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**TOURISM PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT FOR RURAL
WELLBEING IN SERBIA**

Master's Thesis

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INTRODUCTION

Tourism, as an ever-growing modern industry highly susceptible to changes in demand, has recently become a boiling point of talks concerning health, wellness, and wellbeing as the most recent tourism products in trend. Due to the on-going changes in tourism demand, its needs and expectations, new forms of tourism have emerged rapidly in the market at the end of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st century (Štetić & Šimičević, 2008, p. 20). In the light of these events, it is essential to respect the patterns of global tourism development and apply it on national scale, through national product development based on the most recent global tourism trends.

Tourism concerned with concepts of health, wellness and wellbeing appeared as a result of new modes of lifestyle, healthcare and the holistic approach to improving the unity of physical, emotional and spiritual wellbeing of a person (Romão, Machino, & Nijkamp, 2018, p. 734). Rural tourism, such form of tourism typically related to areas outside of dense urban areas and city centers is often associated or identified with nature tourism and travelling in nature (Pesonen & Komppula, 2010, p. 150). Not only that in this way rural tourism represents an alternative to mass market tourism, but also its main product is tightly connected with nature end environment as a basic resource of a rural destination (Štetić & Šimičević, 2008, p. 20). In several countries in Europe, wellness and wellbeing establishments are in rural environments, places often observed as essentials for health enhancement, relaxation, and overall improvement of one's wellbeing. Moreover, apart from wellbeing being tightly connected with nature, it has also found its linkages with "inner and outer beauty therapy, massage, spas, sauna, relaxation, energy balancing, art, music and diverse treatments" (Sheldon & Bushell, as cited in Pesonen & Komppula, 2010, p. 150).

These two market trends (i.e. wellbeing and rural tourism) represent a significant opportunity for developing a combined tourism product based on wellbeing concept offered in a rural environment, where all the relevant resources (e.g. nature, authenticity,

spa services) aimed at improving individual wellbeing could be strategically exploited for that purpose. With many baths and mineral springs located in rural areas, the possibilities of developing such tourism product in Serbia are significant. Not only that Serbia possesses the necessary resource basis for development of rural wellbeing product, but this model would also be based on the main global tourism trends and tendencies beforementioned. This opportunity has been also recognized by Vuković, G. Čavlin and M. Čavlin (2015, p. 260) who argue that Serbia has both good basis of rural tourism and a good basis for the development of thermal baths, spa and wellness tourism which can be used for the creation of an integrated tourism product.

Despite the tourism resources the country possesses, there is still a quite substantial lack of competitiveness in the international tourism market. Major shortcomings of Serbia's competitive tourism position are inadequate development and commercialization of tourism products (Ilić, Ivanov, & Stefanović, 2017, p. 162), and lack of potential tourism products' valorization (Ubavić, 2016, p. 109). Developing a new product which combines significant global tourism trends and undertaking proper valorization may positively increase Serbia's tourism offer and differentiate the country's image in the tourism market. Rural tourism with emphasis on thermal baths has even been recognized as a development opportunity in diverse development strategic documents by the Serbian Government and the Ministry of Tourism (Vuković et al., 2015, p. 259). Therefore, the successful new tourism product might receive highly beneficial acknowledgement and support of both Government and Ministry for further development. Moreover, due to limited studies based on complementary development of rural and wellbeing tourism in Serbia it is of essential importance to explore this topic more in depth. There have been talks about the possible complementarity of rural and spa tourism (Vuković et al., 2015), however there is also a clear lack of researches conducted related to motivational aspects and wellbeing resource attributes which would attract tourist to participate in this form of tourism in Serbia.

Based on the abovementioned reasoning, the main goal of the Master Thesis is to assess the potential of implementing wellbeing concept in rural environment in Serbia in order to make recommendations for the tourism managers and other decision-makers of the for

raising the country's competitiveness in the tourism market. According to the thesis goal the following research questions have been set:

- What kind of wellbeing-related motivations do tourists in Serbia have?
- What are the rural-specific attributes customers expect to experience in the context of improving their wellbeing?

As beforementioned, Serbia has the necessary resource base for creating a complementary rural wellbeing tourism product, however this area in general, along with customer wellbeing motivations and opinion on the rural attributes important for improving wellbeing is neglected. Based on the main aim of this research paper, the following tasks are set:

- To provide an overview of theoretical literature on wellbeing motivations and rural tourism resources tightly connected to wellbeing;
- To measure the importance of customers' certain motifs for taking on a wellbeing holiday;
- To measure the relevance of rural-specific attributes for tourism customers in the context of improving wellbeing;
- To provide recommendations according to research results.

Wöhler as cited in Schalber, Zehrer and Schobersberger (2011, p. 16) suggests that innovation is essential to rise competitiveness in destinations. This Master Thesis will present the possibility of creating a new tourism product to achieve favorable competitive position of Serbia in the tourism market. Furthermore, main challenges for developing rural wellbeing product will be presented and the author will give suggestions for dealing and mitigating them to reach the set goal. The thesis comprises four main chapters. The first chapter will provide a literature overview of the topic. Here, the author will go through the existing theory on wellbeing tourism, motivations of wellbeing tourists and attributes of a wellbeing destination. Furthermore, the connections between wellbeing tourism and rural environment will be presented and a theoretical approach to development of a new tourism product explained. The second chapter represents the research itself, explanation of research method used, data collection and data analysis. Finally, the author delves into discussion, recommendations, and conclusions of the topic.

1. THEORETICAL APPROACH TO RURAL WELLBEING

1.1. Conceptualization of wellbeing tourism

Wellbeing and wellness terms nowadays have a widespread use, both in everyday communication and in literature. Health and wellbeing topics have attracted interest of various fields' scholars as these two have become important motives for modern consumption (Grénman & Räikkönen, 2015, p. 8). This is due to people's rising awareness of the importance of health and willingness to accept responsibility for improving their wellbeing (Grénman & Räikkönen, 2015, p. 9). Modern, hectic way of living urges people to take control of their lives and start consistently improving their health and wellbeing. Thanks to the nowadays abundancy of such products and services aimed at refining the way of living, and rising demand, it is no wonder that wellness industry grows so rapidly. Hence, this devotion for improving health and wellbeing is what drives the demand for tourism offers of certain wellness categories (Hjalager et al., 2011, p. 17). This rise of demand for wellbeing and wellness services appeared because of "work-obsessed, time-pressured, materialistic and over-individualistic societies" (Smith & Puczkó, 2009, p. 61). Therefore, due to hectic way of living, people are in search of balance, and wellbeing and wellness services can provide this balance (Konu & Laukkanen, 2009, p. 2).

Wellbeing and wellness, two terms occurring in literature, mostly are used interchangeably, however, without a clear definition which can distinct them (Hjalager et al., 2011, p. 9). In addition, different countries use different words to describe such terms depending on different factors. "Thermal baths tourism" (or hot springs tourism) is the closest way to translate the Serbian term "banjski turizam", which derives from the word "banja" (Vuković et al., 2015, p. 262). The banja are places with great conditions for treating acute or chronic diseases and they almost always imply thermal baths, mineral waters, and mud (Vuković et al., 2015, p. 262). Due to many different expressions,

definitions and confusion that can occur because of it, some authors, such as Ungureanu and Tešić (as cited in Vuković et al., 2015, p. 262) have begun using new term – “balneary tourism”, although this term focuses mostly on treating tourists only with water in order to improve their health. Not to forget that due to improvement of quality and development of services in Serbian spas, the original term of thermal bath tourism was enlarged to now include wellness and spa tourism (Vuković et al., 2015, p. 262). Similarly, old Roman term “thermae” has now been replaced with wellness, with basic idea that people nowadays do not need to use water only for treating illnesses, but for improving their overall health (Vuković et al., 2015, p. 263). Spas and spa tourism are one of the best known wellness forms which can be defined as “tourism which focuses on the relaxation or healing of the body using mainly water-based treatments; such as, mineral or thermal pools, steam rooms; and saunas. Emphasis tends to be focused on curing, rehabilitating, or resting the body” (Smith & Puczkó, 2009, p. 85). However, spa visitors may have much broadened motives for visits than just relaxation and healing. They do not anticipate only wellbeing services, but a possibility to socialize and create new experiences with family members and companions (Dimitrovski & Todorović, 2015, p. 260).

There is a plethora of studies following various approaches aiming to define concepts of wellness, wellbeing, and health, and yet the terms are still difficult to differ from the theoretical point of view. The wellness concepts’ history can be found in different contexts – medicinal, spiritual, religious, with accent on healing and therapy (Voigt & Pforr, as cited in Pyke, Hartwell, Blake & Hemingway, 2016, p. 96). “Wellness is clearly a complex concept, incorporating elements of lifestyle, physical, mental, and spiritual wellbeing, and one’s relationship to oneself, others and environment” (Smith & Puczkó, 2009, p. 54). Furthermore, it can be said that “wellness” represents a plethora of concrete products and services, whereas complete state of mind is defined within the term “wellbeing” (Smith & Puczkó, 2009, p. 9). Wellness tourism has been identified as a type of tourism existing in various forms with an important distinctiveness of enhancing health and wellbeing better than other types of tourism (Deesilatham & Hosany, 2016, p. 1). In addition, Smith and Puczkó (2009, p. 80) differ internal and external factors affecting the development of wellness, where external factors are related to medicine, therapy, healing, psychology, and their general growth in development. Internal factors address people’s motives and needs (search for community, spirituality, curiosity etc.). Interlinkages

between wellness, wellbeing and health are indisputable, and the products, services and establishments aimed at providing them are varied and numerous. However, the wellness form of choice will depend on tourists' needs, motivations and interests, based on which they have a chance to select different types:

physical with a focus on sports and fitness; medical with a focus on the treatment of disease or surgery; mental or psychological with a focus on life-coaching or mind-control; relaxing and pampering in a luxury spa; entertaining and recreational in a purpose-built water park; or meditational and spiritual in a retreat (Smith & Puczkó, p. 84).

Moreover, wellness tourism has numerous main motives: holistic health, higher awareness of individual health, hectic life, individualism, spirituality etc. (Voigt & Pforr, as cited in Hartwell et al., 2018, p. 1837). All of this indicates wellness tourism is distancing from the notion of mass tourism, focusing on individual approach and smaller-scale travels, aiming to improve individual's health and overall state of wellbeing. In their research of progress in tourism and wellbeing destinations, Hartwell et al. (2018) have emphasized the general importance of both developing and engaging in a tourism destination based on a eudaimonic well-being instead of "hedonistic" mass tourism which can lead to many negative impacts on not only destination's image but also on a relationship between local residents and tourists (Hartwell et al., 2018, p. 1839).

Wellbeing is defined as follows: "Wellbeing is a multidimensional state of being describing the existence of positive health of body, mind and soul. Wellbeing is an individual issue, but it manifests only in congruence with the wellbeing of the surrounding environment and community." (Hjalager et al., 2011, p. 10). In addition, wellbeing is said to be tightly linked to happiness, as "a momentary state of pleasant emotion" (Ed & Diener, as cited in Piuchan & Suntikul, 2016, p. 5). The concept of 'authentic happiness' was proposed as the most suitable to understand the ways tourists benefit from their holiday experiences (Hartwell et al., 2018, p. 1838). The authors added that this concept comprises emotions, engagement and a sense of meaning as key components to making a fulfilling tourist experience, focusing on "a search for self and identity, self-empowerment and connectedness with others" (Hartwell et al., 2018, p. 1838). Moreover, it is believed that happiness positively contributes to both quality of life and wellbeing

and has inspired a shift from objective (materialistic) approach to wellbeing towards more of a subjective (psychological) approach (Piuchan & Suntikul, 2016, p. 6). These two approaches are distinct dimensions which conceptualize “human wellbeing” (Alatartseva & Barysheva, 2015, p. 37). As Hartwell et al. (2018, p. 1837) explain, objective wellbeing relates to satisfaction of materialistic desires, whilst subjective wellbeing is much more complex and relates to self-assessment of satisfaction, goal achievements and expectations.

Furthermore, Grénman and Rääkkönen (2015, p. 16) argue that terms wellness and wellbeing are similar, as both incorporate physical, mental, and social wellbeing combined with external effects, but they do have differences. The authors explain that wellbeing is more related to relaxation, nature, indulgence, subjective wellbeing, and abstract aspects (e.g. freedom), whilst wellness is more related to hedonistic consumption, five-star settings, luxury, high quality, pampering and so on (Grénman and Rääkkönen, 2015, p. 16). Luxury usually mean “uniqueness, excellence, sensuality, superior quality, and higher price”, it depends on subjective customers’ perceptions and can be understood differently in different cultures (Park & Reisinger, as cited in Pesonen & Komppula, 2010, p. 151). Therefore, wellbeing tourism would in that sense appear to be closer to the notion of subjective feelings, enhancement of happiness and life satisfaction and does not necessarily relate to travelling to luxurious places and five-star hotels as wellness concept suggests.

Over the course of last decade, wellbeing related tourism has gained more holistic notion which emphasizes both psychological and emotional aspect (Hartwell et al., 2018, p. 1832). Aside from sustaining good state of body, mind and soul, the purpose of health, wellness and wellbeing tourism often represent the experience of “pleasure, indulgence and luxury” (Hjalager et al., 2011, p. 10). Smith & Puczko (2009, p. 9) furthermore explain that wellbeing relates to people’s everyday satisfaction and happiness and argue that these can be improved simply by escaping from routine, planning and anticipating a trip and by periods of rest and relaxation.

Wellbeing can also represent “a connection with community or nature, inner and outer beauty therapy, massage, spas, sauna, relaxation, energy balancing, art, music and various

diverse treatments“ (Sheldon & Bushell, as cited in Pesonen & Komppula, 2010, p. 150). Moreover, Smith & Puczko (2009, p. 42) have acknowledged the importance of travel for enhancing wellbeing and its contribution to all aspects of health – physical, mental, social, and intellectual (Smith & Puczko, 2009 p. 40). Tourism and travelling can contribute to individual wellbeing through “reenergizing one’s life” (Tuo et al., as cited in Piuchan & Suntikul, 2016, p. 7) which ultimately can lead to happiness. As remarked by McCabe et al. (as cited in Piuchan & Suntikul, 2016, p. 6) in their study on wellbeing in social tourism, vacations can have a positive impact on people who travel rarely due to lack of financial stability. Moreover, the authors have concluded that travelling enhances emotional wellbeing and higher levels of perceived wellbeing after a holiday (McCabe et al., as cited in Piuchan & Suntikul, 2016, p. 6).

It is inarguable that connection between wellbeing and tourism exists and that this type of tourism has a growing number of tourism participants. The growth of wellness and health tourism goes has already been noticed and characterized with a considerable potential in the future (Hjalager et al., 2011, p. 9). As the same authors furthermore argue, health and wellbeing have a wide perspective for development and success and wide range of institutions and private enterprises consider them as a perspective business opportunity (Hjalager et al., 2011, p. 9). It is essential to mention economic benefits of developing wellbeing tourism concept. As tourism industry positively affects business and sustainable growth, developing a tourist destination on wellbeing principles would cause a rise in tourism travel and inevitably positive economic benefits (Pyke et al., 2016, p. 95). However, to create a successful new tourism product, it is important to investigate country’s specific resources, potential customers, and their underlying motivations in participating in this travel type. Following the theoretical framework of researchers most relevant to the topic of this Master thesis and taking into account the positive case studies of countries already involved in such product development will help investigate the possibilities of creating a new wellbeing tourism related concept in Serbia.

1.2. Motivations of a wellbeing tourist and attributes of a wellbeing destination

“Motivations are inner drives that cause people to take action to satisfy their needs” (Hudson, as cited in Težak Damijanić & Šergo, 2013, p. 4). With regards to travel-specific motivations, it is important to emphasize a typology suggested by Crompton (as cited in Konu & Laukkanen, 2009, p. 3) which depicts a push and pull model emphasizing two forces affecting tourist’s choice of travel destination. Push factors are the ones pushing tourists away from their home and pull factors are those pulling them towards a destination. Push factors which have the most effect on behavioral intentions are said to be the ones such as “excitement, relaxations, achievements, family time, escape, safety and curiosity” (Yoon & Uysal, as cited in Konu & Laukkanen, 2009, p. 3). On the other hand, pull factors are destination’s attributes which can be divided into three groups (Lubbe, 2003, p. 34)

- primary pull factors e.g. scenery, cities, climate, wildlife, historical and local cultural attractions;
- secondary pull factors e.g. accommodation, catering, entertainment, sports;
- tertiary pull factors e.g. marketing, prices.

Therefore, push and pull factors explain how tourism consumers are motivated by inner factors to travel and how a destination with its resources (attributes) attracts them to visit. The same approach can be applied in order to explore motivations of a wellbeing tourist, to depict what are the subjective motives for taking on a wellbeing vacation and what are the wellbeing-specific attributes of a destination pulling the tourist towards it. Wellness tourism, being such a dynamic and growing concept requires continuous researches about needs and motivations of tourism participants. Wellness-wise, a destination is often a place in which one can achieve self-exploration in a stress-free environment (Smith & Kelly, as cited in Pesonen & Komppula, 2010, p. 152–153). Driven by different motivation, tourists take on a different sort of holidays. Tourists searching for an escape and relaxation might travel to seaside, mountains, or spas, and those with psychological motivations might rather be interested in holistic resorts where they can focus on self-development. According to Smith and Puczko (2009, p. 134–135), wellness consumers mostly appear to be women due to their interest in physical appearance, partly influenced

by media and expectations imposed by modern society. Dimitrovski & Todorović (2015, p. 260), explain that majority of spa tourism participants are female, married and over 50 years of age. However, as the same authors further suggest, constant growth of males demanding wellness services should not be neglected as the wellness offer to this specific segment is constantly on the rise as well (Dimitrovski & Todorović, 2015, p. 260).

However, there are only few studies concentrating on exploring motivations and profiles of wellbeing tourists, as most of the existing studies relate to sub-sections, such as spa tourists (Mak, Wong, & Chang, 2009), yoga tourists (Lehto, as cited in Konu & Laukkanen, 2009, p. 2), spiritual tourists (Smith & Puczko, 2009), holistic tourists (Rocha, Seabra, Silva, & Abrantes, 2016). In this section of the Thesis, the author will investigate existing literature findings related to wellbeing motivations and attributes of a wellbeing destination (for summary, see Appendix 3 and 4).

The turn of the 21st century has brought a social change in the Western world, where people have become more concerned about taking care of their wellbeing and from these changes important wellness motifs arose (Árpási, 2018, p. 88), such as, relaxation from stress, life balance, meaningful life, beauty and self-competence. Moreover, in the research of wellness tourism and the customer motivations, Árpási (2018, p. 90) acknowledged that most important motivational factor on the case of Budapest is the opportunity to relax and the enjoyment of indulgence. As the author further explains, this finding supports the trend of individualism and the customer's focus on himself/herself and his/her own balance and harmony (Árpási, 2018, p. 91).

One direct research on motivations and characteristics of spa and wellness tourism participants lies in the work of Mak, Wong and Chang (2009). They have investigated the motives of Hongkong spa-goers to visit spas based on a focus group and theoretical overview. Their research results suggested several main motivational factors: "relaxation and relief", "escape", "self-reward and indulgence", "health and beauty" (Mak et al., 2009, p. 187). According to their results, "relaxation and relief" proved most important motivational factors. Once again, relaxation shows up as the crucial driving factor, mainly due to people's perception of spas as places mainly aimed at relaxation, but also due to

relaxation and relief being the basic, most important physiological needs, according to Maslow's hierarchy of needs (as cited in Mak et al., 2009, p. 193).

Moreover, benefits sought by spa-goers were defined in a research conducted by Koh, Yoo, & Boeger Jr (2010). The purpose of the paper was "to fill the research gap by identifying different market segments among spa goers, based on a set of benefit variables" (Koh et al., 2010, p. 718). Four main benefits discovered were socializing, relaxation, health, and rejuvenation. "The social factor illustrated the desire to share a special, pleasant experience with family and friends while relaxing and meeting other health-conscious people in a spa setting" (Koh et al., 2010, p. 726). Health factor focused on improving both mental and physical health, and lastly, rejuvenating factor equated experiences that renew spirit.

Another study has revealed similar conclusion about spa-goer's motivations. Dimitrovski and Todorović (2015) explored motivational factors of Vrnjačka banja's visitors, currently most popular and most visited spa town in Serbia. The results showed there are six dimensions of motivation among wellness tourists: rejuvenating, socialization, excitement, hedonism, obsession with health and beauty, relaxation, and escape (Dimitrovski & Todorović, 2015, p. 262). Mean values indicated socialization and excitement, and relaxation as primary motifs of wellness tourists, consistent with mentioned studies (Koh et al., 2010; Mak et al., 2009). Therefore, the results specific for the context of Serbian spa tourism are like the results explored in the North American and Asian context, so they can be partly generalized, although not entirely, due to different nationalities involved. In addition to this, Taiwanese wellness tourists have stated relaxation, recreation and experiencing nature as the most popular motivators, according to Chen and Prebensen's study in three Taiwanese wellness resorts (as cited in Pesonen & Komppula, 2010, p. 152). As a result, internal motivations of wellbeing tourism seem to be similar in different parts of the world.

In their research on roles and motivational factors in predicting tourists' intention to take on wellbeing holidays, Konu and Laukkanen (2009) have explored this matter on the case of Finland and have come to a conclusion that visitors who are interested in physical activities, getting in better shape and improving their health are eager to go on a wellbeing

holiday (Konu & Laukkanen, 2009, p. 1). This was explained by three major motivation factors: “Health and physical activity”, “Self-development”, and “Relaxation and escape” (Konu & Laukkanen, 2009, p. 6). In addition, the Konu and Laukkanen added that:

the number of annual trips, the importance of waterparks and/or spas, the importance of natural sights and of ease of access to the destination as well as the importance of motivations such as recreation, experiencing fashionable/trendy places and aesthetic experiences increase the interest of tourists in taking a wellbeing holiday (as cited in Pesonen, Laukkanen, & Komppula, 2011, p. 308).

On the other hand, Pesonen et al. (2011, p. 303) focused their study on benefits based on destination specific pull factors. In their case country Finland, they acknowledged two main segments: “Sightseers” and “Culturals” where the first segment represents those most intrigued by history and attractions, and the second depicts those more increasingly inspired by culture and appropriateness of the surroundings for children and pets (Pesonen et al., 2011, p. 311).

Pesonen and Komppula (2010, p. 150), in their empirical study of rural wellbeing tourism in the context of motivations and expectations of customers have studied the possibilities to distinguish a special wellbeing segment among rural tourism customers in Finland. The results of the study have shown that main motivations of rural wellbeing tourists are “relaxing away from the ordinary, escape from a busy everyday life, hassle-free vacation, getting refreshed, having a sense of comfort and having an opportunity for physical rest” (Pesonen & Komppula, 2010, p. 154). The authors drew one end from this examination: calm, natural countryside areas of beautiful scenery provide a perfect wellbeing holiday surroundings offering relaxation and peace but excluding any material luxurious components (Pesonen & Komppula, 2010, p. 156). Similar to this, a study undertaken to explain Finnish specific tourism product – Lake Wellness has discovered main components of this product: “activities of spirit and mind, and self-development; health promoting services; healthy cuisine; accommodation; treatments and services of inner and external beauty; activities aimed at relaxation and comfort; and tailormade movement/fitness services” (Konu, Tuohino, & Komppula, 2010, p. 136).

According to Pesonen's (2012, p. 69–70) study on rural tourists' segmentation, rural tourists' motifs usually are to learn and investigate cultures, take part in outdoor activities, and find peace and seclusion. Moreover, what attracts rural tourists the most, are outdoor activities and hassle-free environments (Pesonen, 2012, p. 70). In this study, Finnish rural tourism was investigated and the results have shown several distinct rural tourist types based on their motivations: "Social Travelers" (who value social interaction with local people, hosts and other travelers), "Wellbeing Travelers" (who value quiet, calm and passive rural holiday with good opportunities to spend time in nature), "Family Travelers" (who want to have memorable experiences with their family) and "Home Region Travelers" who choose their destination based on where their family comes from (Pesonen, 2012, p. 80–81). Another Finnish study (Pesonen & Tuohino, 2017, p. 414) gave a closer insight at rural wellbeing tourist segment from activity point of view where the most intriguing rural wellbeing activities discovered were walking in the nature and outdoor sports, followed by pampering services such as treatments and spa. Finland gave a good example of wellbeing tourism product in Savonlinna, a region abundant of lakes, calm rural landscape, activities in nature and cultural experiences in form of events and festivals (Pesonen et al., 2011, p. 307). This is just one of the examples of good practice in developing wellbeing tourism products which helps to understand how to approach with creating a new wellbeing product in Serbia. Evidently, natural environment and countryside resources combined with cultural experiences and events are a good base for developing such product.

1.3. Wellbeing tourism in relations with rural environment

"Rural" can be understood in different ways and approached from different perspectives. In this Master Thesis, rural will be considered in the notion of rural environment, opposite of urban areas (Hjalager et al., 2015, p. 17), mainly remote countryside as the essential location for rural tourism activities. What is common with most of the definitions of wellbeing is the importance of surrounding environment. Some authors have understood the important connection between an individual and the environment, stating that wellbeing can be identified as a coherence of healthy body, mind, and spirit in correspondence with surrounding environment (Hjalager & Flagestad, 2012, p. 726). One of the works on wellbeing by Ryff (2014, p. 11), suggests the essential aspects of

wellbeing: autonomy, environmental mastery; positive relationships with others; purpose in life; realization of potential and self-acceptance. Active engagement with environment has been distinctly elucidated as one of the most effective strategies for improving human wellbeing (Little, 2015, p. 127) threefold: mental wellbeing (nature as restorative), physical wellbeing (walkable landscape) and social wellbeing (landscape as bonding structure), according to Abraham, Sommerhalder and Abel (2010, p. 62–63). The restorative potential of natural landscapes was also indicated in an experimental study by Berto (as cited in Abraham et al., 2010, p. 63) in which perceiving pictures of natural landscapes had restorative impact on mental tiredness of students. Finally, the authors concluded that landscape represent the key in promoting activities with positive improvement of physical, mental and social impact, by providing natural environment, outdoor activities, recovery from stress, positive feelings and so on (Abraham et al., 2010, p. 65).

Clearly, presence of nearby nature, either purposeful or incidental, has a fundamental influence in human health and wellbeing (Pretty et al., as cited in Bragg, Wood, Barton, & Pretty, 2015, p. 14). As natural environment is an essential part of wellbeing enhancement and wellbeing experiences (Pesonen & Komppula, 2010, p. 150), several countries have developed their nature-specific wellbeing tourism products – Alpine Wellness (Austria), Lake Wellness (Finland), Nordic Wellbeing (Finland, Denmark, Iceland, Norway and Sweden). For the purposes of this Master Thesis, rural wellbeing concept is being investigated in the context of Serbia, country abundant of rural and spa-related resources. Although there has been clear lack of studies on rural wellbeing topic, Hjalager et al. (2015) have summarized the definition by stating that:

Rural wellbeing tourism is a form of tourism that takes place in rural settings and that interconnects actively with local nature and community resources. Based on the rural tangible and intangible, openly accessible and commercial ingredients, wellbeing tourism is holistic mode of travel that integrates physical and mental wellness and health and contributes to wider positive social and individual life experiences (p. 14).

Many authors have acknowledged the positive impact of tourism and travel on human wellbeing (Smith & Puczko, 2009; Tuo et al., as cited in Piuchan & Suntikul, 2016, p. 5).

The sole anticipation of the trip and the experience on the trip itself clearly have a strong effect on satisfaction and self-indulgence of a person. Particularly, short nature-breaks have the holistic impact on “fixing” the body, spirit and mind of people living a hectic, fast-paced life (Farkić & Taylor, 2019, p. 2). The importance of nature for wellbeing was emphasized by different authors. Vikman (as cited in Komppula, Konu, & Vikman, 2017, p. 120) argues that nature is a place where one can relax surrounded by calming sounds, and place of calm and relaxing atmosphere people are in search for when spending time in natural areas. Similarly, forest based wellbeing tourism represents a type of tourism taking place in or in near vicinity of forest environment, including forests’ natural attributes, physical or relaxing activities, and learning activities related to how to use these natural attributes for wellbeing (Konu, 2015, p. 100).

It can be said that rural areas are mostly located in natural surroundings, far away from urban zones and are most likely to be set within a forest landscape, further or closer away from it. Forests have beneficial effects on the physical, mental health and wellbeing in general (Park et al., as cited in Komppula et al., 2017, p. 121) and these forest areas can relieve stress, help with relaxation and improve positive emotions (Lee et al., as cited in Komppula et al., 2017, p. 121). It is inarguable that being in nature and engaging in activities in natural surroundings has positive impact on health, happiness, and relaxation. Therefore, wellbeing tourism is inevitably evolving due to people’s search for calm and quietness, both comprehended as a favorable option in contrast to modern urban tempo. Importance of green areas and natural environment has already been recognized in Finland (Tyrväinen et al., as cited in Komppula et al., 2017, p. 121). Some authors have even acknowledged the importance of protected areas for health and wellbeing and the possible connection between them has been discussed (Azara et al., as cited in Farkić & Taylor, 2019, p. 2). This corroborates with the fact that in protected areas, most common tourism types are currently rural and ecotourism, with emphasized need of involving health tourism as well (Armatiene et al., cited in Đorđević, Lakićević, & Milićević, 2018, p. 55). Therefore, due to this recognition of need to develop health tourism within protected areas and parks, basis for developing wellbeing concept in such areas in Serbia is already of great potential. In addition, Serbia already has a rich resource base for such development, being a country of five national parks, with different areas of protection.

Maller et al. (2009, p. 57) have made obvious that parks play an important role in saving, keeping up and advancing human health and wellbeing and should not be underestimated. The authors (Maller et al., 2009, p. 57) summarized in their report five most important health benefits of parks, as shown in the Table 1 below.

Component of health	Contribution of parks
Physical	Provide a variety of settings and infrastructure for various levels of formal and informal sport and recreation, for all skill levels and abilities, e.g., picnicking, walking, dog training, running, cycling, ball games, sailing, surfing, photography, birdwatching, bushwalking, rock climbing, camping
Mental	Make nature available for restoration from mental fatigue; solitude and quiet; artistic inspiration and expression; educational development (e.g., natural, and cultural history)
Spiritual	Preserve the natural environment for contemplation, reflection, and inspiration; invoke a sense of place; facilitate feeling a connection to something beyond human concerns
Social	Provide settings for people to enhance their social networks and personal relationships from couples and families, to social clubs and organizations of all sizes, from casual picnicking to events days and festivals
Environmental	Preserve ecosystems and biodiversity, provide clean air and water, maintain ecosystem function, and foster human involvement in the natural environment (friends of parks groups, etc.)

Table 1. Health benefits of parks to human health and wellbeing. Source: Maller et al., 2009, p. 57

Table 1 features five most important ways parks contribute human health and wellbeing. Maller et al. (2009, p. 57) clearly suggest parks can benefit human health from five perspectives: physical, mental, spiritual, social, and environmental. All these factors give various contributions, offering different activities in the nature (e.g., walking, picnicking, birdwatching), preserving the clean air and ecosystems and so on. As a result, it is obvious that natural environment offers a holistic approach to enhancing human health and wellbeing. Moreover, Frash Jr, Blose, Norman, & Patience (2016, p. 84) found that visiting parks can satisfy human need for happiness and their study proved that park visitors were content during their visit and even more content at the end of it. As Smith

and Csurgó (2018) suggest, parks and protected areas contribute both to the conservation of biodiversity and provide an attractive resource for improving health and human wellbeing. Nowadays, wellbeing tourists' needs and motives for travelling are growing beyond just relaxation and escapism from daily routine, which is why wellness businesses are working towards expanding their services and products to offer "body and mind" experiences (Hjalager et al., 2015, p. 23). The new trend of "holistic wellbeing" was recognized by Hjalager et al., (2015, p. 23–24) and rural settings were mentioned as an optimistic location due to possibilities to reconnect with nature, organize trekking, riding and other physical activities which improve both body's and mind's health. Some authors acknowledged food as a nature's resource favorable for uplifting wellbeing dimension in rural tourism (Hjalager et al., 2015, p. 24). Locally produced healthy food, authentic for the region can inevitably serve as an emphasizing factor for both rural tourism's attractiveness and for visitors' individual wellbeing and health.

Rural tourism is defined as a tourism which offers a "rural environment" for the visitor, with a combination of natural, cultural and social experiences with a clear rural character (Erdeji, Gacić, Jovičić, & Medić, 2013, p. 310). As the same authors furthermore argue, rural tourism is also based on principles of sustainable development and comprises countryside settings, nature, and the tradition, hospitality, and general values of the local population. The authors have used survey in this quantitative study to investigate rural tourists' preferences and needs in the context of rural tourism. The results have shown that the main reason to visit rural areas in Serbia are natural settings (50%), relaxation, culture, food, and events (Erdeji et al., 2013, p. 314). These findings are congruent with beforementioned motivation factors of wellbeing tourists discovered within different nationalities, including Serbia. It seems that one of the main reasons of taking on a both wellbeing and rural holiday is almost always unmistakably related to relaxation.

According to Garrod, Wornell and Youell (2006, p. 119), one of the most important constituent elements of countryside capital are: landscape (including seascape), wildlife, biodiversity, geology and soils, air and air quality, hedgerows and field boundaries, agricultural buildings, rural settlements, water and water quality, stream, rivers, ponds, and distinctive languages, customs, costumes, foods, crafts, festivals and so on. In a wider sense, according to Aref and Gill (2009, p. 68), rural tourism refers to a kind of tourism

which supplies visitors personalized contact with both physical and human environment of countryside and allows them to participate in various activities, traditions and lifestyle of the local residents. Urban residents in this sense can be observed as rural tourists who have similar motives as wellbeing tourists: “they seek relaxation, escape from busy jobs, peace and quiet, sports, and healthy gastronomy” (Pesonen & Komppula, 2010, p. 151).

There are a several studies defining what motivates the traveler to go on a rural holiday in different country markets. In Korea, rural tourism is a diverse sector with a wide range of tourists’ needs and expectation that Park and Yoon (2009, p. 100) have investigated. Once more, relaxation seemed to be the fundamental persuasive factor among rural tourists, consisting of, for example: refreshing one-self, escaping busy work, hassle-free relaxation away from the conventional and remaining physically active. There were four main tourist segments suggested based on the findings: “family togetherness”, “passive tourists”, “want it all” and “learning and excitement” (Park & Yoon, 2009, p. 106). The first segment was the one most likely to engage into a relaxing holiday in nature with visits to recreational and historic sites (Park & Yoon, 2009, p. 104).

Some of the most important rural tourism motives as seen by Botezatu (2014, p. 49) are related to being close to nature, in a quiet, “not mechanized” environment, with close contact with local people, knowing local business and integrating with the community. Tourist motivation and preferred activities in rural areas were researched by Demirović, Berjan, Milentijevic, El Bilali and Syromiatnikova (2019, p. 29) who identified the motivation factors that push tourists to rural area of Vojvodina Province, Northern Serbia and the activities that tourists prefer on the destination. The findings suggested three tourist segments based on their primary motivations: “Poetic tourists”, who prefer peaceful and beautiful natural settings; “No-hassle tourists”, who search relaxation and simplicity for their holiday in rural areas and are looking for a chance to enjoy activities with their whole family; and “Cultural explorers”, who see rural areas as a way to discover and be a part of the local culture, people, and settings (Demirović et al., 2019, p. 33–34). In addition, the results indicated the possibility to experience and gain knowledge of different cultures, history, and way of life and the possibility to relax and enjoy a feeling of freedom as important motivational factors of rural tourists.

Moreover, outcome of an Iranian study of motivation-based market segmentation in rural tourism suggested eight primary motivations among rural tourists: “Space and environment”, “Buying local products”, “Rurality and learning”, “Outdoor recreation”, “Escape and relax”, “Social and place attachment”, “Second homes and spirituality” and lastly, “Peace and tranquility” (Bayat et al. 2019, p. 8). Out of these eight motives, largest proportion of the total variance belonged to Space and environment category, however, descriptive statistics showed that the highest motivation for rural tourists is Escape and relax. The latter of the two included motivations such as “Break away from the daily routine”, “Escape from overcrowded and stressful urban life” and “Enjoy family leisure in a pleasant natural atmosphere” (Bayat et al. 2019, p. 8). Rural areas are deemed to be “old fashioned” and “authentic” and as such help people distance themselves both from daily routine and time (Hjalager et al., 2015, p. 53). Rural settings are a perfect environment to move away from daily schedules, inconveniences, and burdens, and simply enjoy local, traditional way of life, far from the crowded areas one urban citizen is used to.

Most essential rural wellbeing tourism resources are “climatic and weather peculiarities, rural flora, rural fauna, geologies, remoteness and distance, the urge for mobility, connectivity between earth and water, cultural landscapes and rural traditions” (Hjalager et al., 2015, p. 49). According to the same authors, adding an “outdoor element” to destinations which are focused only on spas can bring more diversity to the product. Moreover, as discussed before, locally produced food is of essential importance for creating wellbeing. These “superfoods” not only promote human wellbeing, but also define cultural identity of a location in which they are produced (Hjalager et al., 2015, p. 50). To some authors (Radović, Vasiljević, & Pejanović, 2017, p. 22), traditional products with geographical origin, produced locally in rural areas, might have a crucial effect both on hospitality sector, but also on souvenir sale. Serbia is a country of many products of that sort, ranging from dairy products, fruits to handcrafted textiles. Moreover, according to Hjalager et al. (2015, p. 51), wellbeing products may include rural fauna as well. The authors deem that these vary, from the sole animal presence, the sounds and smell they create, to different activities such as observing and interacting animals (birdwatching, horseback riding, taking care of animal) and so on.

Rural wellbeing studies are apparently yet in early stages and the most relevant findings are thanks to Finnish studies on rural tourist' motivations and wellbeing tourists as a rural tourism segment. Therefore, the studies presented in this theoretical overview and related essentially to the topic of this Master thesis will serve as a base for investigating rural wellbeing concept in case of Serbia.

1.4. Developing a new tourism product

One can say that a tourism product is a combination of elements (accommodations, transportation, attractions, events etc.) which are complimentary to each other and are intended to offer tourists experience at a destination (Podovac & Jovanović Tončev, 2015, p. 499). However, considering the necessity of defining tourism products from a tourist's point of view, Bakić (as cited in Podovac & Jovanović Tončev, 2015, p. 500) has proposed two basic forms of a tourism product:

- Partial tourism product, formed by tourism offer holders (hotels, transportation companies, tourist agencies, museum, galleries etc.) and placed on tourism market as their own products;
- Integral tourism product which is perceived and consumed by a tourist. It consists of various number of partial tourism products.

To create a tourism product, it is necessary to understand needs of tourist demand and offer experiences able to satisfy those needs, by consuming the product. According to Popesku (as cited in Podovac & Jovanović Tončev, 2015, p. 500) there are three main elements of a united tourism product:

- Destination attractiveness – combines natural and social resources and highly influences tourist's destination of choice;
- Conditions for a stay and services in the destination – food, accommodation, local transport, sport activities etc.
- Destination accessibility – implies destination's distance from tourist's place of permanent residence.

Therefore, tourism product development can be understood as combining all elements visitors come into contact with at a destination (infrastructure, service personnel, places

of lodging, attractions and activities, facilities and amenities) on the one hand, and as a combination of only those attractions, activities and facilities specifically offered to the visitors on the other (Geremew, Alemayehu, & Meskele, 2017, p. 2).

Nowadays, large number of people is travelling to improve health and wellbeing (Farkić & Taylor, 2019, p. 2), which is unmistakably raising a need for developing new wellbeing-related tourism products or redesigning the existing ones. Many countries have already acknowledged their national potential and exploited its wellbeing resources to develop unique tourism products (Pesonen & Komppula, 2010, p. 150). There is a potential to accomplish the same in Serbia, by investigating the possibilities of creating a rural wellbeing product. First task in the process is to understand tourist motivation to take on such a holiday and to discover rural-specific attributes which will attract wellbeing tourists.

The necessity of creating a new, integral tourism product in Serbia has been recognized by the authors Podovac and Jovanović Tončev (2015, p. 500). They acknowledged this is essential to satisfy the needs of a modern, sophisticated tourist who wishes to learn, experience new cultures, and spend his/her vacation actively (Podovac and Jovanović Tončev, 2015, p. 502). According to them, the basic motivation of contemporary tourist looking for an active holiday with a goal of reaching body and mind balance, should be enriched with cultural, religious and gastronomy tourism offer (Podovac and Jovanović Tončev, 2015, p. 502). Supporting this, OECD (as cited in Geremew et al., 2017, p. 2) has suggested that in the future it will be essential to create innovative and rewarding tourism experiences through product development instead of offering singular tourism elements.

Rural wellbeing destination attractiveness relies on a combination of natural (e.g. forests, mineral springs, clean air, rivers) and social resources (e.g. residents, culture, customs, tradition). The most suitable location-wise and authenticity-wise types of accommodation potentially could be ethno-houses, local farmsteads, and local resident's traditionally built houses for rent. As Pesonen and Komppula (2010, p. 151) have suggested, most common rural holiday is a holiday located in remote countryside, in a self-catering cottage, but also in accommodation in bed and breakfast establishments. According to the same

authors, the typical example is a “Finnish rural holiday, includes accommodation in a cottage, local food, sauna and some kind of nature activities such as swimming, rowing and walking in the forest” (Pesonen & Komppula, 2010, p. 150–151). Another example of a rural wellbeing destination is Byron Bay, in Australia (Wray et al., as cited in Piuchan & Suntikul, 2016, p. 8), offering a well-balanced combination of environment, cultural activities and alternative lifestyle and targeting people who are seeking a more peaceful life. Talking about the most important feature of a similar tourism product, WelDest research (as cited in Dvorak, Saari, & Tuominen, 2014, p. 28), has brought up several key elements of a health and wellbeing tourism destination:

- Nature and its assets;
- Local culture;
- Authenticity;
- Destination’s image.

Moreover, some authors suggest that health and wellbeing tourism destination needs to include a range of services aimed at improving health, wellbeing and relaxation: “wellness and medical treatments, sauna and pool facilities, outdoor/indoor sports and possibilities to get mentally refreshed” (Dvorak et al., 2014, p. 28). In addition, Fyall et al. (as cited in Piuchan & Suntikul, 2016, p. 8) have agreed that wellbeing can improve destination’s image by combining different health and wellness products. The tourism product creation needs to follow five key steps in the process (Masip, 2006, p. 6):

- Establishing existence of a motivation to travel;
- Defining resources and attractions as a destination’s foundation;
- Developing special activities and experiences in addition to infrastructure and amenities;
- Creation of destination’s image, positioning on the market and promotion;
- The consumption of tourism products in a destination.

This thesis will help give an answer to the first two key stages of tourism product development. It will define motivational aspects of rural wellbeing tourists and the most important rural resources and attractions in Serbia, shaping the basis of a potential future tourism product, later fully developed from the managerial side of destinations.

The process of developing a new tourism product has multiple benefits. More precisely, it improves profitability of tourism businesses through wider range of services and products, increased number of visits and spending by visitors (Geremew et al., 2017, p. 2). As aforementioned, tourism product development has not only a positive impact on development of a national economy but also the economy of residents involved in the tourism development. Due to rural wellbeing concept being created within rural areas, it gives a great opportunity for rural households to gain additional profit by selling food products made at their farms and participate actively in further tourism product's development. Not to mention that with adequate promotion and economic valorization of traditional products with legal marks of geographical origins can help develop rural tourism offers in general, as well as the local communities within rural areas (Radović et al., 2017, p. 13).

For a country to thrive in the international tourism market, it must precisely define the tourism product as well as the tourism destination. A tourist product and adequate destination must be also compatible with international standards and accompanied by well-organized marketing. Moreover, created tourism product needs to be supported by destination management companies and promoted in the correct way, targeted to the most suitable market. Marketing is one of the most valuable assets in tourism sector, much more important than production and sales (Geremew et al., 2017, p. 3). As one of the marketing tools, promotion is one of the strongest drivers for travel and according to Morrison (as cited in Pesonen et al., 2011, p. 311) good marketing means picking the segment most intrigued by certain services and pointing marketing programs at them. Creating value for a product is not an easy task for marketing experts, as products and services successfully adjusted to the tourists' expectations lead to their satisfaction (Maričić & Đorđević, as cited in Živković & Brdar, 2015, p. 129). Satisfying visitors is crucial for destination management as satisfied people show greater tendency to revisit the destination and influences the purchase behavior of tourists (Živković & Brdar, 2015, p. 129). Surely a destination with high created value, good marketing and high levels of service quality has a significant advantage in satisfying its visitors and in such way induce their revisit.

2. SERBIA AS A RURAL WELLBEING DESTINATION

2.1. Rural wellbeing tourism in Serbian context

Nowadays, in the times of stress, lack of quality activities and time, rural tourism is an adequate solution to escape from everyday life and provides relaxation and sense of freedom, which contrasts to the modern lifestyle in urban environment. With new demand for alternative, more environmentally engaging tourism forms, it is clear why so much attention is being paid to rural tourism. Rural areas, which were until recently underdeveloped and uninteresting for tourists are now in the center of attention. They are special places of exceptional landscape, traditional culture, and ethno-cultural diversity. One could say that the concept of rural tourism nowadays implies a new kind of behavior of the people participating in tourism movements – their intention of spiritual enrichment and purposeful attitude towards natural and anthropogenic tourism values.

Authors describe rural tourism as tourism which produces a “rural environment” for the visitor, by offering a combination of natural, cultural, and human experiences which have a typically rural character (Erdeji et al., 2013, p. 310). They characterize it as a connection between a rural visitor and essential authentic rural experiences which bring the visitor back to his/her roots (Erdeji et al., 2013, p. 310). Rural tourism in Serbia includes the reception of tourists for stay in rural households, where agriculture and ethnic heritage represent tourism values and motives for visiting (Бјељац, as cited in Тодоровић & Бјељац, 2007, p. 138). Furthermore, these ethnographic values that rural tourist destinations have are the most important factor in the process of integrating tourism with tradition, history, and local cultural identity (Antić, Vujko, & Gajić, 2015, p. 12).

Republic of Serbia has numerous natural and anthropogenic resources essential for rural tourism development. It refers to preserved nature, clean air, favorable climate, rich flora and fauna, unpolluted rivers and lakes, and large number of cultural and historical

monuments. Rural tourism resources are scattered throughout Serbia, which complements the fact that 85% of Serbia's territory is rural and abundant of natural, cultural, and man-made tourism attractions (Erdeji et al., 2013, p. 310). Rural tourism in Serbia is intricately connected to ethnic features, cultural and historical heritage. Not only that tourists visiting rural areas seek relaxation, peace, and rest, they wish to hear about tradition and local culture. In Serbia, rural areas are usually abundant of archeological sites, farmhouses and local households built in traditional form of architecture, local people still preserve old folk costumes, musical instruments and so on. According to Тодоровић & Бјељац (2007, p. 138), the territory of Serbia comprises four types of rural tourism offer:

- Individual rural households, scattered across rural settlements, which are specialized and registered to accommodate tourists;
- Ethno-house, which is a house built in traditional folk style;
- Ethnic settlements, which represent the old rural Serbian folk construction;
- Landscape areas in Serbia, which represent clusters of rural tourism.

Moreover, according to Živković & Brdar (2015), rural tourism comprises a long list of activities in rural areas which can apply to Serbian context:

observation or participation in traditional agricultural activities, with no adverse effects on ecosystem or rural household productivity, activities in the nature (walking, hiking), experiences combined with the cultural, archaeological contents in rural areas, experiences of special interest, touring in local areas, various events, festivals, recreational activities in the nature, purchase of local souvenirs and agricultural products etc. (p. 128)

As suggested in their study on complementarity in development of rural tourism with the development of thermal baths, Vuković, et al. (2015, p. 266), the basic idea of this complementarity is to accommodate tourists in rural households and offer them baths, spa, wellness, medical and health tourism services of the destination, in addition to rural tourism services. Most typical rural accommodation objects, as described by Гашић, Перић and Ивановић (2015, p. 76) are apartments, log cabins, ethno-villages, guest houses, hostels, motels, boarding houses, rural households, weekend-houses, villas and so on. Vuković et al. (2015, p. 267) have recognized that since many baths in Serbia are in rural areas, the possibilities for creating a complementary tourism product – rural

wellbeing are great. Positive advantage is that some baths, such as Vrnjačka Banja, Banja Vrujci etc., already use rural tourist accommodation. The authors (Vuković et al., 2015) used the conceptual approach to rural and spa tourism to address the importance of their synergic cooperation for country's better position in the international tourism market. Developing rural wellbeing would inevitably help revive most of the undeveloped thermal baths and concurrently improve the development of rural tourism.

Hjalager et al. (2015, p. 54) mentioned the importance of connectivity of earth and water for wellbeing, although activities in mineral water spas are not yet well known. Serbia has more than 300 mineral springs (Топаловић, 2012, p. 124), 40 spas (baths), and as of 2005, wellness tourism started developing, by creating wellness offers at around five different thermal bath destinations (Vuković et al. 2015, p. 265). However, there is a significantly higher number of unregistered, single sources of less or greater abundance, which need being captivated and their mineral composition determined (Топаловић, 2012, p. 125). Thermal baths can be characterized as complex natural motifs whose development is based on the following elements: thermo-mineral springs, medicinal mud, clean air and climatic elements with emphasis on stimulating and soothing effect which has a preventative effect on strengthening the human body (Станковић, as cited in Топаловић, 2012, p. 123). Abovementioned thermo-mineral springs represent the basis of hydrogeological potential of Serbian spas. Captivated springs are used for healing purposes, heating greenhouses, recreational purposes (indoor and outdoor pools, waterparks), some are used as water for drink and some for purposes of cosmetic industry (Krunic, Parlic, & Jovanovic, as cited in Белиј, 2016, p. 61).

Due to the abundance of thermo-mineral springs, a long tradition and importance in tourism, Serbia is popularly called "the country of spas". However, spa tourism is mainly based on a traditional health tourism, which includes prevention and curative treatments and those treatments are carried out in health facilities, also called "sanatoriums" (Perić, Stojiljković, Gašić, & Ivanović, 2017, p. 599). Possibilities for Serbian spa tourism to evolve are optimistic, as already the cutting edge society is changing the worldview in which spas are no longer considered solely as places for healing, yet in addition as places for wellness and wellbeing (Dimitrovski & Todorović, 2015, p. 260).

Furthermore, not only that rural tourism is strongly interlinked with spa and wellness tourism, synergies between rural activities and other products should be considered: cultural tourism, heritage tourism, ethno-villages, gastronomy and wine tourism, nature and earth tourism, ecotourism, mountains, rivers and lake tourism. These types of tourism were suggested by Erdeji et al. (2013, p. 311) as their correlation with rural tourism development is the strongest. Also, it should not be forgotten that findings of many studies mentioned in previous chapter have shown that wellbeing tourists in context of rural attributes have unmistakably stated cultural motifs, good food and nature as important motives of their travels. Certain authors (Radović et al., 2017, p. 22) deem that traditional products with geographical origin, produced locally in rural areas, might have a crucial effect both in hospitality sector, but also through souvenir sale. These products mostly refer to local, healthy food, fruits, and handcrafted items.

Development of rural tourism is addressed in the document Development Strategy of Tourism in The Republic of Serbia frequently. According to the Document (Government of the Republic of Serbia, Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunications, 2016, p. 43) one item of tourism business mission of Serbia is promotion of rural and regional development and reducing depopulation. Another is to raise the quality of accommodation, promotion and booking in rural tourism. Most importantly, the Document emphasizes development of Serbian rural, spa and mountain tourism product “from a single point and with a unified vision” (Government of the Republic of Serbia, Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunications, 2016, p. 54). Government’s acknowledgment and support of the unique combination of rural and spa tourism creation is a particularly good basis and strong tailwind for new product development. Although rural wellbeing as such concept does not yet exist in Serbia, this Master Thesis will serve as a tool for investigating the possibilities for its development. The theoretical overview in the last chapter has shown examples of good practice in other countries which are researching and developing new wellbeing concept. This chapter, however, deals with real situation in Serbia and researches the basis for new product creation: tourism customers’ motivations and rural destinations’ attributes strongly attracting them to visit.

2.2. Research methods and sampling

The following sub-chapter represents the research part of the study. The author begins with short theoretical overview of research methods utilized in the study, proceeds with explaining how necessary research data was collected, and finally analyzes said data.

Research purpose and research questions are the basis for developing the research design (Wahyuni, 2012, p. 79). More precisely, research design represents a plan of how the research questions will be answered and it contains objectives, sources which the author will collect data from and takes into account constraints such as access to data, time, location or money (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009, p. 136–137).

To undertake a research on new product development in rural wellbeing area, it is essential to understand couple of crucial aspects. Two key elements for tourism product creation process are initial stage which explains the existence of motivation to travel and the second one relates to the resource basis (i.e. attractions) of a destination (Masip, 2006, p. 4). This research will give quantitative answer to the research question about which wellbeing motivations tourism customers in Serbia have and which rural attributes they are willing to experience to improve their wellbeing. Due to travel restrictions and states of emergency in Serbia amidst the pandemic spread of COVID-19 disease, the author was prevented from applying a face-to-face survey method among rural tourists and has decided to conduct a web-based survey to reach respondents remotely. The following research will comprise one research method only.

Author decided to use survey strategy as one of the most popular ways of data collection. Data is standardized, easily administered to a sample, and allows easy comparison (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 144). This survey research will use quantitative research strategy, utilizing a questionnaire (online survey) with closed-ended questions in order to collect necessary opinions of the respondents (potential tourism customers) about their wellbeing motivations and rural attributes most important for improving their wellbeing. Due to the nature of web-based questionnaires, special attention must be paid to survey design to ensure its visual appeal, logical order, and level of understanding (Ponto, 2015, p. 170). Data collected using a survey can be used to propose possible reasons for connection between variables (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 144), in the current case the

relationship between customer wellbeing motives and rural attributes which improve wellbeing. This will set the base for creation of the tourism product based on potential customers' opinions, using the rural wellbeing resources, services, and products most compatible to the motivations and needs of these customers. Most important reasons for the choice of the research method are as follows:

- The nature of the research requires conducting quantitative research in order to provide numerical results about wellbeing motivations of tourism customers and rural attributes they consider important for improvement of their wellbeing;
- An electronic web-based survey was chosen due to cost-savings and higher response rate.

Although survey strategy provides more control over the research and allows the researcher to gain large number of respondents, it has its downsides as well. Not only that data collected using by this strategy is not as wide-ranging as the one collected by using other research strategies, there is also a limited number of questions a survey can consist of to keep the interest of the respondent (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 145). Furthermore, respondents may feel lack of understanding of the topic or may not feel encouraged to provide accurate, honest answers. Also, they might not give as relatable answers due to lack of interest or time to focus. To mitigate lack of understanding, the author has included an introduction to the survey, where its reasoning and goals are presented, aiming to provide engaging and easy-to-understand opening to the questions. Special attention was paid to dividing the questionnaire into clearly distinctive sections according to the nature of questions. Firstly, social-demographic questions, followed by questions related to wellbeing travel motivations and finalized by sections with questions related to rural attributes necessary for developing rural wellbeing tourism.

The questionnaire compiles questions modified from a study of rural wellbeing motivations (Pesonen & Komppula, 2010), WelDest project on developing a competitive health and wellbeing destination (Tuominen et al., 2014) and a study on clustering wellness tourists in spa environment (Dimitrovski & Todorović, 2015). The author found these three studies most relevant for her own research and that further data analysis will be able to provide valuable answers to the research questions. Two questions were modified based on the study by Pesonen & Komppula (2010), one question modified

based on the study by Tuominen et al. (2014) and one from the study by Dimitrovski & Todorović (2015). Based on the results received, the author will also give suggestions to possible solutions of the challenges and provide helpful proposals to the managers and rural tourism destination decision-makers.

Data was collected using a non-probable sampling technique – convenience sampling. This type of sampling is used by a researcher because the respondents are easily available and it helps overcome research limitations (Taherdoost, 2016, p. 22). Although this type is convenient and affordable, the disadvantage is that it is likely to be biased (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016, p. 2). The targeted sample for this study includes only Serbian-speaking Serbian nationals, therefore the results are not able to provide basis for conclusions regarding any other market. As this study encompassed only domestic demand side, the results of international tourists' motivation and expectations can, therefore, differ. Although motivation and expectations of foreign tourists may differ from domestic ones, it is the author's opinion that investigating domestic demand can be of great service for creating a new tourism product, firstly aimed at local target group and at later stages placing it at international tourism market. Also, as the research will analyze the congruence of results with existing foreign studies, it will assist in showing to what extent do domestic wellbeing customers' motifs are like the foreign ones. In addition, due to the choice of sampling, the results do not provide a conclusion of Serbia's entire population. After data collection, data analysis was carried out using Microsoft Excel and its features to analyze data faster, more precise, and more effective.

2.3. Data collection

The author used a survey as a quantitative method of research. Electronic, web-based survey was conducted to reduce the costs and reach respondents remotely. It was expected to have at least 100 respondents, due to time constraints and difficulties encountered with reaching larger number of respondents. The survey was made using Google Forms due to fast, reliable, and easy sharing and was conducted in April 2020. The survey was published on 10th of April and closed on 20th April 2020. Google Forms have proved to be an effective and supportive tool for survey-making process. The results were straightforward and they were collected quickly. The survey itself was anonymous and comprised

14 close-ended questions. The survey objectives helped answer two research questions of this Master Thesis. The objectives are following:

- To understand wellbeing motivations of Serbian tourism customers;
- To find out which rural attributes are most relevant for tourists;

The survey was aimed at citizens of Republic of Serbia who are potential tourism customers of rural tourism. Data was collected by sharing survey link to respondents via Facebook. The author shared the survey across three major Facebook tourism groups related to rural tourism and domestic travel in Serbia, aiming to collect the opinion of different tourism goers regardless of their age group or gender.

The survey was divided in four different sections. First section provided an introduction, comprising the information about the author, purpose and goal of the survey and estimated time of completion. Wellbeing was here described as the “multidimensional state of being describing the existence of positive health of body, mind and soul” (Hjalager et al., 2010, p. 10). Second section provided questions of social-demographic nature, aimed to investigate gender, age, education, and average monthly income differences among the respondents.

Third section “Wellbeing travel motivations” presented three closed ended, multiple choice questions related to the interest in participating in wellbeing holidays, using wellbeing services on a holiday and whether the respondents would use wellbeing services if they start developing in rural areas in Serbia. The following three questions were presented as Likert scales each with five possible answers, aiming to understand to which extent do respondents agree with the given statements. The statements were related to importance of certain services, elements and activities for a wellbeing holiday, and reasoning for participating in a wellbeing holiday. The first Likert-type scale (from not important to very important) comprised 11 statements which referred to the importance certain wellbeing holiday attribute and services. The second Likert-type scale had 13 statements (from strongly disagree to completely agree) and referred to reasons for taking on a wellbeing holiday. Last in the section was Likert-type scale with 12 statements (from not important to very important) which related to activities and elements of taking a wellbeing holiday.

Final section “Rural attributes important for developing rural wellbeing tourism” comprised two questions as Likert scales. Their aim was to understand to what extent do respondents agree with given statements regarding motives and attributes of rural areas which would attract them as potential customers. The first Likert-type scale (from not important to very important) provided 19 statements related to rural attributes which attract the most to visit rural destinations. The final question provided several services, products and attractions in rural areas and gave the opportunity to respondents to point out which of them are of primary, secondary, or irrelevant importance for their holiday in rural areas. This was to understand which main rural tourism services destinations are needed to provide for rural wellbeing goers and which services may be additional to their tourism offer.

2.4. Results and analysis

In total, there were 119 respondents who took part in the survey. All respondents answered to all questions. First section of the survey has given answers about gender, age, education, and monthly income. Out of all, 92 (77.3%) of respondents were female and 27 (22.7%) were male. Figure 1 illustrates the age distribution of respondents. Most of the respondents belong to the age group 20–29 (36.1%), followed by age group 50–59 (25.2%).

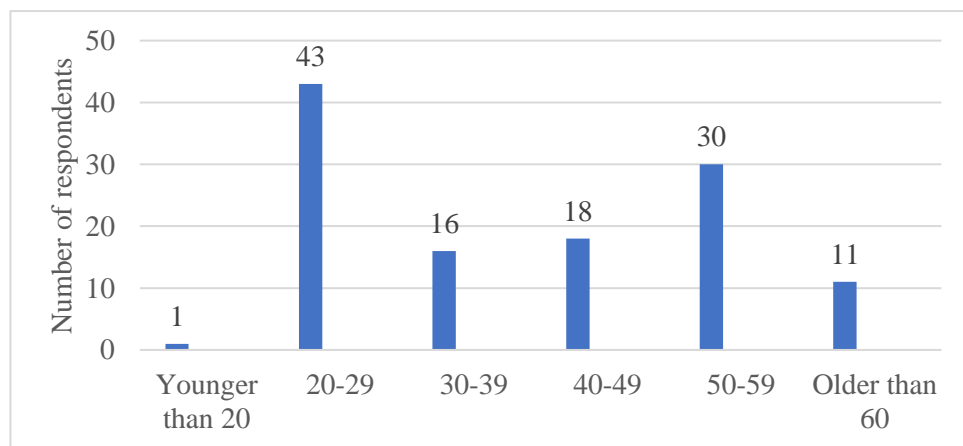


Figure 1. The age distribution of respondents

Most of the respondents selected bachelor’s degree as their highest level of education (46.2%), followed by secondary education (28.6%), Master’s degree (23.5%) and finally

Doctoral degree (1.7%). There were no respondents with elementary school as their highest level of education. Figure 2 illustrates the differences among respondent's education levels.

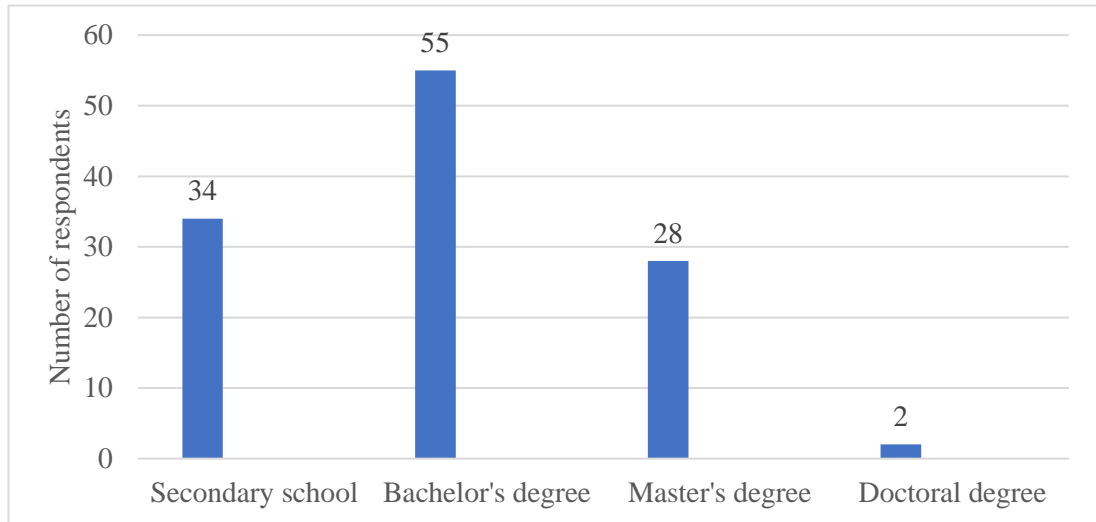


Figure 2. Respondent's education

Majority of respondents (70.6%) indicated they live in a big city with population over 100,000, which shows that most of them reside in the capital Belgrade or several other big cities in Serbia. Rest of the respondents live in middle-sized towns (15.1%), small towns (6.7%) and villages (7.6%). The following question was related to average monthly income of respondents, considering the average salary in Republic of Serbia is 59 772 RSD (approximately 508€). Most of the respondents answered they have average income (33.6%), followed by above average income (26.1%), below average income (26.1%) and 14.3% stated they do not have any income. Final question from the first section of the survey indicated with whom respondents prefer to travel with. Firstly, 33.6% answered they usually travel with their partner, 29.4% with their family, 25.2% with friends and 11.8% usually travel alone.

The following section of the survey “Wellbeing travel motivations” began with three multiple choice questions aimed at understanding how many respondents are interested in wellbeing holidays and services as shown in Figure 3 below.

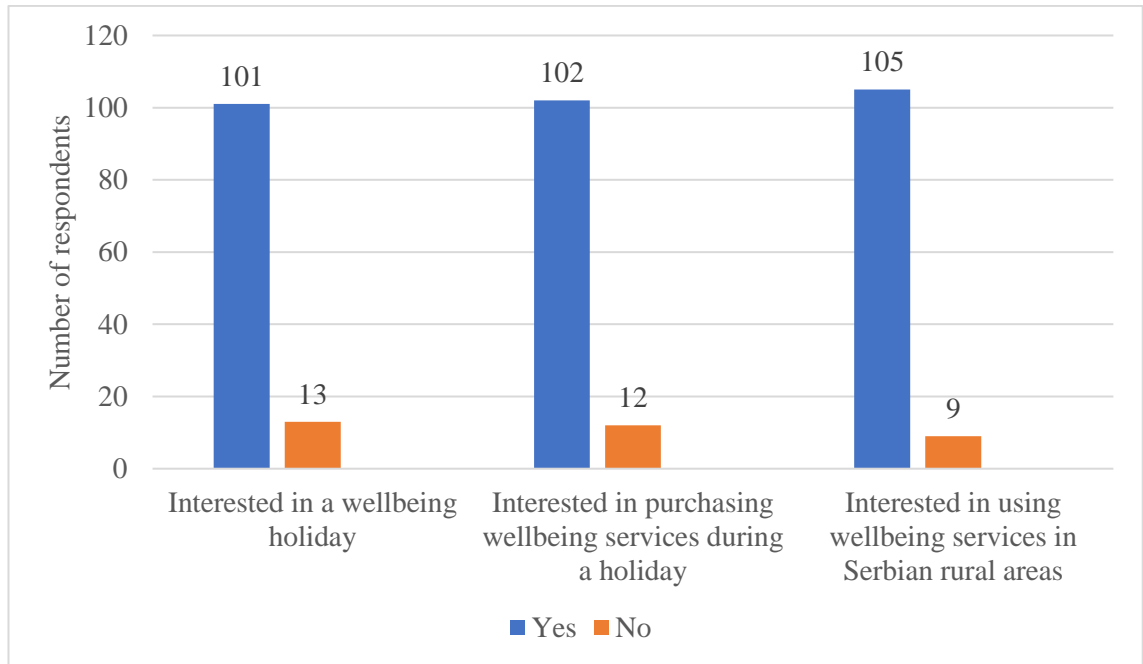


Figure 3. Illustration of respondent's interest for wellbeing holiday and services

Majority of respondents (89%) answered they are interested in a wellbeing holiday and only 11% that they are not. Furthermore, 88.2% of respondents indicated they are interested in purchasing wellbeing services during a holiday with only 11.8% of those who are not interested. Finally, 92.4% is interested in using wellbeing services in Serbian rural areas if they start developing and only 7.6% are not interested in that. Clearly, majority of respondents is interested in wellbeing services and in case of those being developed in rural destinations in Serbia, they would be interested in using them.

The following question aimed at investigating the importance of certain services for wellbeing holiday of respondents. The participants were asked to indicate whether the listed wellbeing services and factors are not important, slightly important, neutral, important or very important to them. There were eleven statements in total. The results are shown below in Figure 4.

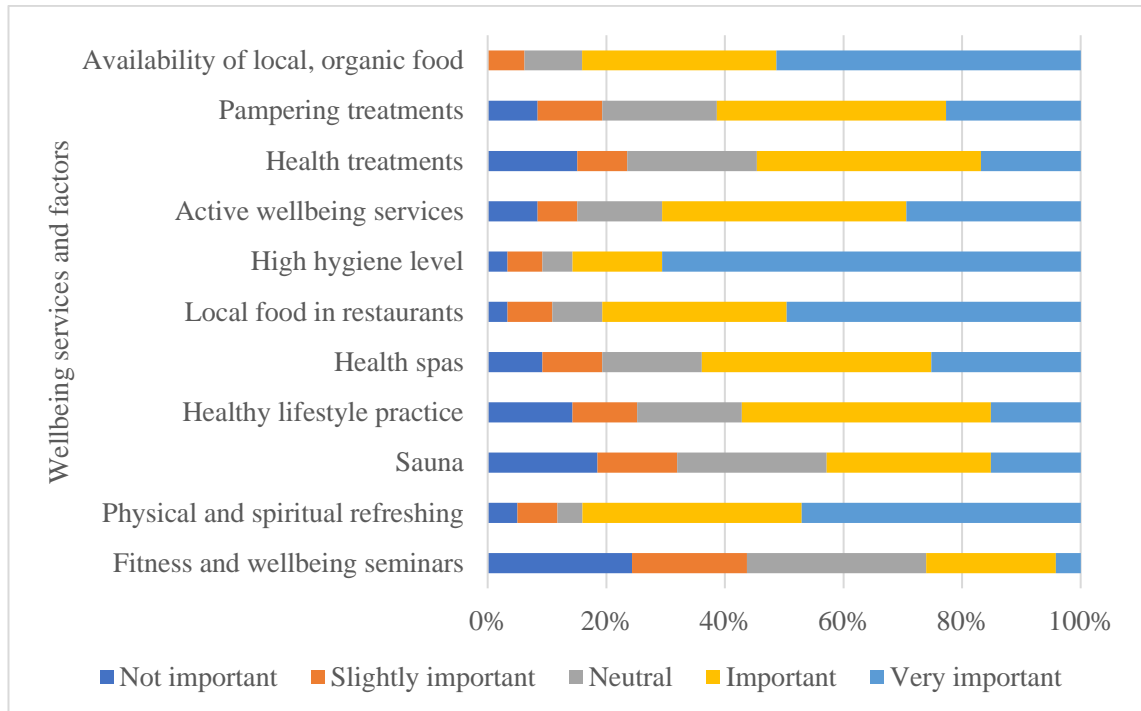


Figure 4. Importance of wellbeing services among respondents

As seen in Figure 4, “High hygiene level”, “Availability of local, organic food”, and “Physical and spiritual refreshing” were ranked as most important motives for travel and have the highest number of respondents stating them as very important for their wellbeing holiday. Whether served at restaurants, whether available on destination in general, local food is ranked as second most relevant factor for participants of the survey. Majority of respondents who have stated “Physical and spiritual refreshing” as very important belong to the age group 20–29 (45%) and are residents of a big city with population over 100 000 (73%). This corroborates with the fact that those living in urban areas usually are motivated to relax and escape busy city life. The ones who deem “High hygiene level” as most important factor were similar, belonging to 20–29 age group (42%). When it comes to the factor “Availability of local, organic food” the results were more even, with 34% of respondents within age group 20–29 and 27% of them belonging to age group 50–59. Services seen as important vary.

Results show that rest of the services are deemed as important by respondents – usage of saunas, spas, possibilities for healthy lifestyle practice, active wellbeing services, pampering treatments, and health treatments. Interestingly, some of the most important wellbeing factors supported by theory have not been ranked with highest importance.

Finally, factor “Fitness and wellbeing seminars” divided most opinions, and generally, respondents were found mostly neutral.

The following question in second section was related to reasons of taking a wellbeing holiday. The participants were asked to point the level of their agreement with thirteen statements. The results are shown below in Figure 5.

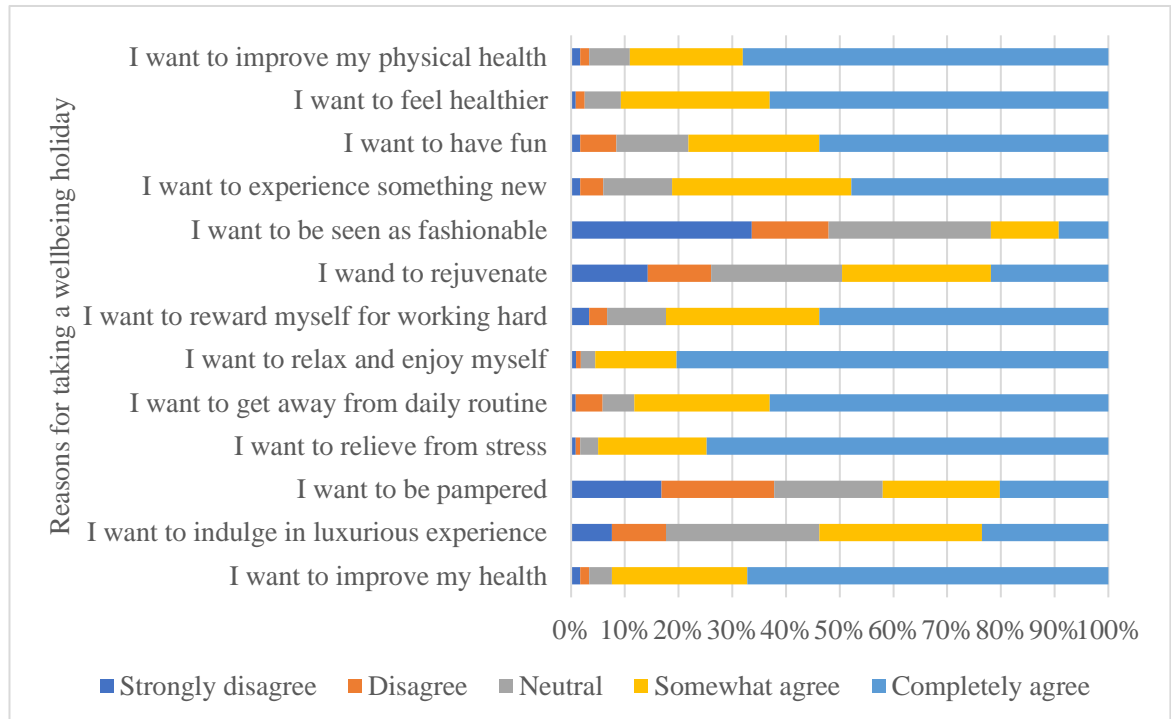


Figure 5. Opinions of respondents about different reasons for taking on a wellbeing holiday

As seen in Figure 5, the four most common respondents’ reasons for taking a wellbeing holiday are – “I want to relax and enjoy myself”, “I want to relieve from stress”, “I want to improve my health” and “I want to get away from daily routine”. They are followed by reasoning related to desire to feel healthier, to have fun and experience something new and reward oneself for working hard. Interestingly, there were three statements which divided the opinions of respondents the most. Those were “I want to indulge in luxurious experience”, “I want to be pampered” and “I want to rejuvenate my appearance”. The results almost equally show that 30% of respondents somewhat agree that indulging in luxurious experience is a reason for taking a wellbeing holiday and 29% are neutral. “I want to be pampered” is almost equally divided in the importance. Majority of

respondents were women (83%), half of which were with Master’s degree and half with Bachelor’s degree. Finally, the results suggest that “I want to be seen as fashionable” is a reason majority of respondents (34%) disagree with and 30% are neutral about it. Among the few ones who deemed this factor is very important, they mostly belonged to the age-group 30–39. It can be concluded that ‘rejuvenating’, “pampering” and “luxurious indulgence”, which are one of the basis of wellness concept, do not play a major role as reason for wellbeing holiday among the sample and the respondents deem other wellbeing-related factors, more important.

The last question of the wellbeing section was related to activities and elements of a wellbeing holiday. Participants were asked to state the level of importance of twelve statements. The results are shown below in Figure 6.

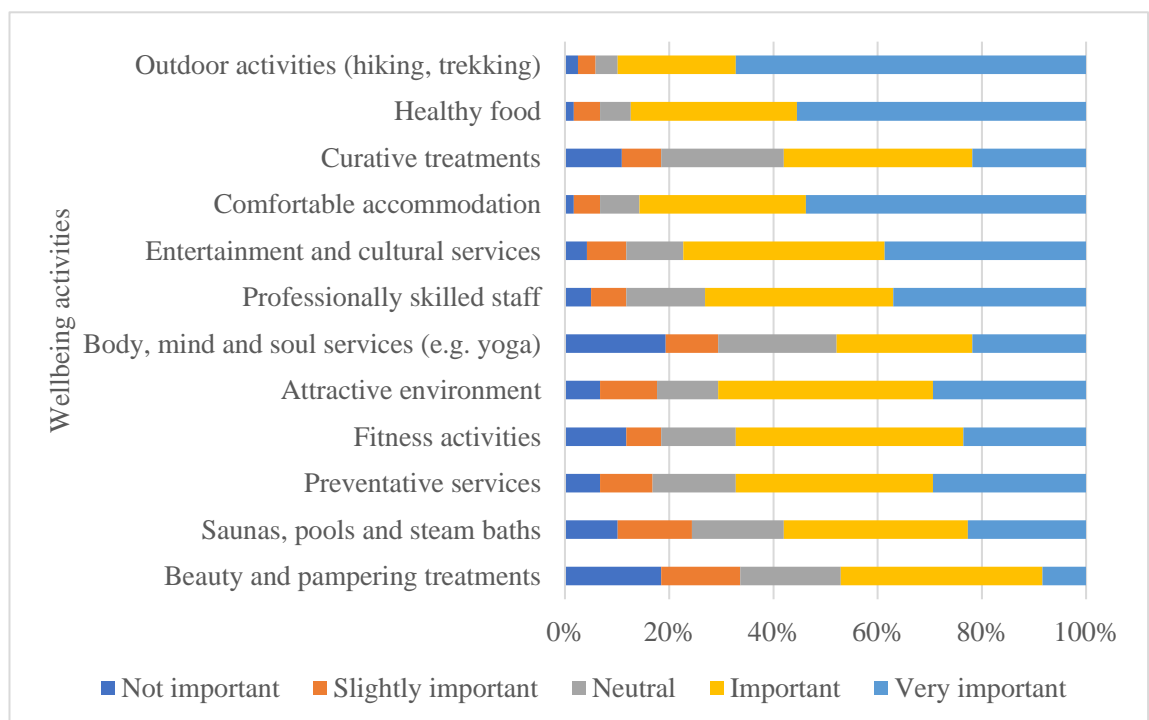


Figure 6. Importance of different activities and elements of a wellbeing holiday according to respondents

As seen in Figure 6, the three most important wellbeing activities as respondents indicated are “Outdoor activities”, “Healthy food” and “Comfortable accommodation”. Local and healthy food persists to be one of most relevant wellbeing factors for respondents of this survey. Outdoor activities appeared to be the most relevant for those with bachelor’s

degree (47.5). Factor “Entertainment and cultural services” are equally perceived, according to results, as 39% of respondents indicated this factor as very important and 39% as important. Rest of the listed statements are found to be important and related to professionally skilled staff, body, mind and soul services, attractive environment, fitness activities, preventative services, saunas, pools and steam baths and beauty and pampering treatments. Like the first question of the survey’s second section (see Figure 4), respondents do not find pampering to be as important for their wellbeing holiday, although it is one of the constitutive aspects of wellness concept. Interestingly, those who deemed it very important were in the age groups of 20–29 and 30–39, whereas the literature had suggested that those usually interested in wellness services to be even older. Furthermore, 31% of respondents who deemed “Preventative services” as very important were aged 20–29 and 25% were aged 40–49.

The first question of the last section comprised nineteen statements and the participants were asked to state the level of importance of each rural attributed presented. The results are shown below in Figure 7.

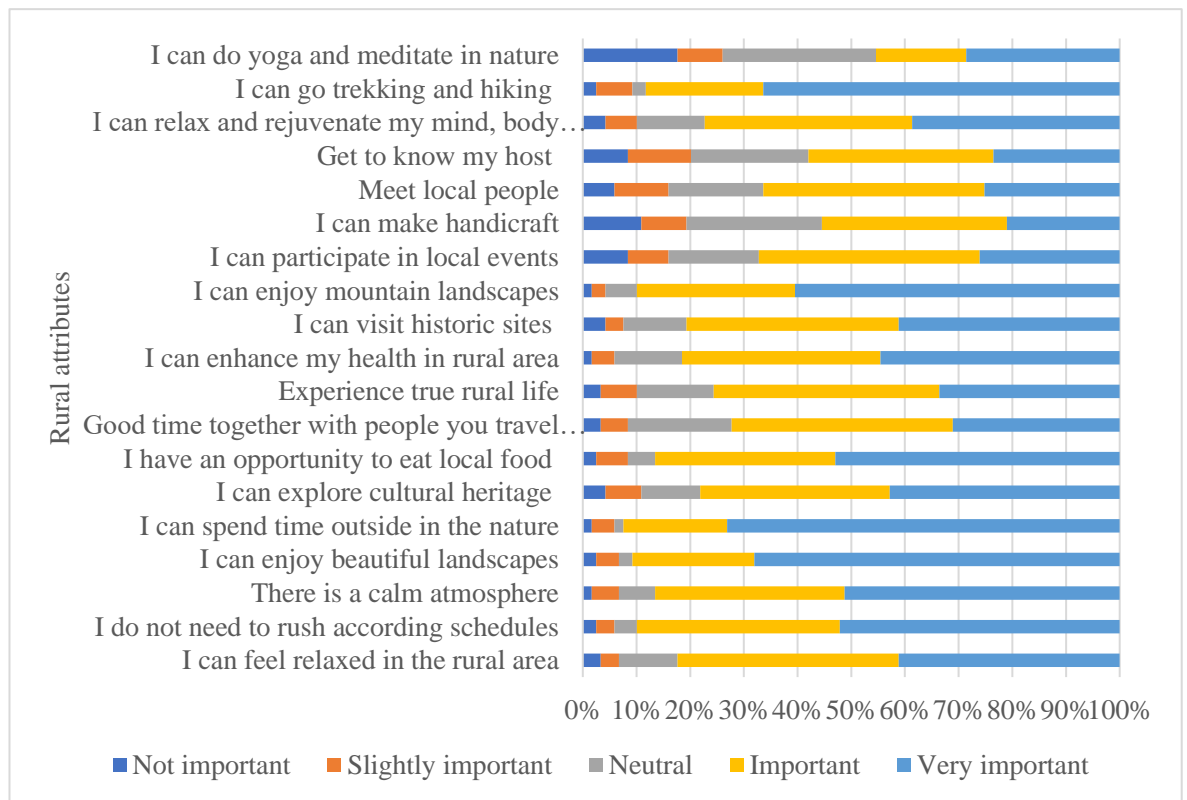


Figure 7. Importance of rural attributes for visiting rural areas

As seen in Figure 7, the most relevant rural attributes for visiting rural areas are related to the natural environment, its peaceful and quiet setting where potential visitors can enjoy the landscape and do outdoor activities. According to the respondents, the most important factors of rural areas which attracts them to visit correspond to the statements “I can spend time in the nature”, “I can go trekking and hiking” and “I can enjoy beautiful landscapes”. These are followed by local food, hassle-free vacation and calm atmosphere, health improvement and visiting historic sites. According to the results, second group of statements was related to the social aspect of the holiday, and majority of respondents marked the following statements as important: “Get to know my host”, “Meet local people”, “I can make handicraft”, “I can participate in local events”, “Good time with people you travel with”. This shows that, when it comes to a rural holiday, the potential visitors deem time in nature, beautiful landscapes and possibility to do some physical activity (trekking, hiking) as primary for their holiday, whilst the social aspect of rural tourism is of secondary importance.

There were several statements which divided most opinions. Firstly, the statement was related to yoga and meditation in nature where equally 29% of respondents stated it very important and 29% were of neutral opinion. Women of age group 20–29 and 30–39 expressed most interest in possibilities for yoga and meditation in rural areas. “I can relax and rejuvenate my mind, body and soul” had 39% respondents who deemed it very important and 39% who deemed it just important. Finally, equally divided between very important and important was the statement “I can feel relaxed in the rural area” where women of age 20–29 expressed it as the most important for their rural holiday.

Final question of the survey shows different services and activities which usually best describe rural areas. The respondents were asked to choose whether the service or activity is primary, secondary, or irrelevant for their holidays in rural areas. This may show which main services are needed to be offered in rural wellbeing destinations and which are the additional ones. The results are shown below in Figure 8.

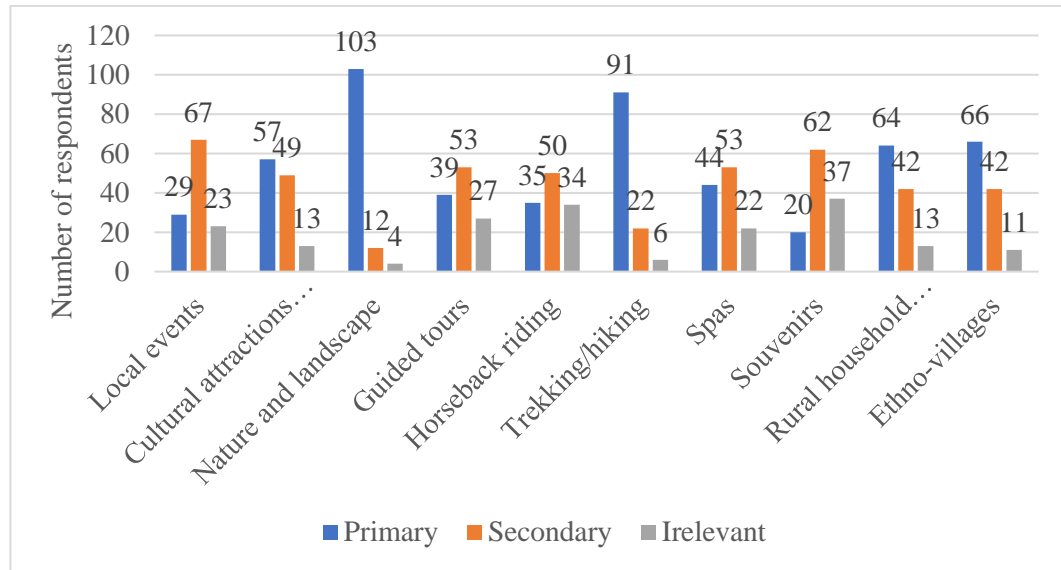


Figure 8. Importance of different services and activities in rural areas

The question comprised ten different rural activities. According to the results, presented in Figure 5, most of the respondents have chosen “Nature and landscape” (86.5%) “Trekking/hiking” (76.4%), “Ethno-villages” (55.4%), “Rural household accommodation” (53.7%), and “Cultural attractions” (47.8%) as of primary importance for their rural holiday. Services and activities of secondary importance according to respondents are “Local events” (56.3%), “Souvenirs” (52.1%) “Guided tours” (44.5%), “Spa centers” (44.5%) and “Horseback riding” (42%). It is surprising that spa centers, as one of the usual places for pampering and improving wellbeing are graded as secondary. However, should the sample size be bigger, the results might be changed in their favor.

2.5. Discussion and recommendations

Overall, the results of the survey were in accordance with literature review findings. Several results of motivational factors and attributes follow the pattern of previous studies, both foreign authors’ and Serbian ones. However, there were some deviations as well, and different findings when it comes to certain questions which will be mentioned in the following pages. Also, the profile of the surveyed segment shows that the group is homogenous, as 77.3% of the segment was female and only 22.3% male. This could be explained by the fact that women might be more interested in wellbeing services, or

perhaps, keener on filling in online questionnaires. This also depends on the gender structure of the Facebook groups where the survey was distributed. Therefore, according to these results, it seems that women are more interested in wellbeing, although, in practice, proportion of men and women in wellbeing tourism is not necessarily as high as the results show. In addition, the sample size was small and included exclusively specific segment of potential tourists interested only in rural tourism from related online Facebook groups. This excludes the opinion of wider population. In addition, this study encompassed only the demand side and presented opinions of tourism customers. For further and comprehensive knowledge on this topic, supplier side and managerial side should be considered as well.

When it comes to the wellbeing section of the research and the motivations arising for taking on a wellbeing holiday, the results have shown similarities to existing findings. The four most common respondents' reasons for taking a wellbeing holiday are – “I want to relax and enjoy myself”, “I want to relieve from stress”, “I want to improve my health” and “I want to get away from daily routine”. This survey question was modified from a Serbian study on motivational factors of Vrnjačka banja's visitors (Dimitrovski and Todorović, 2015). The results of author's research have shown somewhat congruence with this study results where the primary motifs of wellness tourists were socialization and excitement, and relaxation.

Moreover, the finding corroborates with several other foreign studies. Firstly, opportunity for relaxation was found to be the most important motivational factor when deciding about a destination in the case of Budapest (Árpási, 2018, p. 90). Furthermore, in their study on identifying different market segments among spa goers (Koh et al., 2010, p. 718), primary motifs found were socializing, relaxation, health, and rejuvenation. Lastly, the results of this Thesis about wellbeing holiday motivations are congruent with Taiwanese study of tourists' motivation in three Taiwanese resorts where relaxation, recreation and experiencing nature were found as the most popular motivators, according to Chen and Prebensen's (as cited in Pesonen & Komppula, 2010, p. 152). Clearly, relaxation was proven to be one of the essential wellbeing motifs for potential wellbeing tourists across different countries. It is evident that most of the tourists seeking wellbeing

holiday are drawn by relaxation, escaping daily routine to simply relieve themselves from accumulated stress from work and daily obligations.

Furthermore, the study also gave results about preferred wellbeing activities and elements of a wellbeing holiday. This survey question was modified from WelDest project report where the research was conducted in five European countries (Austria, the Czech Republic, Finland, Germany and the UK) in order to research health and wellbeing (Dvorak, Saari, & Tuominen, 2014, p. 12). These two findings somewhat mismatch. WelDest project's result show that three most relevant attributes regarding destination's services are "Diverse beauty and pampering treatments", "Attractive environment" and "Diverse sauna, pool and steam bathing" (Dvorak, Saari, & Tuominen, 2014, p. 60), whereas this Master Thesis' results clearly show different findings. The three most important wellbeing activities as respondents indicated are "Outdoor activities", "Healthy food" and "Comfortable accommodation".

Outdoor activities seem to be first and most important as per Serbian participants' opinions, whereas in the abovementioned five European countries opinion's it is on fourth position. Most of the respondents in this study stated "Attractive environment" as plainly important, although in WelDest's research it is on second position and considered especially important. Local, healthy food seems to be almost always an essential factor for wellbeing according to results of this study. This is positive, as discussed before, locally produced food is of utmost importance for wellbeing and is considered as "superfood" which also defines cultural identity of a location in which it is produced (Hjalager et al., 2015, p. 50).

Moreover, the research has brought about three main wellbeing services as most important to the respondents – "High hygiene level", "Availability of local, organic food", and "Physical and spiritual refreshing". The importance trend of local and healthy food continues as respondent's deem it as one of the most relevant aspects of their wellbeing holiday. Moreover, it is clear throughout this research that respondents never ranked spas, saunas, pampering treatments as utmost important. Clearly, spa and the accompanied treatments are not as important for Serbian potential tourists as spending time in the nature, with outdoor activities and local food is. This finding supports the fact

that spa tourism in Serbia is still not yet developed enough in wellness concept and it still mostly relates to rehabilitation and health treatments.

This survey's last section has brought up results about rural attributes which are most relevant for potential tourism customers when thinking about a wellbeing holiday. The most relevant rural attributes as respondent's answers indicated are "I can spend time in the nature", "I can go trekking and hiking" and "I can enjoy beautiful landscapes". The question was modified from a study on rural wellbeing motivations in Finland, where the authors concluded that that main motivations of rural wellbeing tourists are "relaxing away from the ordinary, escape from a busy everyday life, hassle-free vacation, getting refreshed, having a sense of comfort and having an opportunity for physical rest" (Pesonen & Komppula, 2010, p. 154). Therefore, the results of this Master Thesis' research do not fully support these findings, as main motivations suggested by the results are more related to spending time in nature's beautiful landscapes and doing physical activity (trekking, hiking). Although the respondents have acknowledged "no rush" and "calm atmosphere" as very important, it is not the as high rated as the latter.

Finally, one end can be drawn about rural attributes and activities mostly desired as per respondents of this survey. They highly value nature and outdoors, beautiful landscapes and possibilities to do outdoor physical activities (trekking, hiking). This supports results of a Serbian research where it was discovered that main reason (50%) to visit rural areas in Serbia are natural settings (Erdeji et al., 2013, p. 314). Similarly, Demirović et al., (2019, p. 29) identified a rural tourist segment – Poetic tourists, based on their primary motif to be surrounded by peace and beautiful natural settings. Furthermore, on example of Finland, rural attributes of highest importance for wellbeing tourists were walking in the nature and outdoor sports, followed by pampering services (Pesonen & Tuohino, 2017, p. 414). Clearly, potential wellbeing tourists recognize the importance of nature, its calming and soothing effect and are in search for beautiful landscapes where they can undertake different physical activities. This corresponds to the beforementioned fact that engaging in activities in natural surroundings has positive impact on health, happiness, and relaxation.

Based on results, one could say that potential rural wellbeing tourists are drawn by motivations to relax, relieve from stress and improve their health. Essential wellbeing attributes they are looking for are local and healthy food and physical and spiritual refreshing. High level of hygiene and comfortable accommodation is of especial importance to them. Furthermore, these potential tourists value nature, beautiful landscapes and possibilities for trekking and hiking. Finally, they deem rural household accommodation and ethno-villages also as primary for their stay in rural areas. Interestingly, rural wellbeing customers in Serbia do not find pampering treatments, saunas, and luxurious experiences as important for their holiday. Namely, they mostly disagree with them and do not wish to present themselves as “fashionable” for participating in such holidays.

Possibilities for developing new rural wellbeing tourism product in Serbia are high. Firstly, the respondents have shown clear interest in using wellbeing services if they should start developing in rural areas. Rural tourism destinations in Serbia are usually located in remote, countryside settings, surrounded by nature and beautiful landscapes. These are the places which offer perfect calm, quiet setting for relaxation and health improvement. Here, local and healthy food is being produced by local farmers and almost 34% of accommodation is related to rural households (Гашић, Перић, & Ивановић, 2015, p. 76). Based on the research results, the author can draw several recommendations for managers of rural and spa tourism destinations and other decision-makers in future tourism development:

- Take into consideration the results of this Thesis when developing main and additional services in the destination, in order to answer the primary wellbeing motivations – to relax, relieve from stress, improve health;
- Creating and choosing a vision for this rural wellbeing development which will be in line with contemporary world trends and European cases of best practice and development models (e.g. Finland);
- Focus on including more rural households as main accommodation type on destination and pay attention to categorization standards for this type of accommodation;

- Maintain and develop additional rural wellbeing services (e.g. spa services, guided tours for cultural attractions, events);
- Consider forming tourism clusters which are of essential importance for creating tourism products;
- Focus marketing actions on promoting a destination as a rural wellbeing product, primarily on domestic market with target groups mainly from urban areas;
- Consider potential partnerships between restaurants and small business family owners who produce local, healthy, and organic food.

With regards to tourism clusters, the basic model for a cluster tourism destination is to connect different entities (public sector, technology, suppliers, sales channels) to ensure competitiveness on the market (Đurašević, 2009, p. 103). This way all necessary stakeholders would establish better communication, work together on a common goal to develop rural wellbeing destination. Advantages of developing rural wellbeing tourism product in Serbia are numerous. As per author's opinion some of the greatest opportunities that should be considered are the following:

- Possibility for growth of local agrarian businesses;
- Rise of employment on local and regional level;
- General national economy growth;
- Revitalization of rural areas, infrastructure and existing agrarian businesses;
- Revitalization of local food and crafted products;
- Accent on domestic tourism due to travel restrictions amidst pandemic of COVID-19;
- Rise of awareness about the need to improve health and wellbeing and general growth of wellness trend.

Due to current travel restrictions and tourism being "on standby" due to ongoing pandemic, it is inevitable that some countries will consider stronger marketing focus on domestic tourism. This could serve as good chance for Serbia to present a new product on the domestic market and affect the growth of domestic travel. Clever marketing strategy could play an essential in this process as well. Moreover, rise and development of rural wellbeing tourism product in Serbia will not only positively impact revitalization of rural areas and agrarian business, but with the implementation of correct development strategy which appreciates complementarity of rural and spa tourism, it can affect growth,

development and restructuring of spa tourism offer. As this development proposal includes attributes and services of both rural and wellness character, this study can serve as a starting point for tourism destination decision-makers to engage into new product development. However, there are also several challenges to have in mind. Considering current state of tourism, transport infrastructure, and several other factors, the author has compiled a list of challenges to think about when developing rural wellbeing tourism product, based on suggestions made by several authors (Erdeji et al., 2013, p. 315; Гашић et al., 2015, p. 79; Тодоровић & Бјељац, 2007, p. 145):

- Lack of adequate tourism infrastructure and suprastructure;
- Lack of motivation of rural residents to deal with new forms of tourism;
- Insufficient education of interested rural households' owners on how to receive and host visitors;
- Lack of adequate staff;
- Inadequate distribution of funds.

The challenges listed above are some of the most important potential setbacks for developing a new tourism product. However, the examples of good practice from other European countries should be considered and this new form of a tourism offer could be complementary to the overall tourism development strategy in Serbia. Although there are several limiting factors, there are also numerous opportunities and advantages new product development could bring. In the author's opinion, this new product, aimed initially at domestic market, with adequate valorization and commercialization can affect the creation of Serbia's image as a destination of rural wellbeing tourism. If well-planned, strategically managed, and under constant governmental support, the product could advance to the international market and raise the country's overall tourism competitiveness. Furthermore, in order for rural wellbeing tourism to be affirmed and presented as a significant tourism offer, it is necessary to develop good communication between stakeholders, educate local residents about the importance of a new tourism product, intensify infrastructure construction and consider forming tourism clusters where different tourism organizations could work together in planning and realizing all development actions, including marketing and renovation of rural accommodation objects.

CONCLUSION

To meet the goal of this Thesis – assessing the potential of implementing wellbeing concept in rural environment in Serbia and make recommendations for the tourism managers and other decision-makers of Serbian rural and spa destinations – a research on potential rural wellbeing customers' motivation and most valued rural attributes in their opinion was conducted. This study filled the gap in research based on complementary development of rural and wellbeing tourism in Serbia and presented ground recommendations for new product development and potential for growing Serbia's competitiveness in tourism market.

Due to travel restrictions, web-based questionnaire was applied and distributed among several Facebook groups for those participating and interested in rural tourism. The questions used in the online survey were developed from the literature review and were related to wellbeing motivations, preferred wellbeing services and activities, reasoning for visiting rural areas and preferred primary and secondary rural services and activities. In this research, non-probable convenience sampling method was utilized and in total, 119 responses were collected between 10th and 20th April 2020.

The approach of this Thesis was to provide research results and analyze them according to the several existing studies on wellbeing tourism to investigate whether there is a congruence in results or provide an explanation to potential mismatches. During this research, several findings arose which corresponded to previous researches. The four most common reasons for taking a wellbeing holiday were found to be – “I want to relax and enjoy myself”, “I want to relieve from stress”, “I want to improve my health” and “I want to get away from daily routine”. The primary motif “relaxation” corresponded to the findings of a Serbian study which the question was modified from, and with three other, foreign studies.

As a result, one recommendation for managerial tourism experts was to take into consideration the results of this Thesis when developing main and additional services in the destination, in order to answer the primary wellbeing motivations – to relax, relieve from stress and improve health.

The results brought about the most important wellbeing activities as respondents indicated – “Outdoor activities”, “Healthy food” and “Comfortable accommodation”. These findings were in mismatch with the results of the WelDest project report which the survey question was modified from. As opposed to the project’s results, Serbian respondents did not find beauty and pampering treatments, and sauna, pools, and steam bathing as important for their wellbeing holiday. As a result, one recommendation arising from this finding is to focus on renovating rural households and pay closer attention to official categorization standards for this type of accommodation. Secondly, it should be taken into consideration to form business partnerships between restaurants and small business family owners who produce local and healthy food, to answer to this specific need of potential rural wellbeing customers.

Finally, the study results showed that most important reasoning for visiting rural areas were “I can spend time in the nature”, “I can go trekking and hiking” and “I can enjoy beautiful landscapes”. This is another place where discordance with existing study was noticed. While Finnish respondents are choosing rural holidays for the purpose of relaxing and escaping from the ordinary, Serbian customers rather choose rural areas for the natural setting, beautiful surroundings, and possibility to do some physical activity in the outdoors. Nevertheless, this results correlates to the rural attributes of primary importance as per Serbian respondents – nature and outdoors, beautiful landscapes and possibilities to do outdoor physical activities (trekking, hiking).

Therefore, there are several conclusions to be drawn from this Master Thesis. Firstly, a potential rural wellbeing tourist is motivated by a need to relax, relieve from stress, and improve health. This tourist finds that he/she will gladly travel to rural areas to spend time in nature, go trekking and hiking, and enjoy beautiful landscapes. Also, one of the most important services for this tourist are outdoor activities, healthy food, and comfortable accommodation. And secondly, Serbian potential rural wellbeing customers seem not to

have primary interest in spa services (saunas, pools, beauty treatments). Even so, future rural wellbeing destinations should try and maintain the level of spas services and focus on developing them more. However, primary focus should be on services provided in natural environment, outdoor activities, and local, healthy food provision.

Furthermore, the author has presented several important opportunities of such new product development, which can have clear impact on national, regional, and local economy. Real challenges to this process were not neglected, as it is important to be aware of them for further research, and product development.

Altogether, evaluating the research process, one could say that a limitation to this study was the homogenous segment of respondents, mainly represented by female population. In addition, surely, questionnaires distributed face-to-face might would have been more insightful and presented more trustworthy responses. However, as the circumstances for the research were affected by outside factors which one did not have influence on, the author believes that chosen research alternative has sufficed. At the end of the Thesis, there were several lessons learned, such as, taking longer time to analyze, plan and implement the research method. In future research, this should positively affect the probability of finding more adequate and representative sample.

Finally, the author believes she has provided answers to the research questions as which are the most important wellbeing motivations for Serbian customers and which rural attributes affect their choice to go to rural areas on a holiday and improve their wellbeing. According to those answers, the author was able to provide her insight in how those two factors might correlate and how tourism managers can utilize such knowledge and implement it in practice.

It was the author's utmost pleasure to work on this Master Thesis, under constant support of University's teachers, go through the learning and research process and focus her effort on making beneficial findings in rural wellbeing research. Hopefully, this work will prove to be serviceable to those whom it may concern and deliver a solid basis for future research.

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Appendix 1. Survey questions – in Serbian

Поштовани, анкетни упитник који се налази пред вама је део истраживања студенткиње Тање Маринковић у оквиру Мастер рада Универзитета Тарту у Естонији.

Попуњавањем ове анонимне анкете, ваше мишљење биће од велике помоћи за утврђивање мотивационих фактора за учествовање у руралном “wellbeing” туризму и туристичких атрибута којима сеоске дестинације могу да привуку будуће “wellbeing” туристе.

Просечно време за попуњавање анкете је 5–10 минута и нема исправних или погрешних одговора, само оних које најбоље одговарају вашим жељама и погледима.

Резултати анкете биће коришћени искључиво у научно-истраживачке сврхе. Молим Вас да на следећа питања дате што искреније одговоре и тиме допринесете истраживању.

Хвала унапред!

Друштвено-демографске одлике

1. Пол:

Мушки

Женски

2. Образовање:

Основна школа

Средња школа

Основне студије

Мастер студије

Докторске студије

3. Старост:

Млађи/а од 20 година

20–39

30–39

40–49

50–59

Старији од 60 година

4. Тип пребивалишта:

Село

Мали град – варошица (до 10,000 становника)

Град средње величине (10,000–100,000 становника)

Велики град (преко 100,000 становника)

5. Месечна примања (просечна плата у Републици Србији износи 59 772 РСД)

Испод просека

Просечна примања

Изнад просека

Немам примања

6. Са ким обично путујете?

Са партнером

Са породицом

Са пријатељима

Сам/сама

Wellbeing мотивације при путовању

Страни аутори дефинишу “wellbeing” као вишедимензионално стање бића које описује постојање позитивног здравља тела, ума и душе. Wellbeing је уско повезан са боравком у природи, самоугађањем, побољшавањем здравља различитим третманима и развојем личности.

7. Да ли сте заинтересовани за учешће у “wellbeing” путовању?

Да

Не

8. Да ли сте заинтересовани за коришћење “wellbeing” услуга приликом путовања?

Да

Не

9. Ако “wellbeing” услуге почну да се развијају у сеоским пределима у Србији, да ли бисте били заинтересовани за њихово искоришћавање?

Да

Не

10. Испод су наведене изјаве које се односе на важност одређених услуга за wellbeing путовање. За сваку изјаву, молим Вас назначите у којој мери су те услуге за вас важне.

	Неважно	Незнатно важно	Неутралан/на сам	Важно	Веома важно
Могућност за психичко и физичко "освежавање".					
Могућност учествовања у фитнес и wellbeing семинарима.					
Могућност коришћења сауне.					
Могућност практиковања здравог животног стила и специјалних дијета.					
Могућност коришћења спа центара					
Пристапачност локалне и здраве хране у ресторанима.					
Висок ниво чистоће и хигијене пружених услуга.					
Могућност учествовања у активним wellbeing услугама (спорт, фитнес).					
Могућност коришћења третмана који поспешују здравље (нпр. акупунктура).					
Могућност коришћења третмана за лепоту и опуштање (нпр. масажа медом).					

Приступачност локалнехране која је органска и произведена локално.					
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11. Испод су наведене изјаве везане за разлог учествовања у wellbeing путовањима.

За сваку изјаву, молим Вас назначите у којој мери се слажете.

	Уопште се не слажем	Не слажем се	Неутралан/на сам	Слажем се донекле	У потпуности се слажем
Желим да побољшам своје здравље.					
Желим да се препустим луксузном искуству.					
Желим да имам осећај као да сам "размажен".					
Желим да се ослободим стреса.					
Желим да побегнем од свакодневице					
Желим да се опустим и уживам.					
Желим да наградим себе за напоран посао који обављам.					
Желим подмладити свој изглед.					
Желим да се представим као модеран/на.					
Желим да искусим нешто ново.					
Желим да се забавим.					
Желим да се осетим здравије.					
Желим да унапредим своје физичко здравље.					

12. Наведене тврдње односе се на активности и елементе wellbeing путовања. За сваку изјаву, молим Вас назначите у којој мери је важна за Вас.

	Неважно	Незнатно важно	Неутралан/на сам	Важно	Веома важно
Разноврсни третмани за лепоту и самоугађање.					
Разноврсне сауне, парна купатила и базени.					
Превентивне здравствене услуге.					
Фитнес активности.					
Атрактивно окружење.					

Услуге за тело и дух (нпр. јога, медитација).					
Присуство професионалног особља.					
Разноврсни забавни и културни садржаји.					
Удобни смештај.					
Куративни третмани.					
Здрава храна.					
Пешачење, планинарење и сличне активности на отвореном					

Атрибути сеоских предела значајни за развој руралног wellbeing туризма

13. Наведене тврдње односе се на атрибуте сеоских предела које Вас привлаче да посетите руралне дестинације. За сваку тврдњу, молим Вас назначите у којој мери је важна за Вас.

	Неважно	Незнатно важно	Неутралан/на сам	Важно	Веома важно
У сеоском окружењу се осећам опуштено.					
Не морам нигде журити и пратити унапред постављен распоред.					
У сеоским пределима је опуштена атмосфера..					
У сеоским пределима могу да уживам у прелепим пејзажима.					
Могу да проводим време напољу у природи.					
Могу да истражујем културно наслеђе (нпр. цркве, музеје и манастире).					
Имам прилику да пробам локалну храну.					
Сеоске дестинације дају прилику за добар провод заједно са људима с којима путујете					
Имам прилику да доживим прави сеоски живот, далеко изван урбаних градова.					
Могу побољшати своје здравље проводећи време у руралној средини.					
Могу да посетим историјске споменике.					

Могу да уживам у планинским пејзажима.					
Могу учествовати у локалним манифестацијама.					
Имам прилику да испробам локалне занате.					
Дестинација пружа прилику за упознавање локалног становништва.					
Могу да упознам свог домаћина и да им помогнем у домаћинству.					
Могу се опустити и подмладити ум, тело и дух.					
Имам прилику да се бавим јогом и медитацијом у природи.					
Имам прилику за пешачење и планинарење.					

14. Испод су наведене услуге, производи и атракције, најсклоније руралним дестинацијама и њиховом окружењу. Молим Вас да назначите "примарно", "секундарно" или "ирелевантно" у зависности од важности горепомнутих за Ваше путовање у сеоске средине.

	Неважно	Незнатно важно	Неутралан/на сам
Локални догађаји/манифестациј.			
Културне атракције (нпр. манастири, цркве, музеји)			
Природа и пејзаж			
Вођене туре			
Јахање коња			
Пешачење и планинарење			
Спа центри и услуге			
Сувенири			
Смештај у сеоским домаћинствима			
Етно-села			

Appendix 2. Survey questions – in English

Hello, the questionnaire that is in front of you is part of the student's research conducted by Tanja Marinković within the Master thesis of the University of Tartu in Estonia. By completing this anonymous survey, your opinion will be of great help for identifying motivational factors for participating in rural wellbeing tourism and tourism attributes to which rural destinations can attract future “wellbeing” tourists.

The average time to complete the survey is 5–10 minutes and there are no right or wrong answers, only those that best suit your preferences and views. The results of the survey will be used exclusively for scientific and research purposes.

Please answer the following questions as honestly as possible and thus contribute to the research.

Thanks in advance!

Social-demographic characteristics

1. Gender

Male

Female

2. Education

Elementary school

Secondary school

Bachelor's degree

Master's degree

Doctoral degree

3. Age

Younger than 20

20–29

30–39

40–49

50–59

Older than 60

4. Type of residence

Village

Small town (up until 10,000 citizens)

Medium-sized town (10,000–100,000 citizens)

Big city (100,000 and more citizens)

5. Monthly income (average salary in Republic of Serbia is 59 772 RSD)

Below average

Average income

Above average

No income

6. With whom do you usually travel?

With partner

With family

With friends

Alone

Other: _____

Wellbeing travel motivations

Foreign authors define “wellbeing” as the multidimensional state of being that describes the existence of positive health of body, mind and soul. Wellbeing is tightly associated with being in nature, self-improvement, improving health by different treatments and personal development.

7. Are you interested in taking on a wellbeing holiday?

Yes

No

8. Are you interested in purchasing wellbeing services during your holiday?

Yes

No

9. If wellbeing services are started to develop in Serbian rural areas, would you be interested in using them?

Yes

No

10. Below are listed some statements which refer to importance of wellbeing holiday attribute and services. For each statement please indicate to what extent the attributes and services are important to you.

	Not important	Slightly important	Neutral	Important	Very important
The possibility to take part in fitness and wellbeing seminars					
The possibility to refresh physically and spiritually					
The possibility to go to sauna					
The possibility to practice healthy lifestyle or special diets					
The possibility to enjoy health spas					
The possibility to get local and healthy food from the restaurants					
High hygiene level of the provided services					
The possibility to take part in active well-being services (e.g. sport, fitness)					
The possibility to get treatments that promote health (e.g. acupuncture)					
The possibility to get pampering treatments (e.g. honey treatments)					
The possibility to get local food made from ingredients that are organic or are produced locally					

11. Below are listed some statements which refer to reasoning of taking a wellbeing holiday. For each statement please indicate to what extent you agree with them.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Somewhat agree	Completely agree
I want to improve my health					
I want to indulge in luxurious experience					
I want to have a feeling like I was pampered					
I want to relieve from stress					
I want to get away from daily routine					
I would like to relax and to enjoy myself					
I want to reward myself for working hard					
I want to rejuvenate my appearance					
I want to be seen as fashionable					
I want to experience something new					
I want to have fun					
I want to feel healthier					
I want to improve physical health					
Source: Dimitrovski & Todorović, 2015 with modifications					

12. Below are listed some statements which refer to activities and elements of taking a wellbeing holiday. For each statement please indicate how much you value it for your wellbeing holiday.

	Important	Slightly important	Neutral	Important	Very important
Diverse beauty and pampering treatments					
Diverse sauna, pool and steam bathing					
Preventative services					
Fitness activities					
Attractive environment					
Services for mind and soul (yoga, meditation)					
Professionally skilled staff					
Diverse entertainment and cultural services					
Comfortable accommodation					
Curative treatments					
Healthy food					
Hiking, trekking and similar outdoor activities					
Source: Tuominen et al., 2014					

Rural attributes important for developing rural wellbeing tourism

13. Below are listed some statements which refer to rural attributes which attract you the most visit to rural destinations. For each statement please indicate to what extent the attribute is important to you.

	Not important	Less important	So-so	Important	Very important
I can feel relaxed in the rural area					
I do not need to rush according schedules					
There is a calm atmosphere					
I can enjoy beautiful landscapes					
I can spend time outside in the nature					
I can explore cultural heritage (churches, museum, monasteries)					
I have an opportunity to eat local food					
Rural destinations give an opportunity to have good time together with people you travel with					
I can improve my health by spending time in rural areas					
I have an opportunity to experience true rural life, far outside urban cities					
I can visit historic sites					
I can enjoy mountain landscapes					
I can participate in local events					
I can make handicraft					
The destination gives opportunity to meet local people					
I can get to know my host and help them out in the household					
I can relax and rejuvenate my mind, body and spirit					
I can go trekking and hiking					
I can do yoga and meditate in nature					
Source: Pesonen & Komppula, 2010 with modifications					

14. Below you can find listed services, products and attractions which usually best describe rural destinations and surrounding areas. Please mark “primary”, “secondary” or “irrelevant” depending on the importance of those for your rural vacation.

Service/product/activity	Primary	Secondary
Local events		
Cultural attractions – (e.g. churches, monasteries, museums)		
Nature and landscape		
Guided tours		

Horseback riding		
Trekking/hiking		
Spas		
Souvenirs		
Rural household accommodation		
Ethno-villages		

Appendix 3. Summary of wellbeing motivations from literature review

Author	Sample	Findings
Zoltán (2018)	Árpási Respondents who reside in Budapest, Pest and Békés	Most important motivational factor on the case of Budapest is the opportunity to relax and the enjoyment of indulgence.
Mak, Wong and Chang (2009)	Focus group of Hongkong spa-goers	Results suggested several main motivational factors: Relaxation and relief, Escape, Self-reward and indulgence, Health and beauty and Friendship and kinship as the least significant factor.
Koh, Yoo, & Boeger Jr (2010)	Customers visiting hotel spas in Texas	Four main benefits discovered were socializing, relaxation, health and rejuvenation.
Dimitrovski and Todorović (2015)	Visitors of Vrnjačka banja	The results showed there are six dimensions of motivation among wellness tourists: rejuvenating, socialization, excitement, hedonism, obsession with health and beauty, relaxation and escape.
Chen and Prebensen (as cited in Pesonen & Komppula, 2010)	Wellness tourists in three Taiwanese wellness resorts	Taiwanese wellness tourists have stated relaxation, recreation and experiencing nature as the most popular motivators.
Konu and Laukkanen (2009)	Potential tourists at travel fair in Helsinki	Results suggested three main motivation factors: Health and physical activity, Self-development, and Relaxation and escape.
(Pesonen & Komppula, 2010)	Rural tourism customers in Finland	Main motivations of rural wellbeing tourists found are “relaxing away from the ordinary, escape from a busy everyday life, hassle-free vacation, getting refreshed, having a sense of comfort and having an opportunity for physical rest”.

According to Pesonen's (2012)	Rural tourists in Finland	Rural tourists are often motivated by learning and exploring different cultures, participating in outdoor activities searching for peace and solitude.
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Table 2. Summary of wellbeing motivations adapted from literature review.

Appendix 4. Summary of wellbeing destination's attributes from literature review

Author	Findings
Pesonen et al. (2011)	Authors acknowledged two main segments in Finland: Sightseers and Culturals. The first segment represents those most intrigued by history and attractions, and the second depicts those more increasingly inspired by culture and appropriateness of the surroundings for children and pets.
Konu, Tuohino, & Komppula, (2010)	Main components of Lake Wellness product discovered were: "activities of spirit and mind, and self-development; health promoting services; healthy cuisine; accommodation; treatments and services of inner and external beauty; activities aimed at relaxation and comfort; and tailormade movement/fitness services"
Pesonen's (2012)	What attracts Finnish rural tourists the most are outdoor activities and hassle-free environments.
Pesonen & Tuohino (2017)	Most intriguing rural wellbeing activities for Fins discovered were walking in the nature and outdoor sports, followed by pampering services such as treatments and spa.

Table 3. Summary of wellbeing destination's attributes adapted from literature review.

RESÜMEE

TOURISM PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT FOR RURAL WELLBEING IN SERBIA

Tanja Marinković

Healuturism on välja arenenud inimkonna kasvavast tähelepanust oma tervisele ning see on väga suure arengu- ja eduvõimalustega tööstusharu. Selle magistritöö eesmärgiks on hinnata healuturismi kontseptsioonide kasutuselevõtu potentsiaali Serbia Vabariigi maapiirkondades. Heaolu maapiirkonnas on selles töös käsitletud kui spetsiifilist ideed, mille alusel oleks võimalik välja töötada uus turismitoode, mille abil tõsta Serbia riigi konkurentsivõimet turismiturul.

Uurimustöö käesoleva magistritöö jaoks viidi läbi aprillis 2020. Info kogumiseks viidi läbi elektrooniliselt veebipõhise küsitlusega, mis töötati välja Google Forms keskkonna toel. Küsitluse tulemusi analüüsisid oli autori eesmärgiks mõista serblaste motiveerivaid tegureid healuks ning uurida, millised maaelu aspektid on serblaste arvates kõige olulisemad healuks. Küsitlus loodi Serbia Vabariigi kodanikke silmas pidades, kes oleksid potentsiaalsed kliendid maalähedasele healuturismile. Küsitlust jagati kolmes suure kasutajaskonnaga maalähedase turismi groupis Facebook'i keskkonnas eesmärgiga koguda võimalikult laia taustaga turismi tarbijate arvamusi olenemata vanusegrupist või soost. Näidis valiti juhuvaliku meetodil ning küsitlusele andis infot kokku 119 vastajat.

Uurimustöö tulemusel selgub, et healupuhkuse põhjused on seotud lõõgastumise, stressi maandamise, tervise parenduse ning igapäevase rutiini murdmisega. Käesolev informatsioon toetab juba olemasoleva Serbia uurimustöö tulemusi ning mitme välisuurimuse tulemusi. Uurimustöö tulemustest selgub, et vastajate jaoks on kõige olulisemad healu soodustavad tegevused seotud tervisliku toidu, mugava majutuse ja

väliharrastustega. Uurimustöö tulemused ei toeta olemasolevaid vaateid, et heaoluristid on peamiselt huvitatud poputavatest ravikuuridest, spaadest ja saunadest. Kokkuvõttes näitab kogutud informatsioon, et vastajate arvates on maalähedastest tunnustest kõige tähtsamad loodus ja selle lähedus, ilusad maastikud ning võimalused tegeleda väliharrastustega nagu matkamine ja jalutamine.

Käesolev uurimustöö toob esile kaks olulist aspekti turismitoote arenduses – turistide motiivid ning sihtkoha tunnused. Autor tõi välja uusi teadmisi, mida saab rakendada maalähedaste heaolutoodete arenduses Serbias. See uurimustöö anna oma panuse olemasolevatele heaolu uuringutele ning esitab tugeva aluse edasistele maalähedase heaoluristide uuringutele Serbias. Lisaks sellele on selle uurimustöö tulemused kasulikud turismiekspertidele, kohalikele omavalitsustele, maapiirkondade juhtidele ning teistele otsustajatele turismisektori arenduses.

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supervised by Melanie Kay Smith,

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Tanja Marinković

18/05/2020