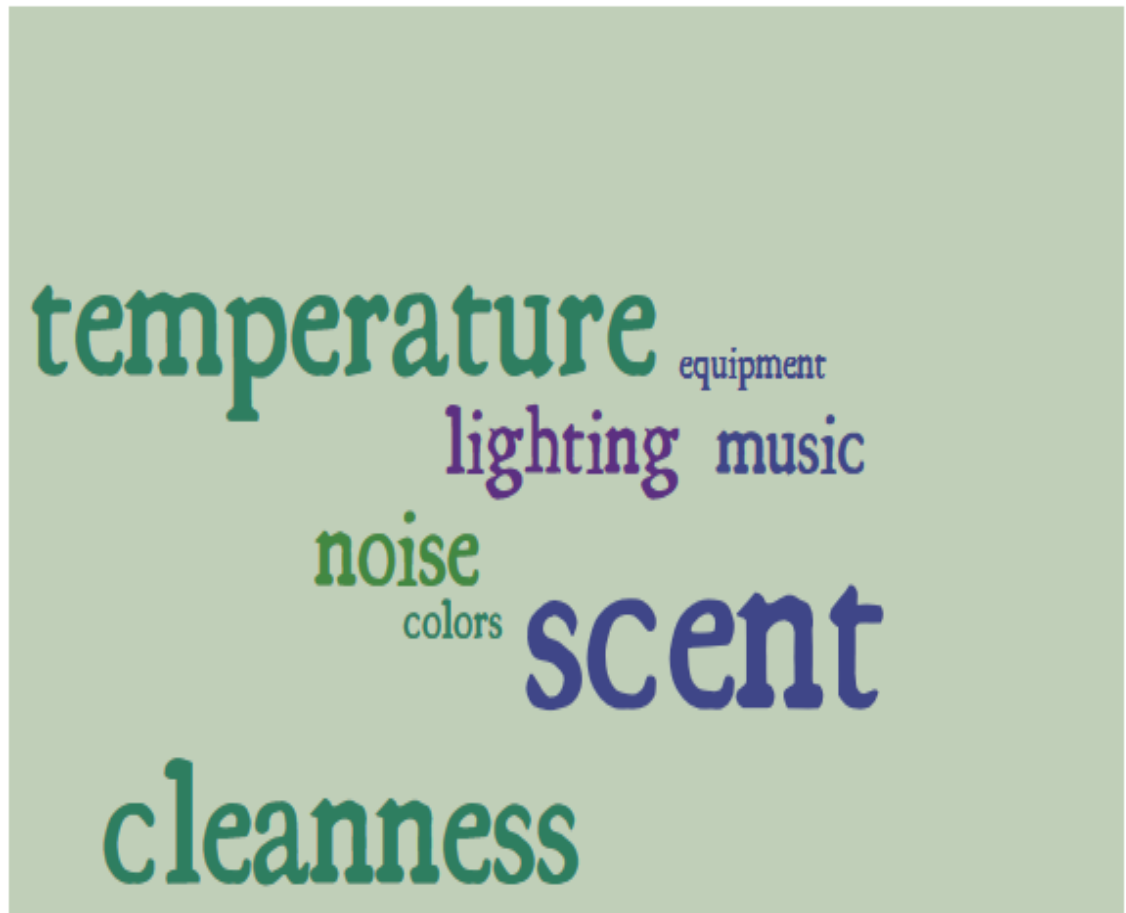


Figure 18. Most influential elements. (N=100)

3 Results and discussion

The data gathered by the means of the questionnaire conducted by the author provided information related to consumers preferences concerning the servicescape of wellness facilities. The questionnaire allowed the author to get an in-depth understanding of the connection between consumers' feelings and facilities' physical environment. In addition, participants' responses concerning the different elements suggested by the author revealed which had the greatest influence on the consumers' mood and therefore gave evidence of the servicescape problems that tend to appear the most frequently in wellness facilities.

The results received during the analysis of the questionnaire allowed the author to prove the hypothesis stated at the beginning of the research. It became evident that the servicescape indeed plays an important role in determining customers' opinions concerning the wellness facility. Thus, the author of the paper managed to support the idea of many scholars who state that servicescape plays a crucial role in differentiating service firms and influencing the nature of customer emotions and sensations. It is important to underline that undoubtedly, in the context of the wellness industry the multifaceted approach is vital while providing services. An excellent service level can only be achieved if high-quality service is presented in an appropriate atmosphere. Well-considered servicescape, will contribute to the creation of an appropriate consumer experience, while bad use of the physical environment can ruin and influence negatively visitors' mood.

During the research it became evident that wellness facilities with efficient servicescape tend to evoke more positive emotions than those with a less successful design. This idea is consonant with the idea of Ali and Amin (2014) who argued that managers of wellness facilities should strive for customers' satisfaction by designing and maintaining a good physical environment, which will result in positive post-consumption behaviours. However, it should be noted that servicescape care alone cannot determine the company's success and aspects such as service quality and range of treatments also have to be carefully considered.

The research indicates that the servicescape elements that can influence mood the most are temperature, cleanness and scent. The first two elements are strongly correlated with

the wellness physical environment that differently from the other hospitality services is more particular and intimate. The importance of temperature, for example, as already explained is due to the specific wellness services that are delivered in a particular context where the consumers are naked and barefoot and therefore much more vulnerable. The control of temperature is not only related to the environment but also to the different services, most of them in fact using the temperature to provoke the desired effect, like for example pools and saunas. The set of results was positive even if it is important to pay more attention to each area of the facilities and also to take into consideration the target market needs. In this case couples over 40 and most of the unhappy respondents were part of this segment. With the passing years it is possible that people require and appreciate hot temperature more than cold. The appropriate use of temperature favoured relaxations while consumers were feeling uncomfortable and with some difficulties to relax when the temperature was not appropriate and overall cold.

Concerning to cleanness, according to the results it was an essential element for the majority of participants, and also this factor like temperature could be explained taking into consideration the 'strong' contact that consumers have with the environment where the service is delivered. The vulnerability of visitors due to nudity in fact makes the cleanness of environment important, also to avoid the transmission of diseases. According to the target market in fact, older consumers have a weak immune system. Scent was considered by participants as the third element that might influence the consumers mood the most. This result might be due to the not really positive condition of the scent in the analysed facilities. Almost half of the participants in fact were not happy about it. However scent was associated with emotions like peace of mind and relaxation and only in a few cases with annoyance and anxiety.

Concerning the other servicescape elements that were taken into consideration in the research, it came out that lightness could be experienced by consumers as warmth, relaxation, elegance, but also melancholy and cold. Lightness is not used only to illuminate the environment but also to create a specific atmosphere, for example low lying lights and fluorescent lamps could be used to accentuate the reception desk, decorative coloured lamps could be used for waiting areas in order to create an interesting and warm atmosphere. D'Angelo (2010) for example argued that the use of coloured light has become popular in the spa for its healing benefit. The light in the

wellness facility should be dim and soft; candles and soft accent light are good choices in spa treatment rooms where lighting is an important part of setting the mood for a relaxing treatment. (D'Angelo 2010). The use of indirect light through small lamps with apposite design can also create a relaxing and cosy ambience.

In addition to the importance of the light, one should keep in mind that colours influence the lightness, for example according to Ufland (2015), dark colours absorb light making an ambient look and the space feels smaller. Therefore it is better to utilize light colour in order to make a space feel open and airy. From the results of the research it came out that the most present colours were neutral colours, in those there is also black and in fact some participants argued that it provoked melancholy, while cool and warm colours were associated with positive sensations. Ufland (2015) argued that painting the wall trim and mouldings in a lighter colour than the walls, will make the wall appear to be further back, making the room seem bigger and moreover, the white colour of the ceiling will open up the space, while bright ceiling colour with the texture will catch the eye, creating the illusion of height.

Another critical issue to guarantee good servicescape is the acoustics, according to the results the most preferred music is meditative and classical but this topic is really challenging because music taste is extremely personal and it can happen that for some people meditative and classical music can provoke opposite feeling. Widely used in the different facilities nowadays are the sounds of nature, in order to create an holistic atmosphere and to unite the spa visitors with nature. Being relaxed is one of the main purposes for wellness consumers; an appropriate control of the noise is another crucial aspect. Designers should carefully plan the location of various areas designed for different purposes. For example, it is necessary to avoid placing swimming pools for children next to the pools for relaxation, or aerobics rooms next to the massage or meditation rooms. Stress, annoyance and desire to leave the facility early are some of the sensations provoked from the excessive noise according to the research result.

Use of materials that isolate the noise could be also good solutions in order to keep a peaceful environment. Concerning the use of materials the majority of respondents preferred wood. Nyrud et al. (2014), and Gibson (2015) have noticed beneficial effects of wood elements in spa and wellness interior design. However, due to the increase of

the sustainability trend, which has influenced spa interiors, those should be decorated with naturally textured woods, such as bamboo and cork, instead of using precious trees.

Reflecting on the consumers' opinions in general all the four facilities had a good servicescape even if facility 1 and 4 succeeded more than facility 2 and 3 in development of some elements. First of all these facilities gave a consumers' positive first impression, which is extremely important. In fact, according to the result participants used words like relax, quiet and warmth and this meant that their mood was already influenced in good a way. To add that facility 1 and 4 balanced better the use of temperature in the different areas and according to the results the most influenced servicescape element is precisely the temperature. In such facilities another essential factor that has to be taken strongly into consideration is the cleanness that appeared perfect in facility 1 and 4. It is important to mention that despite numerous positive feedbacks, facility 1 had to improve the lighting and solve the problem of excessive noise. On the contrary, based on the data gathered during the research the author came to the conclusion that facility 2 and 3 did not manage to develop an efficient servicescape. To be more precise from the first impressions these facilities were considered old, small and basic. Moreover from the results it could be seen that there were problems with temperature for both facilities, excessive noise and equipment for facility 2 and cleanness for facility 3. Finally it is important to add that the author found scent lacking in all the studied facilities.

In the current chapter the author discussed the results of his research, related to visitors' preferences concerning the servicescape of wellness facilities. Taking into consideration the correlation between servicescape elements and consumers' emotions and sensations. Based on consumers' responses, the author of the paper was able to give the 4 facilities, important feedback related to the conditions of some servicescape elements.

Conclusions

Visiting spas and wellness centres is one of the popular ways to spend leisure time. Indeed nowadays due to fast and hectic life-styles, people tend to invest money and time in activities that help them to escape from the stressful daily routine. During the recent decades the number of facilities offering wellness and spa services has increased due to the fact that people become more concerned about their wellness. As a result, the competition among such facilities is becoming fiercer. Nowadays the intangible market is one of the main trends, peoples are looking for unique and authentic experiences, which are able to create different emotions. One of the possibilities for companies to win customers' preferences and differentiate themselves is to concentrate on development of the different elements of facilities' servicescape. Although the existing scope of literature provides some data on the effect of separate design elements on human psychology, there is still a need for a complex and multifaceted approach towards this issue. Therefore, the author of the current thesis decided to examine the relation between customers' feelings the servicescape of wellness facilities from another perspective.

For the purpose of his study the author stated the following research question: how can servicescape influence the consumers' emotions and sensations? The author also aimed to get an understanding of the relationships between wellness facilities and consumers' preferences. This aim was accomplished by several steps. First of all, the author tried to reveal the influence of servicescape of customers' preferences by the means of critical review. Secondly, the author found out the main principles and elements of servicescape and examined the interrelation of these with customer emotions and sensations by means of the questionnaire. Having reached the connection of the above-mentioned relationship, the author made some proposals for the improvement of the servicescape of four chosen Italian facilities. Thus, during the research it became evident that spas and wellness facilities with efficient servicescape tend to evoke more positive emotions than those with less successful design. Therefore managers of wellness facilities should strive for consumers' satisfaction by designing and maintaining a good physical environment, which will result in positive post-consumption behaviours.

At the beginning of the current research the author stated the following hypothesis: the servicescape plays an important role in determining consumers' opinions concerning the wellness facilities. The results received during the research allowed the author to prove the previously stated hypothesis. It is important to add that undoubtedly, in the context of the wellness industry the efficient design of the physical environment is of special importance because the effect of high-quality service can be enhanced by an appropriate atmosphere, while vice versa inefficient design will spoil consumers' experience. The research indicated temperature, cleanness and scent as the most important elements of servicescape capable of influencing consumers, mood. However according to the results it could be seen that all the other elements had an important influence on the consumers' emotions and sensations too. It is important to add that even if it is challenging to develop a perfect servicescape that can satisfy everyone the consumers' preferences are strongly related to the target market.

Although the current research has reached its aims the author still faced some limitations. First of all, the period of collecting data by means of a questionnaire lasted for two months, which inevitably led to another limitation, namely, quite a small number of respondents. The author in fact was expecting at least 200 participants but some complications and low season did not help to reach this number. Finally only 4 facilities out of 380 were examined. The increased time period would also lead to the growth of the sample size. More complete and comprehensive data could be gathered by means of analysing various spas and wellness facilities, around Europe, or even worldwide. A greater depth of information could have been obtained from interviewing that could have provided greater insight into participants' opinions. Finally, it would be interesting to analyse also working staff opinions in order to find out how they perceive the servicescape and if it could also influence their work performance.

The current work could become a starting point for the managers of the examined facilities in order to reconsider their attitude towards the interrelation of servicescape and consumers' preferences. In addition, this paper could also be useful for those wishing to open a spa or a wellness facility as it explains the high dependency of customers' preferences on the overall design of the facility in addition to the quality of the services offered.

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Appendix

Dear respondent!

The current questionnaire is conducted for the purpose of the research aimed at the determination of relationship between the servicescape of wellness facilities and customer emotions. The confidentiality of responses is guaranteed. Please devote 10 minutes to answering the questions below.

Gender :

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

Age :

- ☐ 19-29
- ☐ 30-39
- ☐ More than 40

- 1. Could you please write the first 2-3 words that come to your mind when you think of the external architecture of the facility x ?**

(please comment here)

.....
.....

- 2. What do you think about the lighting in facility x ? (more than one answer is possible)**

- ☐ There is appropriate lightning in each area
- ☐ Lighting is appropriate only in some areas (please specify which.....)
- ☐ There is not enough light in the facility
- ☐ There is too much light in the facility

3. How do you perceive the lighting in the facility x ? (more than one answer is possible)

- ☐ Warm
- ☐ Cold
- ☐ Cosy
- ☐ Uncomfortable
- ☐ Stimulating
- ☐ Relaxing
- ☐ Boring
- ☐ Spiritual
- ☐ Stylish
- ☐ Melancholic

4. What is your opinion about the facility scent ? (more than one answer is possible)

- ☐ The scent was nice
- ☐ The scent was unpleasant
- ☐ Was too strong
- ☐ Was too soft
- ☐ There was not noticeable scent

5. Which emotions did you feel about the facility scent ? (more than one answer is possible)

- ☐ Happiness
- ☐ Agitation
- ☐ Relaxation
- ☐ Anxiety
- ☐ Annoyance
- ☐ Excitement
- ☐ Melancholy
- ☐ Peace of mind
- ☐ Other please specify.....

6. How was the temperature in the facility x ?

- ☐ Perfect in each area
- ☐ Good only in some areas of the facility(please specify which)
- ☐ Too cold
- ☐ Too hot

7. How did temperature influence your mood ? (more than one answer is possible)

- ☐ Favoured relaxation
- ☐ Did not help to relax
- ☐ Made you feel comfortable
- ☐ Made you feel uncomfortable

8. Which kind of music you prefer to be present in a wellness facility ? (more than one answer is allowed)

- ☐ Classic
- ☐ Blues
- ☐ Meditative
- ☐ Jazz
- ☐ Reggae
- ☐ Rock
- ☐ Others (please specify?
.....)

9. Did you experience the problem of excessive noise in the facility x ?

- ☐ Yes (go to the question 10)
- ☐ No (go to the question 11)

10. How did the excessive noise in the facility influence your emotions ? (please skip this question if the answer no, was chose in the previous question. More than one answer is allowed)

- ☐ Provoked stress

- Made you nervous
- Annoyed you
- Made you leave the facility early
- Made you feel tired
- Made it hard to relax

11. What is your opinion about the cleanness in the facility x?

- Each area of the facility was clean
- Good only in some areas of the facility (please specify which)
- Dirty everywhere
- Did' t note it

12. How important is the cleanness of the facility? (Please choose from 5 levels of importance)

Important 1 2 3 4 5 not important

13. What do you think about the equipment in the facility x?

- Was all in good condition
- Some of the equipment didn't work properly (please specify which.....)
- Was old and in bad condition

14. How much can bad and old equipment influence your enjoyment?

Strong influence 0 0 0 0 0 small influence

15. Which type of materials would you prefer to be used in the spa and wellness facility? (more than one answer is possible)

- Wood
- Stone
- Glass
- Metal
- Plastic

16. What kind of colour was mostly present in the facilities X?

- ☐ Neutral colours (white –grey –black)
 - ☐ Warm colours (combination of red – orange –yellow)
 - ☐ Cool colours (combination of blue – green – purple)
 - ☐ Earthy colours (beige- brown)
 - ☐ Others colours (please specify)
-

17. What feeling did these colours provoke?

- ☐ Pleasure
- ☐ Displeasure
- ☐ Relaxation
- ☐ Passion
- ☐ Melancholy
- ☐ Anxiety
- ☐ Creativity
- ☐ Confidence

18. Choose the three elements you think may influence mood changes more than any other? (Rank 1-3)

- ☐ Temperature
 - ☐ Lighting
 - ☐ Scent
 - ☐ Music
 - ☐ Colour
 - ☐ Cleanness
 - ☐ Equipment
 - ☐ Noise
 - ☐ Others (please specify)
-

Thank you for your time and your consideration.

RESUMEE

Teeninduskeskkonna mõju heaoluteenuste tarbija meelelise ja emotsionaalse kogemuse loomisel

Alates iidsetest aegadest on inimesed soovinud külastada kohti, kus pakutakse võimalusi tervise parandamiseks. Järk-järgult on tervisevete traditsioon arenenud moodsaks tendentsiks, kus inimesed külastavad erinevaid spaa- ja heaolukeskuseid. Eriti tugevaks trendiks on see osutunud viimasel aastakümnel. Selle fenomeni tulemusena on pead pöörlema paneval hulgal kasvanud spaa- ja heaoluteenuseid pakkuvate asutuste arv ning selle valdkonna sisene konkurents on äärmiselt tugev. Soov omataoliste hulgas eristuda on väga tähtis ja üks võimalustest seda teha on keskendudes teeninduskeskkonna elementidele, mis mõjutavad inimeste emotsionaalset kogemust. Tarbija emotsioone, valikuid, otsuseid ja tarbimisharjumusi mõjutavad puudutused, maitse, lõhn, heli ning toodete/teenuste üldine visuaal.

Varasemad uuringud selles valdkonnas on toonud välja, et eksisteerib sensoorseid märguandeid, mis mõjutavad tarbijate hinnanguid ja käitumist. Enamus uurimustest on olnud siiski fokusseeritud vaid ühele tajumeelele või ühele mõjuelemendile teeninduskeskkonnas. Selle tulemusena on jäänud aga kõrvale sensoorsete märguannete terviklik mõju. Multisensorsete märkide mõju jaemüügi keskkondades on lähiajal uuritud, kuid empiirilise kirjanduse olemasolu on selles valdkonnas siiski väga piiratud. Uurimustöö eesmärgina on töö autor sõnastanud järgmise uurimisküsimuse: kuidas mõjutab teeninduskeskkond tarbijate emotsioone ja aistinguid? Töö autor on lisaks püüdnud mõista, millised on heaoluasutuste ja tarbijaeelistuste omavahelised suhted.

Uurimuse meetodina on kasutatud küsimustikku, mis koosneb nii avatud kui suletud küsimustest, saamaks võimalikult palju kvalitatiivset informatsiooni. Töö autoril oli esialgselt plaan kombineerida omavahel nii suuline kui kirjalik küsitlus, et koguda veel enam informatsiooni, kuid aja ja asukoha tõttu, langes otsus vaid kirjaliku meetodi kasuks. Küsimustik jagati nelja erinevasse heaoluteenuseid pakkuvasse ettevõttesse, millest kõik on hetkel Itaalia heaoluteenuseid pakkuvate ettevõtete ühenduse liikmed.

Uurimuse käigus selgus, et spaad ja heaoluasutused, millel on otstarbeline ja läbimõeldud teeninduskeskkond, tekitavad tarbijas rohkem positiivseid emotsioone,

kuid need, mis on juhusliku kujundusega. Niisiis, peaksid heaoluasutuste juhid, püüdlema tarbija rahulolu saavutamise poole, kujundades ja pidades üleval harmoonilist füüsilist keskkonda, mis päädiks ka positiivse järeltarbimisega. Uurimuses leiti, et temperatuur, puhtus ja lõhn on ühed olulisimad elemendid teeninduskeskkonnas, mis tarbijaid ning nende meeleolu mõjutavad. Tõsiküll, vastavalt küsitluse tulemustele selgus, et ka kõigil teistel elementidel on tarbija teeninduskogemuse loomisel oma roll. On oluline lisada, et kuigi võib osutada suureks väljakutseks arendada ja luua ideaalset teeninduskeskkonda, mis rahuldaks kõiki tarbijaid, on tarbijate eelistused siiski tugevalt seotud kogu sihtturu eelistustega. Ettevõtte füüsilise keskkonna paremaks kohandamiseks kliendi vajadustega peaks juhatus suurima sihtrühma soovidega arvestama.

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