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**INCREASING SPA ATTRACTIVENESS AMONG MEN:  
CASE OF ESTONIA**

Master Thesis

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Recommendation for permission to defend thesis

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This Master Thesis has been compiled independently. All works by other authors used while compiling the thesis as well as principles and data from literary and other sources have been referred to.

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## INTRODUCTION

Modern Spa Tourism has developed globally into one of the world's largest (and youngest) leisure industries. Global wellness tourism on the other hand has been identified as a growing trend in the industry with the wider economic impact already. In recent years things in business environment have changed and businesses become more and more complex nowadays meaning that managers are under greater pressure as they need to survive in the market place. Managers face the true fact hereby that if there is no customers there is no businesses operating too. However satisfied customers are important to companies because, a higher percent of all sales are being derived from repeat purchases. Global competition has increased dramatically, a larger selection of products and services is available to the same customers. Nowadays society is fast changing and demands something new and never seen before. In order to be successful and meet effectively the increasing demands of customers, the manager need to know, understand and manage it's customers better- their needs, expectations, demands, wishes. This applies to all areas, including spa and wellness too.

The popularity of going to spas among men has risen, but still the visitation could be more intensive and there seems to be room for better and focused advertising of spas to men too. The answer of how does spas reach men nowadays and how it is possible to educate men about the benefits of spas in order to see them more often there, is quite challenging task. Therefore the author of this master thesis has chosen current topic related to men and spas to investigate more about men consumer behavior as a spa client. Hereby the title of the master thesis is „Increasing spa attractiveness among men- case of Estonia. It is necessary to study such topic, because seems like men (specially Estonian) have certain prejudice about going to spas- they think like it is more „women thing“. In the world it is a trend that men are going more often to spas and there are even special Men Only Spas already. This made the author think it would be great to find out how is the situation with men spa visitors in Estonian spas and what do they expect from the spa visits.

The main problem in current study is related to possible men behavior differences compared to women while visiting the spas, which was one of the aims that the author wished to confirm through the research. Therefore there has been formed following research question: „What factors influence the use of spa services among men?“ Problem setting is based on that, spa managers are little aware of men client preferences and expectation. Attracting them into spas is really much related about the the image of spas and the marketing, but of course there can not be forgotten attention to special towels, decor, activities, services etc.

The chosen research method to conduct for this current thesis was mixed methods of quantitative and qualitative method. Therefore the author decided to collect data with questionnaires among Estonian men. Additionally to questionnaires there was also conducted semi-structured interviews with Estonian spa hotels managers. Whereas the data was collected using two different ways- questionnaires and interviews- then also the data needed two different methods to be analyzed. In this master thesis there was used content analysis for the interviews and statistical analysis for questionnaires

The paper consists of four main chapters, where every part of them is divided into subchapters. The first chapter describes the concept of consumer behavior, its evolution, introduces different consumer behavior models used within years, explains the consumer buying decision process and looks closer different factors that influence male consumer within spa also. Secondly the author examines the consumer behavior in marketing strategy, give sense to target marketing and marketing specially for men in spa area and overall. Third chapter of this thesis is devoted to chosen research methods, sampling, limitations and different procedures. Fourth part will concentrate on the questionnaire and interview results and authors suggestions for Estonian Spa Hotels which could help them to attract more men to their spas and design more male friendly services.

The ojectives of current thesis is to identify factors that are influencing Estonian men while visiting spas, find out their expectations while visiting the spas. The overall aim is to make suggestions according to the questionnaire results to the spa hotels with the

purpose of improving the spa attractiveness among men. In order to reach the objectives and the aim of this thesis paper, the author has set up following tasks:

- Providing an overview of thematic literature regarding consumer behavior and its importance in creating marketing strategy and how men are analysed within consumer behavior researches
- Designing appropriate questionnaire for male spa goers and non-spa-goers
- Collecting data by using questionnaires for Estonian men online and being on the field herself
- Conducting semi-structured interviews with the Estonian spa managers
- To analyse collected data from questionnaires and semi-structured interviews
- Making conclusions according to the results
- Presenting findings of the research and make recommendations to the spa hotels

This study will include practical suggestions for Estonian spa hotels to make improvements in the required areas.

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# 1. THEORETICAL APPROACH OF CONSUMER BEHAVIOR CONCEPT

## 1.1. Concept of consumer behavior

Everyone is a consumer as they buy food daily and other products that they consume themselves. Moreover buying, consuming and selling is seen as the core of life in most of the developed countries (Engel, Blackwell, & Kollat, 1978). This is why consumer economics is looking more closely the consumer movement and consumer behavior that reflects who buys what, how, when and why (Goldsmith, 2005). Also it studies the forces that impact consumer choices in quickly changing world. Nowadays consumer is operating in much more complex marketplace and consumer being sovereign makes controlling the resources very difficult. Terms like „customer“ and „consumer“ are being used constantly interchangeably and therefore it is good to define those terms in order to differentiate and use them in right context. According to Doole, Lanchaster & Lowe (2005, pp.25) the definition of those terms is as follows:

*„ A customer is an individual or organisation who buys a product or service; a customer is the person who uses the product and service or may be affected by its purchase“.*

It could happen that customer and consumer is the same person and it might not happen. Customers are the one that make the purchase (buying decision) and understand what they need from the product or service while consumers define the value. Doole, Lanchaster & Lowe (Ibid, 2005) also point out that another term „client“ is confusing when distinguishing it from the term „customer“. Nevertheless customer of services is often being named as clients. In this current thesis context the customer and consumer is seen and treated as the same person meaning that male spa visitors are the ones that make the purchase in form of different spa services and also experience (consume) it themselves. As spa is also a service provider, then male spa visitors therefore has been described as clients too.

Howard (1989) defines Consumer Behavior in simple words as knowledge which explains and predicts how and what consumer use to buy. Furthermore it helps to think about consumers and also provides with a language to talk to them. Nevertheless consumer behavior involves much more than just the way how person purchase something whether it is product or service. Hoyer & Macinnis (2008, pp.3) have brought out the complete definition of consumer behavior that indicates following:

*Consumer behaviour reflects the totality of consumers' decision with respect to the acquisition, consumption, and disposition of goods, services and activities, experiences, people and ideas by (human) decision-making units (over time).*

Consumer behavior is like a process were purchase is only one stage. It is needed also in order to educate the consumer: when doing so the consumer is taught to evaluate the offerings and the look in a much more sophisticated manner (Kindra, Laroche, & Muller, 1989).

## **1.2. Evolution of Consumer Behavior**

Consumer behavior today is far from the consumer behavior defined and studied by economists in earlier years. Yet Kindra, Laroche, & Muller (1989) bring out that consumer behavior seeds may have planted in the early 1930's already, when it was called in a business philosophy as „consumer engineering“. Consumer engineering led in turn to clear understanding that there is need for more information than a knowledgede of business practices and techniques. Kindra, Laroche, & Muller (Ibid, 1989) also notice that pioneering contributions to consumer research during late 1950's and 1960's made the way for the discipline of consumer behavior.

Howard (1989) on the other hand considers the serious development of the consumer behavior field to be started in 1960's, when Ford Foundation asked a two-year study from the state of knowledge of marketing in American business schools. The intention of this study was also to enlarge the level of teaching and research in American Business Schools. As came out from the study, then consumer behavior at that time was

only researchable area in marketing overall. There was even started to do systematic researches about how and why consumers buy. This knowledge in turn led to the development of market research. All of previous progress steps in consumer behavior history happened in one certain time phrame according to Engel, Blackwell, & Kollat (1978). Being more specific, then for the purpose of convenience Engel, Blackwell, & Kollat (Ibid, 1978) bring out and specify clearly three periods in the development of consumer behavior research: pre 1960, 1960-1967 and 1967 to the present time.

Additionally to previously mentioned steps and time period of pre 1960, it can be said that the major consumer researches done before 1960's were mainly conducted to answer pragmatic questions. In marketing literature, the consumer behavior was only occasionally the subject of scholarly inquiry. Furthermore, textbooks at that time explained behavior mainly in terms of long lists of different motives like primary, secondary etc. Much of the theory of behavior was quite unerealistic and the outcome at that time was nothing more than „armchair thinking“ (Engel, Blackwell, & Kollat, 1978, ).

1960-1967 time period reflected a need that was felt by practitioners in order to understand consumer motivation and behavior with bigger precision. In this time period the first real step towards maturity was taken, that had influence on the field of marketing and consumer behavior in particular. Namely the first truly integrative model of the buyer behavior, which is also known later as Howard-Sheth Model, was presented by John Howard in 1963 for the first time. This model was principally an attempt to explain brand choice behavior over time. Block & Roering (1979) explained Howard-Seth Model with four sets of constructs or variables: input and output variables, hypothetical constructs and exogenous variables. This pioneering effort provided needed direction to the approach to analysis of consumer behavior.

The last time period is defined as „1967 to the present time“ and then started to appear already courses in consumer behavior, though there was still absence of integrative theoretical perspectives. There also started to increase literature about it and examples of different form models. Everything changed in 1968, when there was published first book in consumer behavior, that was at that time the first real text in the field (Kindra, Laroche, & Muller, 1989). The same book included then already the first version of the

current Engel, Kollat, Blackwell Model (See Appendix 1) and also earlier Howard model (See Appendix 2), that was added more variables and specifications. Engel, Blackwell, & Kollat (1978) still considered those models of consumer behavior relatively sophisticated in one sense that they were elaborate flow charts of the behavioral process that was depicted. However number of significant advantages are offered through use of these conceptualizations.

### **1.3. Integrative Models in Consumer Research**

Throughout the time there has been used different models regarding with consumer behavior and decision process. Models objective is to gain an understanding as a system through clarifying relationships within inputs, motivational determinants and goal-oriented behavior (Engel, Blackwell, & Kollat, 1978). Sometimes the buying process can be very simple and on the other hand very complex depending on the product or service that is being bought. Hereby consumer behavior theory's several roles offer real benefits, both from conceptual and practical point of view explaining why differences exist in buying. Hereby two conceptualization that have proved to be most influential in terms of frequency of citation in published research are The Howard Model and The Engel, Kollat and Blackwell Model.

John Howards first model and pioneering work in 1969 was strengthened during the same year in cooperation with Jagdish Sheth (Please see Appendix 1), with whom they collaborated and published „The Theory of Buyer Behavior“ (Engel, Blackwell, & Kollat, 1978). There was 12 primary functional relationships specified in that model, but of course after that there was several revisions more. This earlier version of that model suffered also from some conceptual difficulties, but still the great strength of that model was multiplicity of variables that were linked in a precise manner. The same known model of Howards was simplified by Howard (1989) himself in order to understand and explain this complex behavior more easily and market effectively. So it was explained with six components, that are all related to teach other (Please see

Appendix 3). Those three central components (brand recognition, attitude towards the brand and confidence) form the customer brand image and is considered to be also the ABC of consumer behavior. However Howard model excluded post purchase stage only with the exception of satisfaction.

After Howard-Seth model there was another important model of the consumer decision-making process called Engel/Blackwell/Kollat Consumer Decision Process Model (Please see Appendix 2), where was recognized that person is influenced by many forces and firstly each person is motivated by internal basic needs. This model provides an excellent framework for studying and analyzing the consumer behavior and has been used nowadays quite often, but in simplified model. Furthermore, Block & Roering (1979) state that although the issue whether this model is considered to be the best model remains unsolved, then it does cover several areas for analyzing the consumer behavior. Some of the mentioned merits of this model were that the model was logic and covered relevant theories, can be empirically operationalized and was consistent with existing knowledge. One of the most difference compared with Howard model was the treatment of information processing.

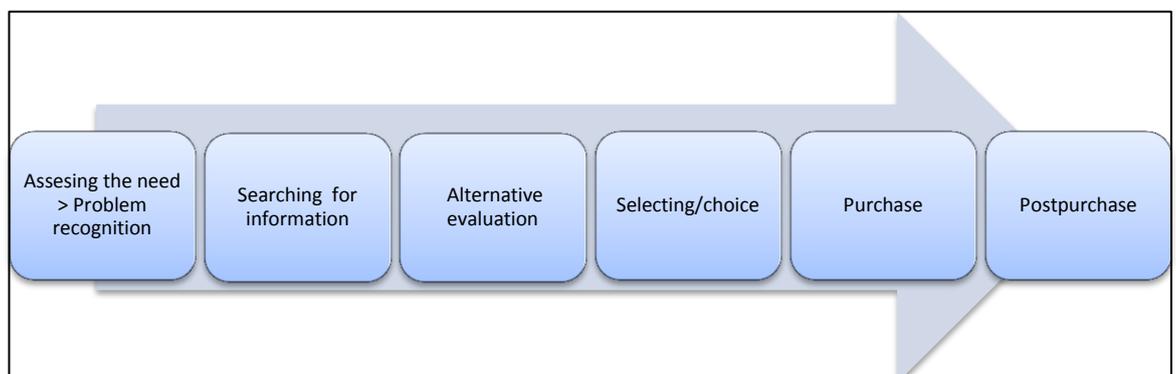
#### **1.4. Consumer Buying Decision Process**

Empirically there are two ways to study consumer behavior: the distributive approach focusing more on behavioral outcomes and the decision-process approach, which describes perfectly the way consumers make their choices (Block & Roering, 1979). Distributive approach hereby is considered to be simple and less expensive, but it provides only partial or incomplete explanation of consumer behavior. Still Block & Roering (Ibid, 1979) emphasize more the decision-process approach, that is more advantageous mainly because it studies the different processes preceding the purchase decision, the decision itself and actions followed after the decision. It also gives more relevant information hereby for the marketing manager which is also why the author of this thesis has chosen to put more emphasis on decision-process trying to find out and determine how Estonian men might make their purchase decisions. However, there is

also needed to pay attention during the purchase decision to the involvement of the male spa guests describing how personally meaningful the purchase is to them.

Consumer decision process, in other words known also as buying process can be described through six steps (Please see Figure 1), that every buyer should pass through with every purchase she/he makes. Those steps are all part of the prepurchase, purchase and postpurchase. Goldsmith (2005) determines four steps under prepurchase part, which actually is phase, where consumer tries to assess how much joy or trouble there might be received when buying a product or service. Convenience plays also large part in consumer decision making. Firstly consumer starts to have the assessing need, that usually reveals when there is difference in consumers current state and the desired state. Something in this stage is needed or desired whereas need here is general, but wants are limitless and often specific. Potential buyer also recognizes a need when there has arisen „problem“ (Reisinger, 2009). Hereby the recognition of a need or problem can be triggered by internal or external stimuli. Also the need/problem recognition may be in this stage whether simple or complex process.

When the needs have been identified, then follows the information search part. Here the information searching is assessed as internal and external. Whereas internal is more common and easier, then external might require more effort like talking with different people, reading additional information from media publications etc. So also the search for information can be done actively or passively. Hereby the most effective sources, however tend to be personal sources as they evaluate the product whereas commercial sources normally inform the buyer (Kotler, McDougall, & Armstrong, 1988).



**Figure 1.** Buyer Decision Making Process (Source: Goldsmith, 2005 pp.153-154)

After all of those previous steps the consumers starts to evaluate potential alternatives based on the previous information search level. Here could be used everything that help to narrow the consumer choices. In this stage there is additionally important considered to be price, additional costs, availability and product/service character as well. The last step of prepurchase part is selecting where is chosen the desired decision.

Other two last stages of buyer decision process is purchase itself, where is done the actual purchase of product or service and postpurchase part. Reisinger (2009) brings out that in purchase stages there can be met three different types of purchases even: trial purchase, when it is first time; repeat purchase and long-term commitment purchase. All this depend how the consumer feels like or has experienced earlier. It should be noted that last stage postpurchase is not less important part because evaluating after purchase might lead to possible next repurchase. The consumer compares his/her experience with the product with initial expectations. So hereby there could be experienced even negative emotions, which could vary by gender. Namely as this research takes closer looks to men customer behavior, then gender as individual difference variable, could moderate relationships between negative emotion, value and behavior.

## **1.5. Major factors influencing consumer behavior**

Unfortunately lots of companies have imperfect picture of detailed consumer behavior in order to compete with their competitors. That is why it is important to know the complete profile of the customer- their needs, expectations and factors that might influence their decisions. Influences can be internal and external from the social environment. The combination of those inputs and and internal factors can be really complex to understand, which is why consumer motivations and behaviour can be understood through research (Engel, Blackwell, & Kollat, 1978). Moreover, motivation and behavior can be influenced by many outside sources.

There are several factors that are influencing the consumer behavior. However Hoyer & Macinnis (2008) classify all those factors into four big groups: the psychological core,

the process of making decisions, the consumer's culture and consumer behavior outcomes. Each of this group is related to all the others. Kotler, McDougall, & Armstrong (1988) classify influencing factors as follows:

- **Cultural factors (culture, sub culture, social class)**

These are the factors that are seen as those, what are influencing how we live, think and communicate and are unique to each person. Also those factors from the human behavior perspective are largely learned and can be dictate how person will act in some certain situations;

- **Social factors (reference groups, family, roles and status)**

The buying behavior can be also affected by relationships with other people around person. Social factors are considered to be one of the most important external factors which are influencing consumer behavior. Furthermore, the persons position in each group can be defined in terms of role and status. Consumption of products gives people a way of identifying themselves in groups meaning that it sets how they should behave morally in society. Learning also takes place in a variety of social reference groups including family, workplace, school etc through sharing values and expectations with others. Family members influence several aspects in consumer behavior and they also might share many attitudes and values, consider each other opinions and divide various buying tasks. A couple for example can agree once on many important purchases and next time they may have strong personal preferences (Shapiro, Wong, Perreault, & McCarthy, 2002).

There is some kind of social class structure almost in every society meaning that people can also move to different social class during their lives and this depends strongly on their education and the work they do. Marketers are interested here to know what buyers in social classes are like and measure the social class groupings mainly based on person's occupation, education and type and location of housing. Hereby it needs to be noted that income level is not included in this list as there is general relationship between income level and social class. Hudson (2005) on the other hand brings out that as a rule, the higher salary people have, the more likely they are to travel as they have more free money to spend on their leisure time. There is also brought out that premium

income earners tend to be those people who have studied at a higher educational level. Still the income levels of people within the same social class can vary greatly, and people with the same amount of income may be differentiated within the same social class even.

- **Personal factors (age, life cycle, occupation and economic circumstance, lifestyle, personality and self concept)**

Buyer's decisions are strongly influenced also by personal characteristics such as buyer's age, occupation, economic situation, lifestyle and even personality. Traditionally markets are usually segmented by age. The different roles of men and women play very important role in consumer behavior. Gender segmentation has long been used in marketing different things, but recently it has been applied to tourism and hospitality products/services too. Though within spa services gender segmentation in marketing has been used rather little (Hudson, 2005).

Regarding with lifestyle analysis in consumer behavior there is examined how people assign their personal time, energy and money. Researchers have even combined psychological variables with demographic into a concept called psychographics measuring mainly people's activities, interest and opinions. By profiling the way groups of people live, it is possible to predict their travel motivations and purchases. (Reisinger, 2009).

The sense of self concept determines who exactly the individual is and how is he/she related to the concepts of personality, identity and attitude. Furthermore the concept of life cycle is seen as the different stages that people might pass as they mature meaning that their behavior is different in life stage- being single, living together, having kids etc. Hudson (Ibid, 2005) is confident that this all can affect the travel patterns and destinations variation as people move through their life cycle

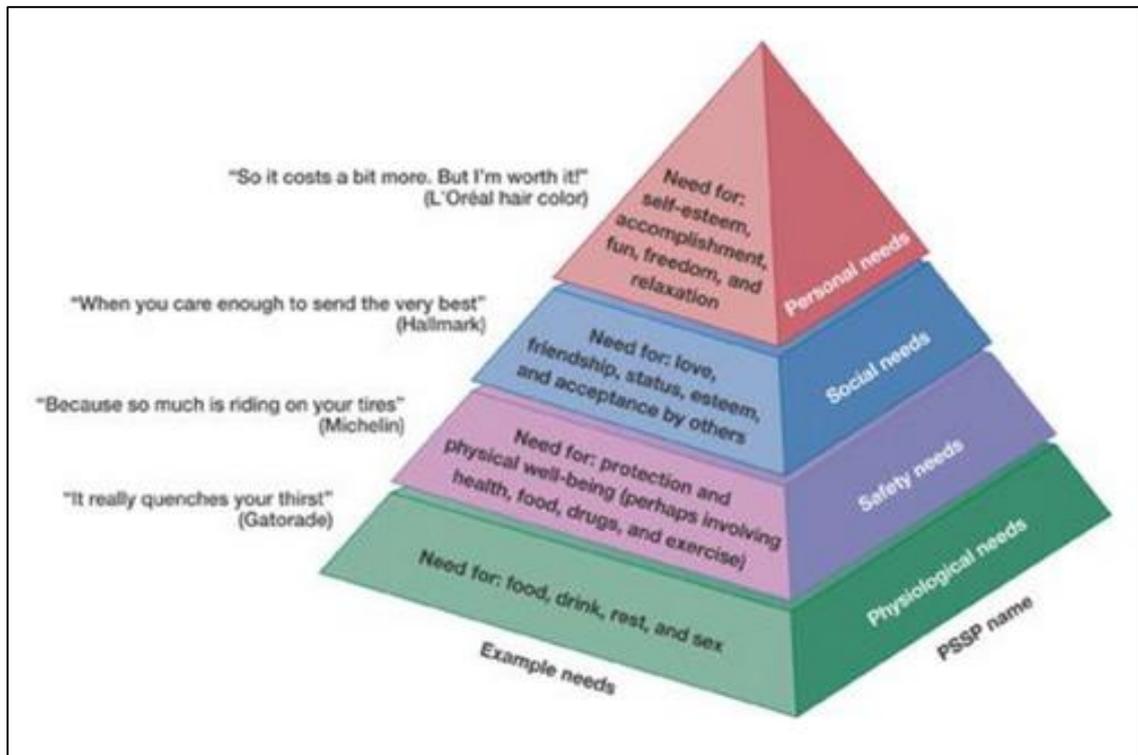
Occupation for example affects the purchase for goods from the salary perspective as people in higher occupations get more salary and therefore they can afford to buy more expensive things rather than cheap ones.

- **Psychological factors (motivation, perception, learning, beliefs and attitudes):**

These factors are all considered to be inner factors causing people to take action and influence their purchase decisions. Understanding the key triggers that lead to the purchase is vital for being competitive in the market. Motivations are seen as a major and most important determinant of the tourist's behavior and the main theories of motivation is the concept of need (Reisinger, 2009). Motivations hereby are those inner drives that cause people to make a move and act in order to satisfy those needs. Everyone is motivated by needs and wants, whereas needs are seen as the basic forces motivating people. Behavior will not occur unless it is motivated or energized by a specific need. Shapiro, Wong, Perreault, & McCarthy (2002) define needs as „*the basic forces that motivate the person to do something*“ and wants as „*needs that are learned during person's life*“. Whereas needs are more basic than wants. Usually when needs are not satisfied then this may lead to a drive, which causes the action to reduce a need. In other words- when buying a product or service, then people do not buy actually the service, but the benefit- the need or want satisfied by that feature. That is why there can be brought out several important needs that might motivate person to some action.

Nowadays best-known motivation theories is still Maslows hierarchy of needs, which is probably still so popular because of the simplicity- person always tries to satisfy the most important need first. Additionally to the field of psychology where it was originally developed, it has been applied also to other areas. Though Maslow identified five different levels of needs, then Shapiro, Wong, Perreault, & McCarthy (2002) discussed a similar four-level hierarchy, which was easier to apply to consumer behavior. According to their PSSP Hierarchy of Needs (Please see Figure 2) the lower level needs is physiological, followed by safety, social and personal needs. In that following illustrative figure there are also included companies advertising slogans, that show how they have tried to appeal to each of this need. Physiological needs are concerned usually with biological needs like food, drink, rest whereas safety needs are more concerned with protection and physical well-being. Social needs are more related to love, status, friendship for example. Higher level need- personal needs- are concerned individuals's need for personal satisfaction including fun, freedom and relaxation.

Motivation theory suggests that people never reach a state of complete satisfaction. As soon as the lower level needs are satisfied, higher levels become dominant.



**Figure 2.** The PSSP Hierarchy of Needs (Source: Shapiro, Wong, Perreault, & McCarthy, 2002, pp164)

Other factors influencing motivation and purchase include learning, beliefs, attitudes and perception. Because attitudes involve liking or disliking and emotional feelings, then they in turn affect the selective process, learning and also buying decisions. Being rather difficult to change as they are ingrained feelings about various factors of experience, attitudes are not a perfect predictor of behavior, but they are rather important to understand. Hereby Babin, Griffin, Borges, & Boles (2013) bring out that service experience are characterized by emotions that help to shape value in use received by the customer. Negative emotion plays an important role in all of consumer psychology and all too often consumers experience some degree of negative emotion during a consumption experience. Furthermore, with the sample of female and male

mall shopper they found out that negative emotions affect the shopping experience more for women than for men in terms of perceived value and loyalty.

People gain experience through different actions and variety of sources meaning that from that experience is formed the basis of learned criteria and according to that are selected future experiences. Beliefs on the other hand, which can be positive or negative, refer to the thoughts that people might have about different aspects of their lives (Hudson, 2005). However perception is thought to be an overall mind-picture about the world, shaped by the information that people filter and the retrieve. Even regarding perceptions there are gender differences. One example here worth mentioning could be Arslanagic, Peštek, & Kadic-Maglajlic (2014) research results, that showed that the gender difference revealed in their perceptions of healthy food packaging information and therefore they need to be targetted separately. According to that study women were more influenced by advertisements, while men were influenced both by advertisements and the credibility of packaging information. Therefore companies targeting men should also worry about creating trustworthy and believable information available on packaging.

## **1.6. Specific aspects of male and spa customer behavior**

Health issues are important to study also from the consumer behavior standpoint because lots of money nowadays is spent on health and body products. Furthermore, well-being and wellness equally are needed to study even further in consumer economics, because the human beings health is the greatest asset that human being has (Goldsmith, 2005). Smith & Puczko (2009) note that the concepts of health and wellness acutally mean different things in different contexts, countries and even cultures. Nevertheless those concepts are being used inter-changeably all the time and that is why it should be pointed out that health tourism includes medical and cure aspect whereas wellness is representing more preventative aspect than curative. It has been noticed that people who consume wellness services show higher health awareness than

others. Such people are eager to do something for their healthier lifestyle, they are conscious about the nutrition and do physical exercise too. Wellness address human health in holistic or comprehensive sense and assumes that each person will actively take part in protecting health, preventing diseases and will not leave or count on medication. So hereby consumer health is the complete containing the decision that consumers make about their health care, including products and services that they buy or decisions they make about their lifestyles. That is why spa could be also seen as part of the consumers health and well-being helping to prevent sicknesses or on the other hand help to relieve it. ISPA (2013) defines spas as „places devoted to overall well-being through a variety of professional services that encourage the renewal of mind, body and spirit“. According to Estonian Spa Association (2013) there are three main categories and classification in Estonian spa hotels: 1) Medical Spa Hotel, 2) Spa/Wellness Hotel, 3) Medical and Wellness Spa Hotel. For the classification purposes there is used the same rating system as the hotels apply for stars.

Another key aspect that should be noted in consumers lives affecting health is their well-being, that is made up of variety factors. The human well-being is even measured in world and countries are listed by Human Development Index (HDI), that compares the progress of nations by using the same measures of quality of life across globe. Such well-being can be freely offered in developed countries also from the workplace, that encourages workers to go to incentive trips to spas or stress relief workshops. Problem at the moment is that such people with non-diagnosed mental troubles are paying on their own very high prices for a wellness-enhancing holiday. Changes in future regarding this are coming as it becomes economically sound for governments to encourage preventive wellness- preserving good health rather than curing illness (Smith & Puczko, 2009).

Field of health, wellness and tourism is moving on extremely quickly. Modern Spa Tourism has developed globally from the first small businesses of the 1980's and 1990's into one of the world's largest (and youngest) leisure industries (ISPA, 2014). Global wellness tourism on the other hand has been identified as a growing trend in the industry with the wider economic impact already. Keeping up with all of the needs of clients seems to be great challenge. Even more complicated makes this issue the fact

that wellness is umbrella term including 6 components: physical, emotional, intellectual, spiritual, social and environmental well-being (Floyd, Mimms, & Yelding, 2008). Therefore wellness encompasses the whole lifestyle that includes nutrition, fitness, stress management, spirituality.

When reviewing tourism motivational studies, then it examines why people travel and why not whereas there have been observed differences in gender motivations. Travel experts also say that women travellers are more demanding than male travellers. Actually the same can be applied to spa, meaning that those studies help to find out why people, specially men go to spas and why not. Such studies seek to explain the internal and external driving forces, understand the stages of buying process and decision-making criteria as well as trends in consumer behavior affecting visiting the spa. Furthermore, those basic 2 factors- push and pull factors- used making decisions in travel are again relevant when talking about spa consumer. Namely push factors in spa concept are those that make you want to visit spa and pull factors are those that affect the spa choice (Hudson, 2005). The concept of tourist behavior as well as spa guest behavior can be explained in relation to topics associated with consumer behavior earlier (Reisinger, 2009). Researches that are focusing on wellness consumer behavior and trends are both relatively new and poor. Those researches that does exist are focused more on health and wellness products and goods, but not on wellness-related services. Additionally it can be said that already existing wellness consumer researches tend to focus more exclusively on the U.S. market (Global Spa Summit, 2010). Also there could be said that other spa-related researches focus on customers expectations of service quality, preferences and motivations.

Spa and Wellness industry is more and more opening up for men. Therefore it is increasingly focusing nowadays on men and spas though it is usually assumed that spas attract mainly females. The reasons for this state Smith & Puczko (2009), have not been explored in greath depth, but women seem to have always been far more interested in their physical appearance, weight concerns, make-up and haircare than men. Also the majority of customers and service providers tend to believe that wellness, spas and health are terms that only women find interesting. Visiting spas is considered as not manly. This is rapidly changing of course. There have been several trend reports by

researchers and practitioners forecasting men to become future women or they show a growing demand for various wellness services. The concept of Men and wellness was seen as a joke until now. Obviously this is due to the social expectation, fashion, media pressure. According to ISPA 2007 (cited by Smith&Puczko, 2009) men accounted more than 40% of spa goers in Australia, Austria, Germany, Japan, Singapore, Spain and Thailand. However, the in urban hotels and those that cater for business travellers, the gender split is closer to 50/50 and in some cases they outnumber female clients. As stated Hilton Blue Paper (2012) then men are a real, captive audience and must be paid attention to as a market. Nevertheless, it is acknowledged that the needs of male spa guest are very different to those of women. Which is why there is needed to note following key differences:

- Men prefer no-nonsense approach to spa and want to know that treatment selected will be effective. Being pampered is less important to them
- Men are more aware than ever about looking after their skin. Globally skin care products are developing twice as quickly as womens
- Whereas men skin is biologically different from womens skin then they need and want different approach for their skincare routine
- Men are also willing to experiment with products and services to find the ones that will best meet their specific needs

There has developed even new term called Metrosexual men created by the English writer Mark Simpson, who describes it as a young man with money to spend, living in or within easy reach of a metropolis as there are all the best shops, gyms and hairdressers. This men might be officially gay, straight or bisexual, but he loves himself. One example here could be David Beckham, who is seen very often in different magazines. Sales of men lifestyle magazines have grown in the past five years in Australia. It seems like today's young, wealthy male wants to move forward as they are not expected only to dress well but look good and smell good. Men are also more prolific shoppers and spend quite much on clothes. (Neal, Quester, & Hawkins, 2006, 4th Edition). Byrnes (cited by Beck, 2014) even identified five male shopper stereotypes: the metrosexual, the maturiteen, the modern men, the dad and the restrosexual.

This shows clearly that some men's roles are changing and marketers need to recognise and respond to these changes if they want to capture their interest and loyalty. This could be also a reason why many grooming products are now targeted at men. Neal, Quester, & Hawkins (2006) see that gender roles are ascribed roles meaning that an ascribed role over which individual has limited or no control. This in turn can be contrasted with achievement roles, which are based on performance criteria, over which the individual has some control. Individuals can within limits, select their occupational roles (achievement roles) but they cannot influence their gender (ascribed role). Marketers and managers can make a huge difference if they recognise those changes and follow recommendations (Smith & Puczko, 2009):

- To avoid „Men Welcome“ spas: meaning that owners have recognized the growing market of men but haven't developed a proper mens treatment menu;
- To try crossover spas with a partner: this way was originally catered to women, but they brought along their partners;
- To have The hybrid salon/spa concept, which could be the modern twist of traditional barbershop but with masculine surroundings for example;
- To try the men-only spa concept: first such men-only spa was already opened in New York 2002

Customer loyalty is one key factor to profitability as when customers are more loyal to company, they might be do revisits and also give positive feedback to their friends and family. There has been several discussions about customers loyalty as well- namely whether women are more loyal customers than men. According to popular theories of gender differences women should be more loyal consumers. However Melnyk, Van Osselaer, & Bijmolt (2009) research revealed that female customers are more loyal to individuals service providers whereas male customers were relatively more loyal to groups and companies.

Because of the lack of healing assets in Northern Europe people don't believe that much in the beneficial impacts of medical waters and this has resulted in health and wellness being based on relaxation and mainly includes fitness services, massages, baths with hot water and saunas mainly. It is very typical to Nordic countries, that the sauna often represents an integral part of everyday life (of course specially in Finland) rather than

being a luxury that is associated with wellness programs (Smith & Puczko, 2009). Hydrotherapy and water-based treatments can be considered as the cornerstone of what European spas have traditionally offered so far with a focus on health and physical well-being. In recent years there have been added cosmetic and beauty treatments, which have become more popular, as well as spiritual or psychological activities. Thanks to the improved healthcare regimes and preventive wellness techniques in Europe, then spas have shifted increasingly from physical and medical to more relaxing and pampering activities. Whereas for Northern Europe people the main reason why to go to spas are related more with saunas, then it might not be the same in other cultures.

Unfortunately relatively little research has been undertaken about the profiles and motivations of health and wellness tourists. This is why it is easier to look at the motivations of tourists and patterns of behavior or type of activity than to identify specific segments or target markets. The importance of men in the spa market is demonstrated by Mintel 2011 research (cited in Smith & Puczko, 2014) in the European men's grooming market with an increase of 45% since 2005 with the greatest growth in Germany and Spain. Euromonitor 2011 (cited Ibid, 2014) data also shows that this market is growing. Some of the leading spa brands like Clarins, Thalgo, Sothys, Germaine de Capuccini etc have now even ranges, that are specifically designed for men's skin as their skin is with thicker epidermis and intense cellular activity.

## 2. CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR IN MARKETING STRATEGY

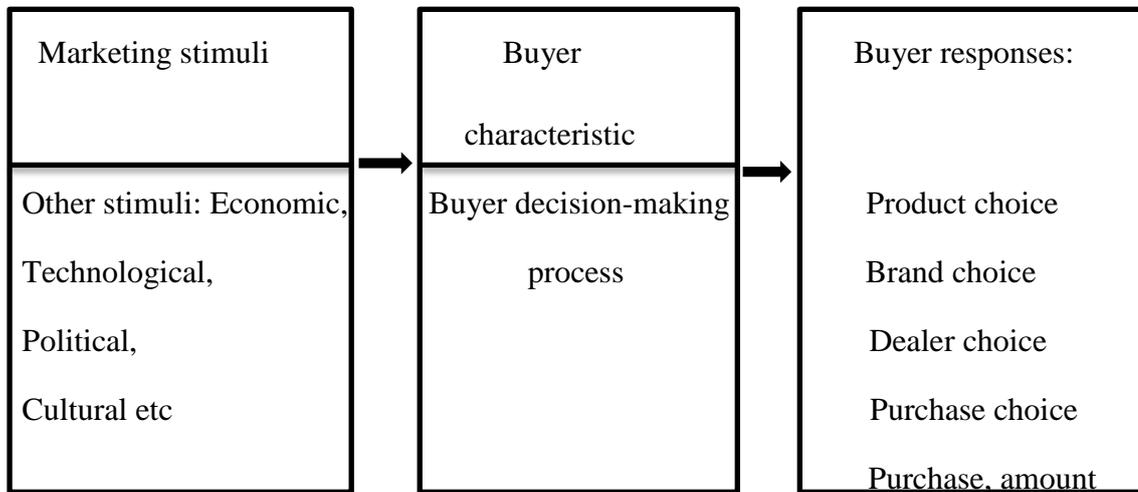
Marketing is more than only selling or advertising as many people might associate it with. It has strong impact on persons day-to-day life and in broader perspective it plays a big part in economic growth and development. More than that, marketing is a very broad set of activities required ensuring that consumers get what they want and need (Shapiro, Wong, Perreault, & McCarthy, 2002). It is ongoing problem for all researchers, advertisers and marketers to try to calculate changes in human needs. However, the cornerstone of marketing theory has been considered to be the satisfaction of the consumer. This is also why there is need to know and understand 3 related aspects of consumer behavior analysis that are consumer motivations, consumer typologies and consumer purchasing process (Hudson, 2005). Marketing managers get critical information from the consumer behavior research. Interpreting the results of analysis of consumer behavior helps to design better marketing strategy and also set the plans. Hoyer & Macinnis (2008, pp.17) have highlighted the American Marketing Association's definition of marketing, that defines clearly why marketing managers need to learn in order to know about consumer behavior:

*„Marketing is the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large“*

Therefore knowing the customer and the specific of his/her behavior is vitally important for the marketing managers, because only then they know what consumers and clients evaluate. Furthermore, this helps them to develop and deliver right product and services to their clients. It is obvious that company, which understand consumers will respond to price, different product features and advertising has a great advantage in the market over its competitors. Before marketing strategies can be developed, the consumer behavior needs to be understood. Nevertheless, the construction of standard model of consumer behavior is also quite problematic. Whereas inputs and outputs can be defined, then there are intangible elements involved with the buyer characteristics and choice determinants that are more unnoticeable. Kotler and Armstrong (as cited in McDonald

& Kolsaker, 2014, pp. 27) themselves describe it as „black box“and in other words even opaque! During the time there has been created simple models for marketers, who can develop deeper understanding of consumers in order to acquire and retain the custom. One of the basic models for studying the human behavior by Engel, Blackwell, & Kollat (1978) was described earlier. The result and inference is that things taken place cause the individual to act as he or she did. Furthermore Engel, Blackwell, & Kollat (Ibid, 1978) see antecedents as the inputs or stimuli triggering the action and lastly behavior as the output or result. As the the individuals mental process can lie between inputs and outputs and might be hidden forever from the view, then they are sometimes described as being located within impenetrable black box.

Among the other models of consumer buying behaviour, the Kotler´s black box model seems to be the most revealing one with its psychological approach (Please see Figure 3). It is very difficult to read consumers mind and therefore consumer is named there as black box. There are seen 2 categories of input: internal stimuli over what the marketers have control (namely the expanded marketing mix as service marketing demands obviously more than known 4P´s of product, price, place and promotion; including also people, processes and customer service). Secondly there is external stimuli over which they have little or no control. However, Seshadri (2006) claims that learning, perceptions, personality and other factors that motivate the consumer either to buy or not to buy the product/service is very difficult to predict.



**Figure 3.** Black Box Model of Consumer Buyer Behavior

(Source: McDonald & Kolsaker, 2014, pp.28)

In order to offer best service to clients it is really important to understand consumer expectations. Furthermore expectations could be categorized in three different ways (Bagdan, 2013). Firstly expectations are evaluated by the type of signals the business puts out and which set the level of expectations for consumers. Those are considered to be explicit and implicit expectations. Explicit expectations hereby are those that are fully expressed and set by promises that are made either by staff, menus, advertisements, contracts etc. Implicit expectations on the other hand are related to those expectations that are not fully expressed and are set by decor, location, prices etc.

Another way of defining consumer expectations are by level. The best outcomes that exceed the typical expectations are called ideal expectations and are wow-moments for the clients. Reasonable expectations are the standard ones and usually the expected outcome. The least and not the ideal one for most of the guest would be the level of minimal expectations, which is advantage for the competitors of course. The last way of defining expectations according to Bagdan (2013) is primary and secondary. Primary (efficiency, professional service, knowledge) are the main expectations of the service experience and are assumed while secondary expectations (competence, pleasant staff) are less important to basic.

## 2.1. Target marketing

It would be really easy to develop effective marketing when all consumers respond to the same message in the same way (Shapiro, Wong, Perreault, & McCarthy, 2002). However, when talking about creation of economic value for customer, then the biggest challenge lies in the diversity of customer needs and preferences. No company can satisfy everyone's needs and therefore needs to identify various needs and select some broad areas. Hereby Kotler, McDougall, & Armstrong (1988) bring out three different possible marketing types: mass marketing, product-differentiated marketing and target marketing. Today companies are moving away from mass marketing and product one towards target marketing. Understanding the consumer behavior helps the market managers to specify which of the consumer groups is appropriate to target for marketing tactics. Hereby comes to help demographics, which refer to the data used to describe populations or subgroups and this is often applied to the study of consumers who are grouped by age, gender, race, educational level, income, marital status etc. Obviously marketers find these useful ways to segment consumers in order to reach them better. Failure to realize changes in demographics has been the downfall of many enterprises. Segmentation based on sex has long been used in clothing, hairdressing, cosmetics and magazines. However they do not limit advertising only to demographic characteristics alone and personality, tastes, lifestyle play remarkable role in consumer behavior as well as the statistical grouping (Goldsmith, 2005).

Marketers also need to identify who is more likely to be involved in acquisition, usage, and disposition decisions. Marketing-oriented managers know that segmenting involves clustering people with similar needs into a market segment (Shapiro, Wong, Perreault, & McCarthy, 2002). Market segmentation involves developing specific marketing programs targeted at consumer groups with unique needs and purchasing processes (Neal, Quester, & Hawkins, 2006). Another strategic choice that McDonald & Kolsaker (2014) prioritize is deciding how the offering should be positioned in consumer's mind. The product or service needs to be different from the competitors one. After the segment has been determined, then the hotel needs to specify the customers requirement as well, because it is needed for making the predictions about future needs. Good

knowledge about customer purchase history, lifestyle and life stage can help the market managers to develop the pattern for buyer behaviour, which in turn can be used for better marketing strategies (McDonald & Kolsaker, 2014).

Doole, Lancaster, & Lowe (2005) highlight even the new consumer phenomenon nowadays, that emerged throughout the 1990s very largely as the result of a series of social, political, economic and cultural changes in society. The new consumer differs from the old by being more globally oriented, demanding, discriminating, willing to complain and less brand loyal (Reisinger, 2009). This means that companies need to satisfy somehow differently those demanding needs. Shapiro, Wong, Perreault, & McCarthy (2002) observe that marketing stimulates research and new ideas, which result in new designed goods and services in order to differentiate from the other competitors. Therefore the difference between a successful and an unsuccessful service company is often the way in which customers are welcomed. The attractiveness of the decor and nice personality of the workers influence the customer's impression of that specific hotel or spa. All of previously mentioned should be designed into the service. The need of designing the services and moreover managing them is also supported by the fact that according to the data of 2011 Population and Housing Census (cited by Statistics Estonia, 2013) 70% of the working population in Estonia was employed in service sector. Competitive advantage can be achieved by understanding what customers want and then by giving it to them in profitable manner, through well-managed design.

With new product it is possible to protect the design from being copied through patents or registering the design, but unfortunately it is not possible with a service. The only way how to be better than the other service providers is to make the design better suited for the potential customers needs. The process of designing services is similar to any design process. As the new service development might be costly, it is important that before launching the new service that the extensive market research is done in order to know whether it is worth proceeding. The same applies with services- they need to be tested and prototyped with the intention not to avoid failures, but to identify them in early stage. (McCabe, 2014)

Design should have much wider scope than just covering traditionally only the „designers“ area. In order to succeed, all the aspects of a new product innovation must be a success- starting from market research, followed by production and good design, selling and good marketing (Hollins & Hollins, 1993). The same theory can be applied also to service sector as service product is very similar to a manufactured product. Services have been defined differently during the times, but in its simplest form it is an intangible product, which often can not be stored. Generally it can be said that with service products there is more customer contact and the customer's experience is almost as important as the service they receive. However, the service is often produced and consumed simultaneously and involves every time also the client. According to (Goldsmith, 2005) the product development has been divided into four different stages. When introduction stage include product development then in growth stage easily recognized brands are already aggressively marketed to keep sales growing. These stages are followed by maturity stage, where the product/service is well-known and accepted. In last decline stage there might be that the product is not produced anymore. The structure of any designing process is iterative meaning that every stage it might be necessary to take step back or even start from the beginning (McCabe, 2014). There is number of methods and tools to use in order to understand customers, to identify touchpoints, map customer journey, to create ideas, to test prototypes etc. Office of Government Commerce (2007) in turn highlights that it is important that a holistic approach to all of the aspects of design is adopted, and when changing individual elements all the other aspects should be considered as well.

## 2.1. Marketing to men

Marketing to men is also little bit different than marketing to women for example. The significance of the new consumer can one way best be understood by the changed and changing roles of men and women. According to Neal, Quester, & Hawkins (2006) neither the women's market nor the men's market is as homogeneous any more as it was before. Nowadays modern women work more and roles are shared meaning that products targeted at the women's market reflect changing gender roles. It also seems like that some products are losing their traditional gender stereotyping and many products like cars, alcohol, other masculine products are now being designed even more with the women in mind. Whereas women are more influential participants in the decision-making process and they are taking a more active approach to leisure, then male roles have changed tremendously as well during the times. For instance, males are increasingly involved in the shopping process. As gender roles have changed then marketers need to develop communications strategies that appeal to the different groups. Marketing to men in the world and also in Estonia still requires straightforward message, masculine wording and shapes and functional elements with a touch of personaility. Smith & Puczko, 2009 state that in comparison, men may prefer different modes of relaxation, some of which have wellness dimesnion like sports or fitness activities. The labelling that is used to target men needs to take a different form, as it is unlikely that beauty or pampering would not sound appealing for them. For example spas can sell their services to men, but like tools for relaxation or stress relief.

Males have obviously different expectations and needs in term of retail outlets. As male shoppers are becoming increasingly involved in shopping whethr with children, for buying clothes etc, then the store layout, advertising, product assortments and sales force training will need to adapt to their needs as well. Many supermarkets have already responded to this in some ways when having increased the space devoted to specialty departments that particularly appeal to men (hardware, automotive supplies etc). Another appeal for implementing other strategies for the male shopper could be late store hours as men hate crowds and prefer according to McDonald & Kolsaker (2014) hopping at odd hours to avoid congested stores. Some examples of attracting more male

shoppers are those, where men are included in fashion parades or even in catalogues so that their shopping experience could be more exciting. There are even specifically designed areas for grooming and skin care products nowadays. Demographics, subcultures and gender roles all influence consumption behavior and importantly influence consumers.

Cramphorn (2011), who reviewed in his research gender differences from the hormonal flows perspective found out that advertising directed to just men only or just women only were more effective. The reason why he made that research was because when investigating and comparing the advertisements, there was less than 15% of ads directed specifically to women and less than 5% for men whereas remaining 80% were apparently targeted to everyone. This shows that there are opportunities for much more creativity and variety to use in advertising messages regarding communication opportunities. Some of the suggestions brought out in that study were: intrigue male with symbols and abstractions, use relevant celebrities and personalities and make music when you advertise!

In marketing to men there are additional considerations according to Hilton Blue Paper (2012) that must be taken into account:

- Men want to know that the spa product or service was made specifically for them and not simply a woman's product changed to masculine packaging. That's why in spas they have treatments designed with the male spa goer in mind;
- Men do not want pampering and rather want to feel fit, well and younger longer through treatments that point rejuvenation, relaxation, detox and nutrition;
- For male, the treatment menu language needs to be clear and specific to their needs as men do not buy bluff- they want real facts, communicate about the benefits and provide resolution;
- Men are more impulsive and plan their spa visit with short notice. This means that spa marketing materials need to be more visible to guests during their stay;
- Men tend to be loyal spa-goers. If they are provided with their desired results, then they are likely to return again.

Furthermore Smith & Puczko (2014) mention that spas should ideally have separate male treatments menus with simple packages including facials, massages and hand/feet treatment. Regarding treatment menus consumer want certain solutions that work, but at the same time are also personal- they are seeking menus that are simple, easy to navigate. Men may be even interested in nutrition products (vitamins for health and wellness for example). The design and interior of the spa also needs to appeal to men as much as to women and there can be area dedicated specially for men. Decor ideally could be neutral and even colour of robes, slippers or towels is playing important role here. Spas have to be very careful about how they market their services as it is very important to male clients that they still look masculine, which is why spas are choosing colours so they do not look to girly. Men probably need larger wardrobes or slippers than women to be really comfortable. According to several studies, around 60% of men go to the spa to have a massage and 40% go because they are stressed. Tsai, Suh, & Fong (2012) research results showed that the most cited reason for example why Hong Kong male spa-goers patronized a hotel spa was relaxation and the most consumed service was body massage. Moreover the Environment factor was the common factor that significantly influenced male spa-goers overall satisfaction, likelihood to revisit and to recommend. It was also considered that male spa-goers would have less desire to revisit the spa, when spas do not offer male-friendly services. Another thing noticed was that photographs in spa brochures or advertisement often feature female models which could refer to potential male spa-goers that. Spas attract people to offer them possibilities to relax, even more- these markets for tranquility and well-being today is enormous and diverse (O'Dell, 2010).

One of researches done in Estonia regarding spa and men could be brought out here by Lumila (2012). Her research regarding with the spa area, which aim was to get an overview of customer preferences and expectations among products and services in Hera Salons in Tallinn also reveals in results that there was demand for more interesting treatments for men. Namely the respondents were asked to name some additional services that they would like to have in Hera salons and this was one of the comments that was noted most. What was even more remarkable about it, is that male respondents made up only 26% of all the respondents and this important statement hereby was done by foreign spa male visitor probably. Furthermore the author in the same thesis context

interviewed the spa manager when she also specified about services for men and according to the spa manager opinion they had enough treatments meant only for men and there was no need to add more. However the spa manager brought out in the interview that starting from 2012 (the year when the research was conducted) Hera Salons had special page with treatments for men. This situation out of several ones shows clearly that the spa managers opinion and spa goers expectations don't match from the male spa customers side.

### **3. THE EMPIRICAL STUDY OF CONSUMER BEHAVIOR AMONG ESTONIAN MEN**

#### **3.1. Research aim and methods**

Nowadays society could be considered also as information- dominated society, where people are overloaded of different facts, figures and news. This leads also to different and countless information sources and even vulnerable to misinformation. That is why consideration of which sources of knowledge are more trustful than the others. Furthermore, information is useful only when it is also accurate. (Ruane, 2005)

It is very important in every research project to define clearly its objectives or questions in order to determine the central purpose and keeping the focus till the end (Thomas & Hodges, 2010). One of the objectives of current research was firstly to investigate the attitudes of men towards spa visitation and furthermore to explore what factors motivates and affects their own visitation. Therefore the author addressed the problem question: „What factors are important and influence men while visiting spa?“. The final goal was to make suggestions based on the research results to the spas for improving the spa attractiveness overall among men.

Usually great amount of researches does not fit clearly only into one category or another and that is why the best solution is to combine features from both research methods- quantitative and qualitative (Thomas, 2003). Those methods equally can be used very effectively in the same research project. Furthermore, using mixing methods has become very popular way of thinking in order to approach the research question in variable ways (Bergmann, 2008). Therefore the author has chosen according to the stated thesis question and problem setting to combine both qualitative and quantitative research methods. The choice for mixed methods was seen as the most appropriate method with a greater value to answer the raised research question. However Thomas (2003) brings out that usually researchers place their emphasis still on one or another research method. The same has been done also by this research author, who has emphasized more on quantitative method therefore.

Due to previously mentioned constraints the questionnaire and interview were seen as the most sufficient data collection methods to use in current research. Though the main focus of this research will be on questionnaires, then additionally to analyzing the information received from the male spa customers, the author decided to add value to the planned study by using also qualitative research and interviews as data collection method.

Whereas the data was collected using two different ways- questionnaires and interviews- then also the data needed two different methods to be analyzed. In this master thesis there was used content analysis for the interviews and statistical analysis for questionnaires. Due to the choice of two different research methods, the author has explained more in detail both of them separately. Next subchapters will give a profound overview of the research approach from the questionnaire and interview perspective.

### **3.2. Questionnaire procedures, sampling and limitations**

When choosing the appropriate survey method, then there are some factors that need to be considered in order it suit for the particular study. Questionnaires are particularly suitable when the research problem needs a descriptive design and when there is need for gathering information from large number of respondents (McNabb, 2010). Furthermore, questionnaires can be desgined to determine what people think, know or how do they act in some situations.

Taking into considerations those advantages the author has considered the quantitative research to be one of the most suitable research to use during the study. More specifically, questionnaire was seen as appropriate method to investigate the research problem and to understand more in detail the male behaviour and their push and pull factors while they visit spas. The reason is because it is giving better overview of real life situations and there is not used artificial experiments, which might affect the final result for making suggestions. Qualitative research in this situation suits better because

it focuses more on describing researched characteristics, its appearance among population and general public tendency (Vanderstoep & Johnston, 2009). Only disadvantage is that as the study contains usually many participants, then received answers might not have much depth. Therefore questionnaire design, questions wording and structure must be thought through very carefully in order to handle well those answers afterwards. It is important to begin this process by collecting relevant, valid and reliable information.

However constructing effective questionnaire demands really good skills as questions must be arranged in logical order and must be worded in such way that the meaning is clear to people of all backgrounds (McNabb, 2010). Coming to the structure of questions of current study, then here the author had to decide about the amount of freedom she planned to give to the respondents. Mainly all of the questionnaire consisted of close-ended questions. Regarding with those questions the respondents were provided with a set of pre-determined and fixed response alternatives, where was also include „Other“ possibility in case the respondent did not find something suitable from the choice. There was also included some open-ended questions, so that the respondents can share their thoughts and unique answers to the question posed. Though open-ended questions are easier to answer, then they suffer lower response rate than closed-ended (Ruane, 2005). This is also why the author had only 5 open-ended questions, where men marked their birth year, shared their thoughts about prices in spa and also commented about their best spa experience they have had so far. Questions related to the respondents personal and demographic characteristics (birth year, education level and marital status) were place at the end of the questionnaire. The reason for doing that is because according to the Parasuraman, Grewal, & Krishnan (2007) such questions could irritate some respondents and might affect their wish even to complete the rest of the survey. Also sensitive questions that might embarrass or put the respondents into awkward situation, should be more placed near the end of the questionnaire.

With the purpose to find out which factors are most important to male spa-goers, the author listed all together 17 factors in row and the respondents evaluated the importance of those factors. For the evaluation the author used Likert scale. Ary, Jacobs, Sorensen,

& Razavieh (2010) explain that Likert scale, which is named after the developer Rensis Likert, is most widely used technique to measure attitudes. The Likert scale helps to assess attitudes toward certain topic, where the respondents are asked to indicate for each topic or statement whether they strongly agree, agree, are undecided, disagree or strongly disagree.

The survey results were analyzed with with special tool- web-server based software called LimeSurvey. This tool was used for analyzing the results of the questionnaire due to the several advantages the software had. LimeSurvey offered survey on-line publishing opportunity, had several response formats, there was possible to use rich text in questions and add images for designing appealing layout for the questionnaire. Furthermore, it provided basic statistical and also graphical analysis of survey results. Additionally, some of the questions in questionnaire needed to be analyzed also with Windows 7 Software Excel separately. The results of the questionnaire are brought out in figures created by the author of current master thesis.

Some of the limitations regarding this study have been addressed. Firstly, as this study mainly adopted a snowball sampling (also known as convenience sampling) method to collect the data, and could gather the opinions of other male spa-goers and non-spa-goers who were not reachable at the time of survey. Secondly there could be much bigger sample of Estonian men in this study and more of men in ages 50 + whereas this sample could limiting the generalizability of the study results. Future studies could include a larger sample or adopt another qualitative technique like focus groups or observation in spas even to validate the findings of this current study.

### **3.2.1. Sampling method**

Information that is being collected with surveys- in this case questionnaires- should be asked from the sample of respondents that are well-defined population (Czaja & Blair, 2005). Furthermore there has been brought out (Floyd J. Fowler, 2009) that everything depends on sample frame, sample size and specific design of selection procedures how well the sample represents the population. As the set research questions was directly related to male spa goers then with that question it was also assigned, who will

participate in the current study. Hereby it was important to choose which men respondents are chosen in the study. According to the data of Statistics Estonia (2014) there was altogether 614 919 men in Estonia as of the time of January 1, 2013. Therefore the author set the goal and planned to get a good sample of 200 responses all together in order to have good comparisons and conclusions among Estonian men. Furthermore, when looking the age groups, then the biggest part of Estonian men were represented in the age range of 25-29 years. This was followed by the age range of 30-34 years, 35-39 years and 40-44 years old men. There was not set goal related to the male respondents age range, but one condition was that the Estonian male respondent is at least 18-years old.

According to (Vanderstoep & Johnston, 2009) there are two ways of selecting the members for a study: randomly or non-randomly. Regarding with random sample each member of the sampling frame has equal chances to to be selected. On the other hand with non-random sample each member does not have equal chance to participate in the study. Sampling of this research was done using snowball sampling method for online questionnaires and random sampling method for on field research.

In snowball sampling there is initially used few persons, who are asked to recommend other potential respondents who fit in the study. Those in turn are asked to suggest further contacts and so is the sample builded up (King & Horrocks, 2010). Though snowball sampling is seen also as convenience sampling, then there are circumstances that King & Horrocks (Ibid, 2010) bring out, when it could be most appropriate strategy. Such situations are namely those where the population to be sampled is hard to access and are tightly defined. Therefore the questionnaire was chosen to be available online for the respondents in order to provide quick access to the questionnaire. Following the snowball sampling principle then first 10 male respondents were chosen from the acquaintanceship and from them the author asked to give next three potential male respondents to include in the research and the same tactic way forward was used till the end. Surprisingly the amount of respondents increased unexpectedly quickly, which justified greatly using online based questionnaire, that turned out to be very effective .

With the reference of current study the author used also random sampling, where all the participants were chosen based on their characteristics. Those men got a chance to answer to the questionnaire need to be at least 18-years old. The aim was to question both men- those who have been in spa and those, who are not spa goers

### **3.2.2. Procedures**

Regarding with the planned research among men there was designed firstly one questionnaire with a purpose to suit for both groups of men- those men who have been in spa and also those who have not been. The structure of the questions was thought through very carefully and several times with a wish to make answering for men as easy and comprehensible as possible. Questionnaire consisted mainly of close-ended questions, where the respondents selected among already designated set of responses. The author used also couple of open-ended questions, to give men opportunity to express themselves and their experiences with spa. Current pilot study questionnaire was conducted in order to test the logical structure and questions clarity as well as understandability of the questionnaire. Furthermore, the purpose of the pilot was to gather more information and feedback before the main bigger study among Estonian men started. The author also recorded all the problematic issues that revealed during the pilot study and that helped to improved the questionnaire's efficiency and quality before going to the field with it. The author determined aims to achieve with the Pilot Study, found the bottle necks of it, improved the questionnaire and changed questions that were confusing or easily understandable.

Pretesting with questionnaires was conducted on a Tallink ferry boat on a route Tallinn-Helsinki with 12 men on the 25th of February. Selected men were chosen according to criteria that was also followed during the main study. Selected men had to have three main characteristics: male, aged 18 +, Estonian. Previous visitation to spa was not required. The first inspection regarding with all those criteria points to be met, was done visually by the author. When there was potential respondent seen, he was approached and asked whether he was Estonian- the same tactic was used in field study. The author

followed the rule that all the answered men were not friends to each other or were not sitting close to each other. This way was eliminated the possibility that respondents can talk and discuss about the questions with each other or have influence on answering.

Firstly the author planned to question men mainly online, additionally from health & fitness clubs, pubs and sport events. Another possibility was to ask permission from spa managers if it would be possible to leave the questionnaires to the spa reception and they will give it to men only, but in this case usually they are not so active to hand them out unless the spa does not have any benefit from that. During the stage of pretesting and pilot study it revealed that capturing the men to answer the questionnaire in spa, health & fitness club is complicated. Main problem was the timing as there was not the real time when it would be perfect to ask men in a way that not too much of their time is waited. So the author decided to have the field study also on the ferry boat between Tallinn-Helsinki.

### **3.3. Semi-structured interview procedures, sampling and limitations**

Interviewing is considered to be commonly used method for data collection in qualitative research and it has its advantages (King & Horrocks, 2010). When surveys are used for getting the broader picture, then interviews are more interactive and allow to clarify questions. Hammond & Wellington (2013, pp.91) define interview as *„Conversations between the researcher and those being researched, variously termed participants, subject or simply interviewees“*.

Though the main results were expected to find from the questionnaires to men, then the author decided to use the qualitative research method additionally for analyzing the information gathered from spa managers. Including the opinions and comments from the service providers- spa hotels in this case- was with a purpose to find out whether spa managers see male spa customers situation in spas the same way as men themselves. The aim with those interviews was to compare and analyze whether those two parties- demand and supply- match or not. The author considers interviews to be very related to

the problem setting of current research which is based on that, spa managers are little aware of men client preferences and expectation. Hereby interviews helped to assess if this situation is actual or not. Whereas there are several types of interviews between to choose, then hereby the author decided to use semi-structured interviews for evaluating the opinions and values. Same questions were asked from all interviewees, but there was cases where the interviewee talked more detailed things than the answer assumed.

The spas, which managers to interview were all chosen from the Estonian Spa Association whereas to avoid any spa hotel which is using word spa, but does not apply for the spa criteria and requirements. Among those spas there were both represented-medical and wellness spas. The author had chance to interview all together 15 spa managers or head doctors out of 17 spa hotel members from Estonian Spa Association (Please see Appendix 5). All of those interviews were conducted between the time period of March to April 2014.

Unfortunately due to the busy working schedule it was not possible to meet with the spa managers from Tervis and Tervise Paradiis (Pärnu) and Kalev Spa Hotel (Tallinn). Also as there was extension and renovation going on in Viimsi Spa Hotel (Tallinn) during the planned interview time, then they decided not to take part of the current research. Almost all the interviews were done by meeting the spa managers of the hotels in person which gave the author great opportunity to see different spas and also have more active communication during the interview. The interviews lasted around 45-60 minutes mainly.

One of the limitation about interviews in this research that the author brings out, was probably the time spent on interviews when gathering the information. Another thing that made this data collection method time-consuming was the need for travelling and meet the respondents from Estonian different locations. Usually another disadvantage that is mainly related with qualitative research is that the sample sizes are small and the findings might not be good for generalizing it to larger population. There of course might be more spa hotels than analyzed here, but those spa hotels might not even meet the criteria of a spa hotel. Therefore the author sees that the sample with 13 interviews out of 17 possible among Estonian Spa Association spa hotels is enough result for generalizing the results.

## **4. RESEARCH FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **4.1. Questionnaire results**

This chapter of the thesis will give an overview of the research findings of the data collected from the questionnaires. The responses are given in the meaning of what exactly men mentioned in their answers about their preferences, habits, wishes and other factors that might influence their spa visitation. In the end of this chapter and regarding to the findings the author gives recommendations for possible future opportunities in service development and marketing for spa hotels and spa sector overall.

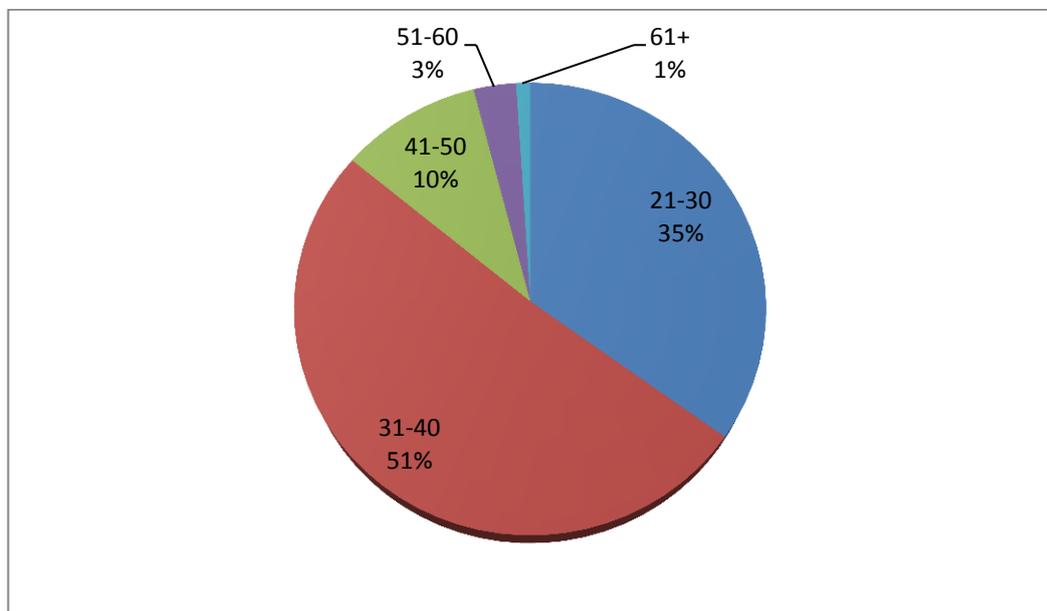
There was all together 565 total responses, but as more than half of the responses were incomplete, then the author decided to exclude those and use only fully responded questionnaire data for analysis. Author had hereby suspicion about possible technical issue in answering online, because there was so many incomplete responses. As this investigation did not give any results neither confirmation to the suspicion, then those incomplete and low quality responses were just left out from the analysis. A total of 275 of qualified questionnaires were collected.

The author also was herself in the research field and conducted the questionnaires among men. In order to get typical Estonian men to answer the questionnaire, the author chose bars in Old Tallinn to visit. In those bars the author sat from 5 p.m. till 8 p.m. five week days in a row and questioned male customers. Furthermore, the author questioned man also on a ferry boat on the route Tallinn-Helsinki-Tallinn three times during the trips to Finland. In summary the author can say regarding field research, that providing men with questionnaires on a ferry boat turned out to be the perfect place to ask man to answer as they had free time there. All together 120 questionnaires out of 275 responses got answered in the research field and then added to the LimeSurvey for getting the overall statistical analysis. It should be noted that all of the respondents were males, which was also the target population of this research.

The research question of the current thesis was „What factors are important and influence men while visiting the spa?“ All of the questions asked from men in questionnaire were with a focus to find out male customer behavior and their specific

when visiting the spa. It was interesting for the author to observe how the opinions of men answered matched or unmatched with the thoughts and comments of spa managers. The results of the analysis have been illustrated with figures and tables.

When coming to the results of the statistical data analysis, then the average age of the questioned men was 33 years whereas the youngest respondent was 21-years old and the oldest 69-years old. The majority of the the respondents (51%) were aged between 31-40 years (Please see Figure 4), which was followed by 35% of the respondents aged 21-30. Less respondents were represented within older generation 51+ age group. In spite of the fact that majority of the respondents were younger people, then it matches well with the male spa goer profile mentioned in spa managers interviews. Namely the male spa goers profile in wellness spa hotels was exactly at the age of 31+ usually according to the spa managers responses. Medical spa hotels clients were more older people which in this research unfortunately were not represented in big numbers. However, at the weekends there was also brought out male clients with the age of 30 + and even younger people, who preferred visiting also medical spa hotel. This shows well that the majority of responded men are potential clients to both spas- wellness and medical ones.



**Figure 4.** Respondent Age Range

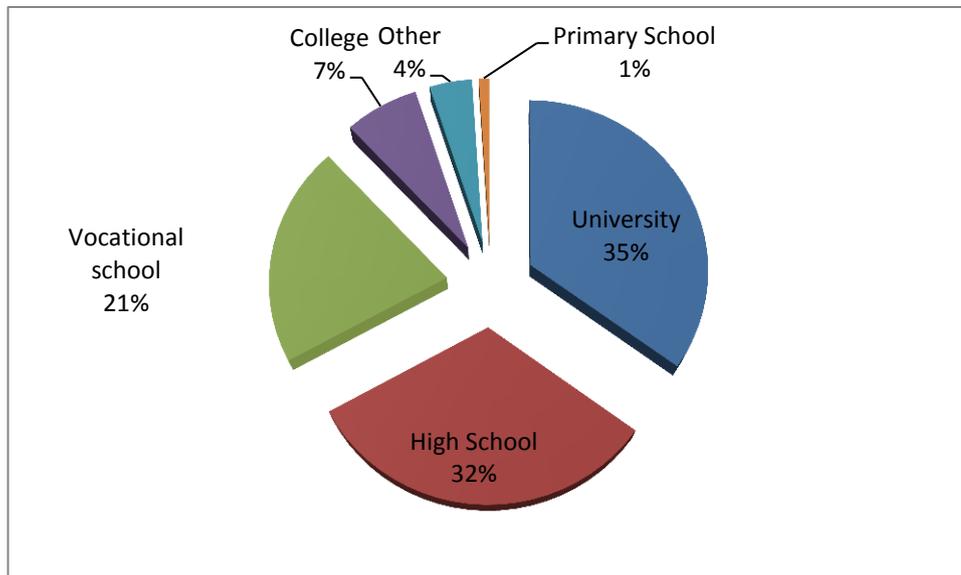
Though quite big part of the men were single (31%), then mainly the respondents were still living with a partner (43%) or were married (21%). Those men together make

remarkably big „group“ in percentages, who might be affected by women beside them from the spa visitation perspective. The purpose of including this question was to analyze whether those men who have female partner beside them are visiting spas more than those men who are single- based on the possibility of women influencing men more to visit spa with them or without. As there was quite big amount of men who had been in spa during last year, then it can be presumed that indeed this situation can be related to respondents marital status and life with women beside them. Moreover, motivation and behavior can be influenced by many outside sources, which in this case is wife or person whi men live together. According to Kotler, McDougall, & Armstrong (1988) this influencing factor classifies under social influencing factors which is specifically affected by relationships with other people around person. Such social factors are considered also to be one of the most important external factors which are influencing consumer behavior- in this particular case male spa-goers consumer behavior. It also should be noted that a couple for example can agree once on many important purchases and next time they may have strong personal preferences (Shapiro, Wong, Perreault, & McCarthy, 2002) when visiting the spa for example.

Understanding the consumer behavior helps the market managers to specify which of the consumer groups is appropriate to target for marketing tactics. Hereby comes to help demographics, which refer to the data used to describe populations or subgroups and this is often applied to the study of consumers who are grouped by age, gender, race, educational level, income, marital status etc (Goldsmith, 2005). That is also why the respondents were also asked about their education and profession as well with the aim to evaluate whether there are strong connections between male education and spa visitation. The author hereby assumed that men with higher education aknowledge more about their health condition and in order to prevent any diseases they take care of themselves including visit spas therefore more.

The respondents of current research in terms of education level (Please see Figure 5) were almost equally either university graduates (35%) or with high school background (32%). This was followed by respondents with vocational school background, representing 21% of all answered men. Men with college education made of 7% of the whole respondents were as only 1% of respondents had primary school education. Men

who mentioned „Other“ as a choice brought out mainly that they were acquiring higher education or had applied higher education.

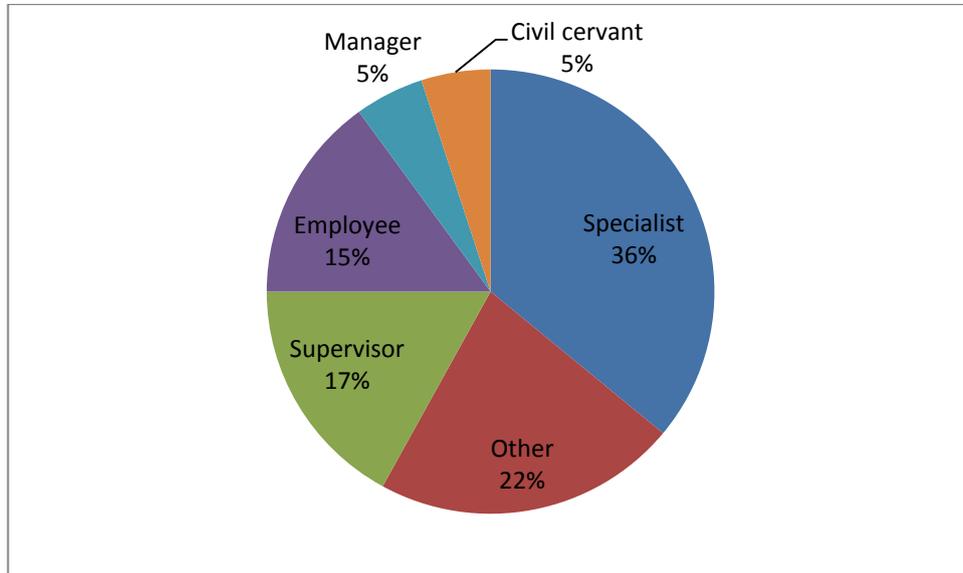


**Figure 5.** Men respondents education level

In order to analyze whether those men who earn more money also spend bigger amounts on their health- on spa services for example- the author wanted the respondents to mark their occupation as well in questionnaire. Occupation for example affects the purchase for goods from the salary perspective as people in higher occupations get more salary and therefore they can afford to buy more expensive things rather than cheap ones (Hudson, 2005). Furthermore, he brings out that as a rule, the higher the level of disposable income people have, the more likely they are to travel, meaning that people have more free money to spend on their free time. There is also brought out that premium income earners tend to be those people who have studied at a higher educational level. Still the income levels of people within the same social class can vary greatly, and people with the same amount of income may be differentiated within the same social class even (Shapiro, Wong, Perreault, & McCarthy, 2002). This revealed also from the current study, where this statement that higher occupations get more money and therefore those men might spend more also for visiting spa and consuming different spa services, did not get confirmation though.

Main part of the respondents (Please see Figure 6) were specialists (36%) by profession, followed by open choice „Other“ (22%) were the respondents brought out entrepreneur

and self-employed occupations. Less representatives were from the supervisor (17%) and employee (15%) professions and only 5% of respondents were doing managerial work or were civil servants (5%) by their profession.



**Figure 6.** Men respondents profession

The aim of this question was to draw parallel to the open-ended questions where the author wanted respondents to write approximate amount what they are willing to pay on one treatment, day in water-based spa and half-day package. There was assumed that the higher position the respondent is the more free money he might have and therefore spends also more on spa services. Surprisingly there could not see any connections or confirm the speculation with the data analysis. Actually the amounts offered were quite mixed and this parallel that more earning respondent by profession would pay more for the treatments or day in water-based spa was not possible to approve. The issue here might be that there were less manager answering to this questionnaire maybe as they made only 5% of the all respondents.

However those offered amounts that respondents mentioned were also quite surprising to the author as men would spend more money on a day in water-based spa than on one treatment. The difference might come also from the situation that men are not aware of the prices of treatment. Hereby the rate range offered for one treatment by men was approximately 25-38 euros, whereas spendings on a day in water-based spa was offered

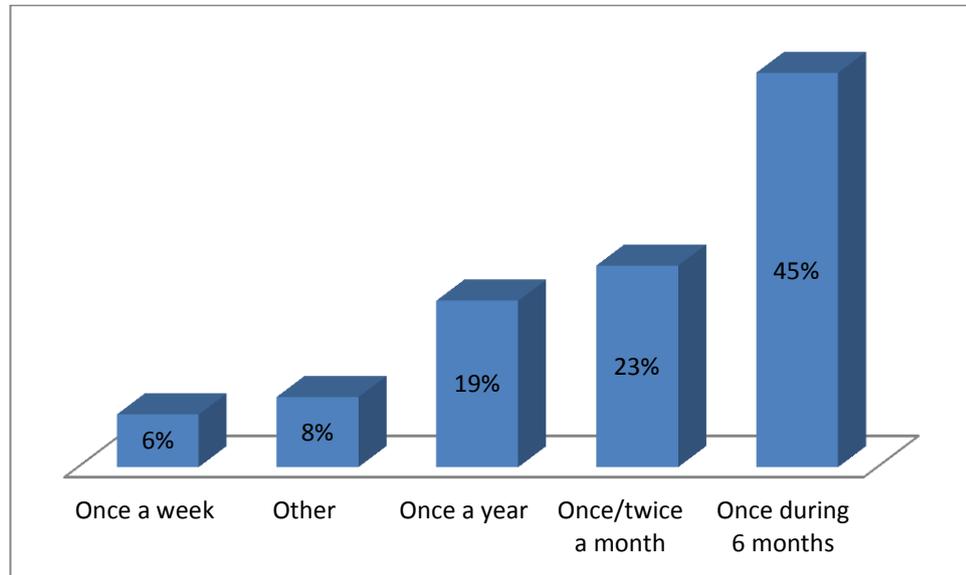
between 33-63 euros. The offered amount that men are willing to pay for a half-day package in day spa was 64-79 euros.

As the questionnaire was for both- those men who have been in spa before and also those who haven't- then there was also asked about whether they have been in spa during last year. It came out that large amount of men (72% of respondents) had visited spa during last year whereas 28% of respondents had not visited spa within 12 months. This big number of male spa goers might be related to the fact that mainly questioned men were living with female partner, which is one of the influencing factors again. The concept of life cycle is seen as the different stages that people might pass as they mature meaning that their behavior differ when they are single, living together, having kids etc (Hudson, 2005).

Another observation and connection to the high spa-goers percentage is that men associate word „spa“ more with saunas and waterparks rather than treatments as revealed from previous responses of men knowledge about wellness and spa. Because of the lack of healing assets in Northern Europe people don't believe that much in the beneficial impacts of medical waters and this has resulted in health and wellness being based on relaxation and mainly includes fitness services, massages, baths with hot water and saunas mainly. It is very typical to Nordic countries, that the sauna often represents an integral part of everyday life (of course specially in Finland) rather than being a luxury that is associated with wellness programs (Smith & Puczko, 2009).

Furthermore, those men who visit spa (Please see Figure 7) do it mainly once during 6 months (45% of respondents). Some amount men of questioned even were visiting the spa 1-2 times in a week (23% of respondents). As referred already earlier then probably those men visit more saunas and waterparks hereby as their understanding regarding spa is like that at the moment. Another thing could be that additionally to visiting saunas men have not discovered yet treatments for themselves or are not aware of the benefits of different treatments. Even Smith & Puczko (2009) note that for example hydrotherapy and water-based treatments can be considered as the cornerstone of what European spas including Estonian ones have traditionally offered so far with a focus on health and physical well-being. In recent years there have been added cosmetic and beauty treatments, which have become more popular, as well as spiritual or

psychological activities. Obviously it takes time before this trend arrives to Estonia and starts to be popular also among Estonia menn. Still it should be observed that Estonian men find at least once a month time to visit spa even though for them it could be with a meaning of saunas. It shows clearly that they take care of their well-being.

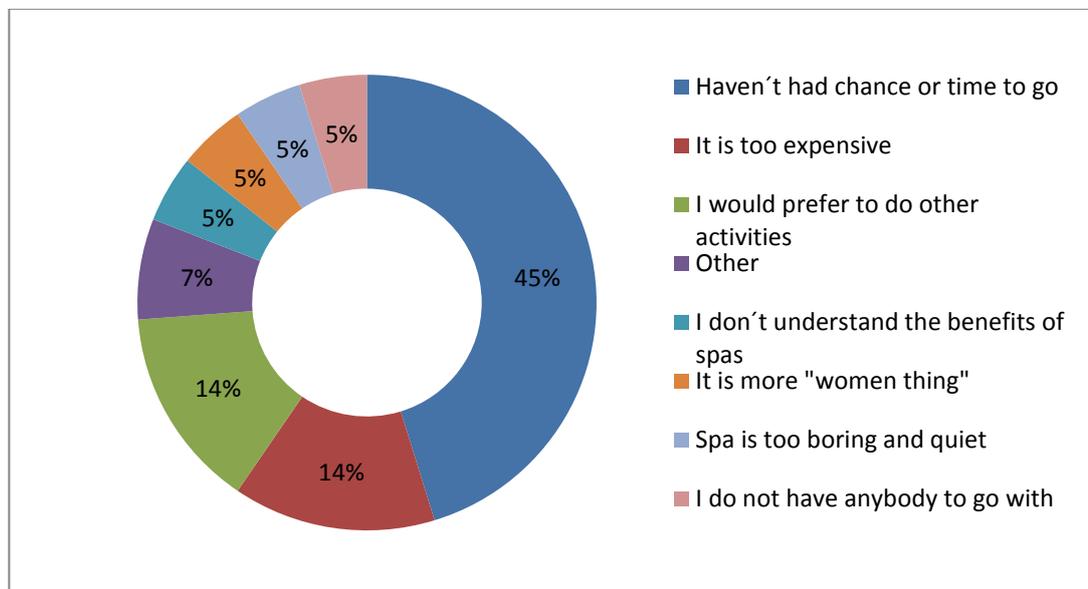


**Figure 7.** Male spa-goers visitation density in spas

On the other hand those men who answered, that they have not visited spa during last year had also opportunity in questionnaire to specify why they have not done that. With that closed-ended question having set choice the respondents were allowed to choos all from the list that applied in their mind. Mostly, as seen from Figure 8 those non-spa goers have not had chance neither time to go to spa (45%), which refers to extremely busy lifestyles nowadays. Equally (both 14% of respondents) were mentioned that spa is too expensive and they would like to do other activities than visiting spa. Under „Other“, which was mentioned by 7% of all respondents were also brought out that nobody has asked the respondents to visit spa or they have not thought about it before. Regarding with lifestyle analysis in consumer behavior there is examined how people assign their personal time, energy and money. As seen from the current research then non-spa goers do not have time neither they can find time to visit spa. Additionally they consider visiting the spa expensive entertainment. Researchers have even combined psychological variables with demographic into a concept called psychographics

measuring mainly people's activities, interest and opinions. By profiling the way groups of people live, it is possible to predict their travel motivations and purchases (Reisinger, 2009). Estonian non-spa-goers interest hereby is to do other activities than visiting spas. Another explanation to that might be also that they have lack of knowledge about spas meaning that they are not eager to go so spa whereas they do not feel comfortable with the spa concept they know. Here the author sees that spa hotels should educate Estonian men about the spa and wellness benefits to their own well-being.

Inevitably such attitude, if not affected or changed by spas, end up losing potential clients as men are not that aware of the spa benefits. Because attitudes involve liking or disliking and emotional feelings, then they in turn affect the selective process, learning and also buying decisions. Being rather difficult to change as they are ingrained feelings about various factors of experience, attitudes are not a perfect predictor of behavior, but they are rather important to understand. Hereby Babin, Griffin, Borges, & Boles (2013) bring out that service experience are characterized by emotions that help to shape value in use received by the customer. Changing those values is number one priority to marketers.

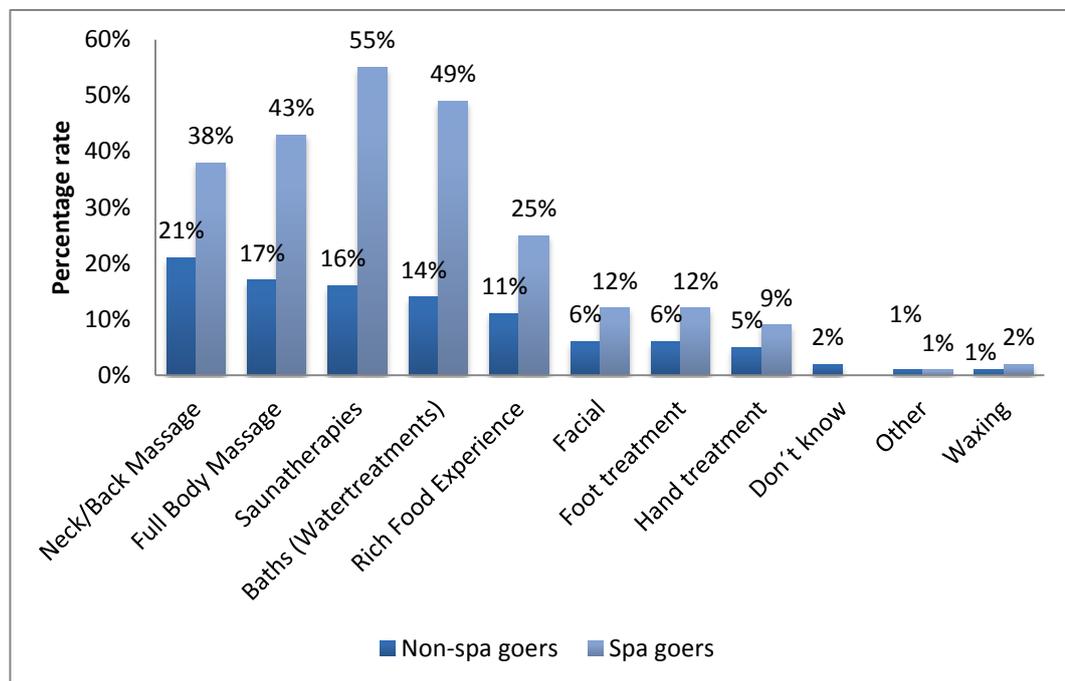


**Figure 8.** Reasons why non-spa-goers have not visited spa during last year

Good side about previously mentioned quite negative reasons is that most respondents among non-spa goers were interested in visiting spa in near future. Accordingly 46% answered „Yes“ and 42% responded „Maybe“ to this question. Only 12% of respondents were not interested at all to visit spa. This shows that even when the male have not been in spa before because lack of time or other reasons, then major part of non-spa-goers would still like to visit spa if there is a chance opening. Furthermore those men who had not visited spa were also asked to mark services that they would be interested to experience. Mostly mentioned treatments came out to be neck/back massage (21% ) or full body massage, mentioned by 17% of respondents (See Figure 9). Followed by treatments containing saunatherapies (16%) and baths/water treatments (14%). These results show expressively that those men who have not been in spa before make quite safe and simple choices. They would choose rather classical treatments including saunas, massages and treatments related to water than facial or treatments for feet and hands. Treatments related to water might be in this context in their mind probably pools, which explains also it's high answering frequency compared to other experiences. Such choice can be explained by Smith & Puczko (2009) that thanks to the improved healthcare regimes and preventive wellness techniques in Europe, spas have shifted increasingly from physical and medical to more relaxing and pampering activities. Of course such favourites can be changed in cultures and countries, but comparing for example with Hong Kong male spa-goers, then the most cited reason for going to spas was also relaxation and the most consumed service was body massage (Tsai, Suh, & Fong, 2012). This might be coincidence and is not researched deeper if and what factors influence male spa-goers visitation within different countries for example.

This question with the same service and experience choice in spa was given also to those male respondents, who were visiting spa constantly. Their task was to answer which of listed experiences they had received in past. There can be noticed some difference with those men who have not been in spa during last year. But the main offered treatment responses somehow cover each other. Mainly male spa-goers had experienced saunatherapies (55%) and baths/ water treatments (49%). Also from the experienced treatment list, men mentioned more full body massage (43%) and

neck/back massage (38%). Again there can be noticed that male spa-goers have experienced more classical treatments than tested facial or feet treatment for example.



**Figure 9.** Experience that non male spa-goers would like to experience and spa goers have experienced

In the questionnaire there was another question included about male purposes of going to spas and here was given only one choice that they were allowed to mark among the others. However, there were the same choices for both- spa goers and non-spa-goers- then the questions wording and adaption was done differently for non-spa-goers. How otherwise they would know the purpose when they have not been in spa before or visit spa rarely. As seen from the Table 1, then the main purpose of visiting the spa for male spa-goers that was mentioned the most was related „To be relaxed and feel better“ (65%). This refers clearly to higher level need that are concerned individuals’s need for personal satisfaction including fun, freedom and relaxation (Shapiro, Wong, Perreault, & McCarthy 2002).

Next were mentioned „To take care of yourself“ (6%) and medical reasons (5%). Rather less was mentioned that they go there for escaping from the every day problems (4%) or for socializing purposes for meeting new people (1%). Another interesting observation here is that men do not go to spa in order to be attractive as only 1% of

respondents mentioned that. The issue here might be that they do not acknowledge it loudly or they really do not care how they look, which is unlikely.

When comparing the male non-spa-goers responses of the purpose of visiting the spa then there are some differences, but overall the purposes seems to be the same and cover each other again. Also respondents who have not visited spa during last year would go to spa mainly „To relax and feel better“ (55%) or in order to take care of themselves (9%). Less from the given options of the purposes why visiting the spa were brought out again socializing aim (3%) and escaping from the everyday problems (1%).

**Table 1.** Spa goers and non-spa-goers purpose of visiting spa

<b>Purpose of going to spa</b>	<b>Spa goers</b>	<b>Non-spa-goers</b>
To relax and feel better	65 %	55 %
To feel better	13 %	13%
To take care of yourself	6 %	9 %
Medical reasons	5 %	8 %
To accompany my partner	5 %	4 %
To get away from daily problems	4 %	1 %
Other	2 %	6 %
To be more attractive	1 %	0 %
To socialize and meet new people	1 %	3 %

Source: made by author according to the data analysis

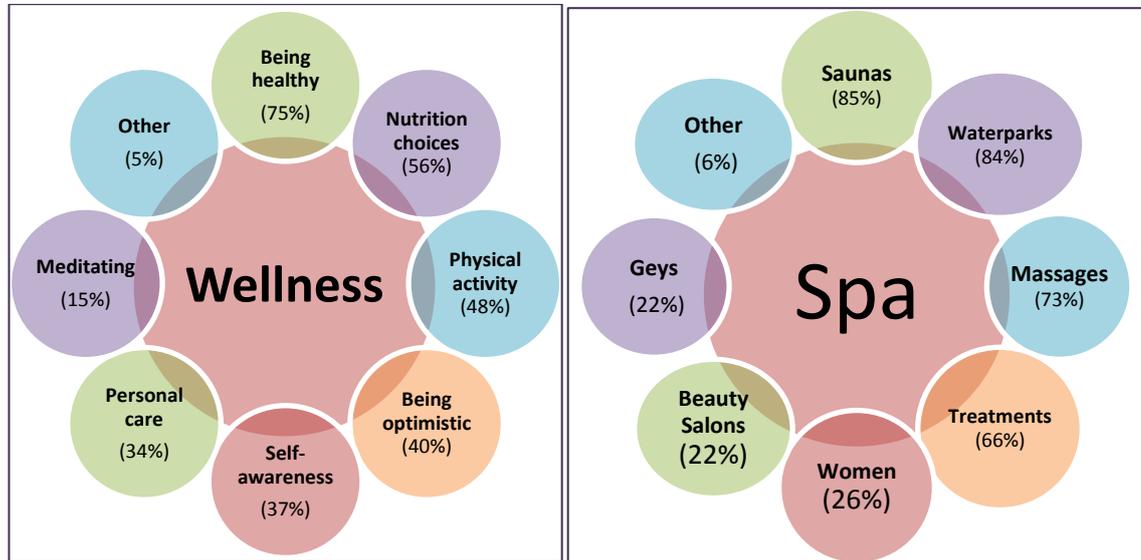
This shows obviously that men still go to spa for relaxation purposes mainly and is message to marketers that should be taken into additional considerations as stated also in Hilton Blue Paper (2012) for example. Namely men do not want pampering and rather want to feel fit, well and younger longer through treatments that point rejuvenation, relaxation, detox and nutrition;

When talking about men preferences regarding what gender staff they would like to have during the treatment, then most of them preferred more female staff (67%) whereas 32% of the respondents did not have any preferences at all. Though the reason of this choice in this research is not asked to specify then those reasons why men seem to prefer women therapists can be different. It can be assumed that it might be related to

the psychological barrier related to that they do not want another men massaging their bodies, because it causes uncomfortable associations of being gay. In most cases the therapist choice is still done according to the persons bias and also comfort level. According to spa managers interviews it came also out that there is 1 to 2 men in their therapists list and those male therapist are usually chosen by knowledgeable men who have been in spa already before. Still there are cases where men request a male therapist because most commonly cited reason here is that male masseurs are stronger and can deliver much deeper massage than female masseurs. Anyhow this is one aspect that can be explored further in future researches.

The author also wanted to examine how men interpret spa and wellness and what associates to them with those words. Therefore there were questions in questionnaire related to men knowledge about spa and wellness. Overall it can be said that it was very good (Please see Figure 10)- with the word „spa“ men associated the most saunas (85%), waterparks (84%), massages (74%) and treatments (65%). Of course there were quite many times mentioned women (26%), beauty salons (22%) and even gays (22%) that came into respondent mind when they heard word spa. Other things that were brought out by respondents themselves were vacation, solarium, manicure and pedicure and even children got mentioned. The limitation with that questionnaire and this certain question revealed from the analysis is that author and men see spa little bit differently. The author has considered the spa in this questionnaire according to the ISPA (2014) definition where spa is „place devoted to overall well-being through a variety of professional services that encourage the renewal of mind, body and spirit“. Men on the other hand equals spa only with saunas and pools mainly, seeing the treatment side there quite new thing. As this questions aim overall was to see what exactly men think under spa, then this was achieved and therefore increasing the awareness of spa other services is needed and actual. This understanding about spa as saunas can be derived also from our Nordic location and culture. It is very typical to Nordic countries, that the sauna often represents an integral part of everyday life (of course specially in Finland) rather than being a luxury that is associated with wellness programs (Smith & Puczko, 2009).

Word „wellness“ on the other hand was more related surprisingly to the healthy lifestyle (75%) and making healthy nutrition choices (56%). Also men associated with wellness physical activity (48%) and even being optimistic (40%) got mentioned by men.

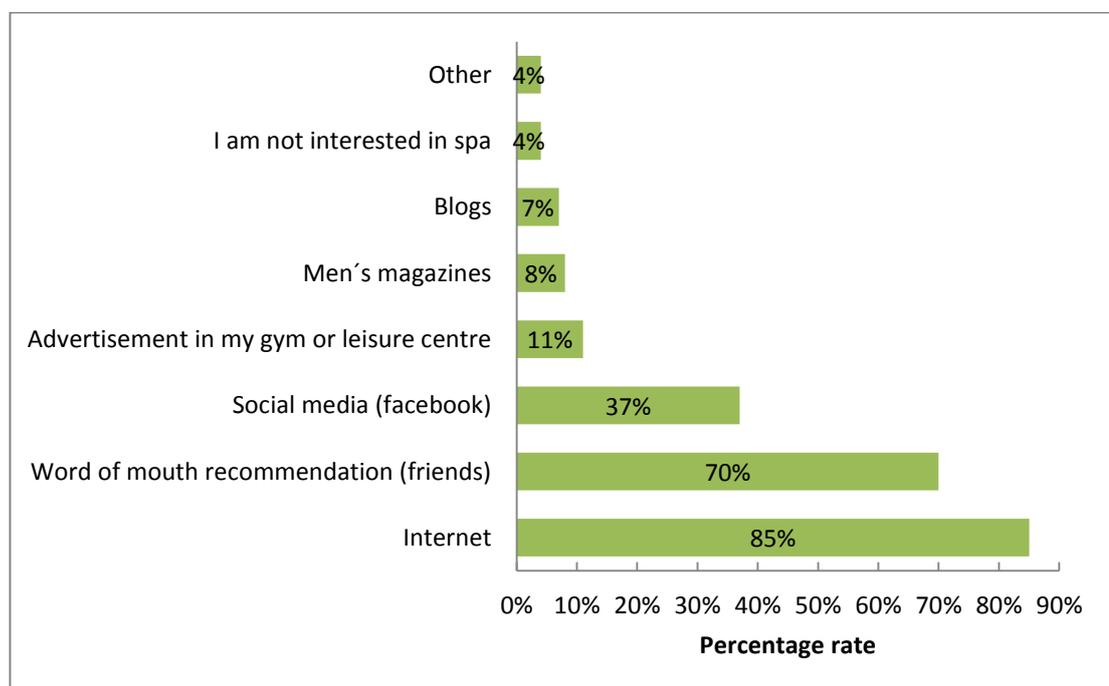


**Figure 10.** Men knowledge about words „spa“ and „wellness“

As seen from the figure then men assumptions and knowledge regarding with wellness turned out to be quite high and in right direction. Of course there were 4% of respondents wh were not quite sure what this word „wellness“ meant. Hereby were offered quite opposite and different things like: women thing, happiness, spa thing, suspicious cure, some beauty treatment etc.

The most sensible question in authors mind was about false belief that was moving in male community. The belief itseld was that „men who go to spas are considered to be too feminine or called even gays“. Here almost all of the respondents whether disagreed strongly (70% of respondents) or rather disagreed (24%) with that statement. The author was expecting here the opposite reaction though and therefore wonders how men feel about when they are called as metrosexuals as it seems like the sound of this words refers to something else. Metrosexual is a young man with money to spend, living in or within easy reach of a metropolis as there are all the best shops, gyms and hairdressers. This men might be officially gay, straight or bisexual, but he loves himself (Neal, Quester, & Hawkins, 2006). Of course not all men would categorize or see themselves as metrosexuals, but it would be really interesting to investigate it in the future.

For marketing purposes the author tried to discover the sources what men would like to use in order to get any additional information about spas (Please see Figure 11). Three main sources that men would like to use were firstly and predominantly internet (85%), which was followed by „Word of mouth“ information (70%) preference and social media (37% of respondents). It comes out from thte responses that men do not read that much blogs (7%) or men´s magazine 8%) and therefore these sources of information for marketing purposes are not effective at all. Good opportunity to reach men, probably those men who are spa goers and take care of theirselves, is when advertising in gym or leisure centre (mentioned by 11% of respondents).

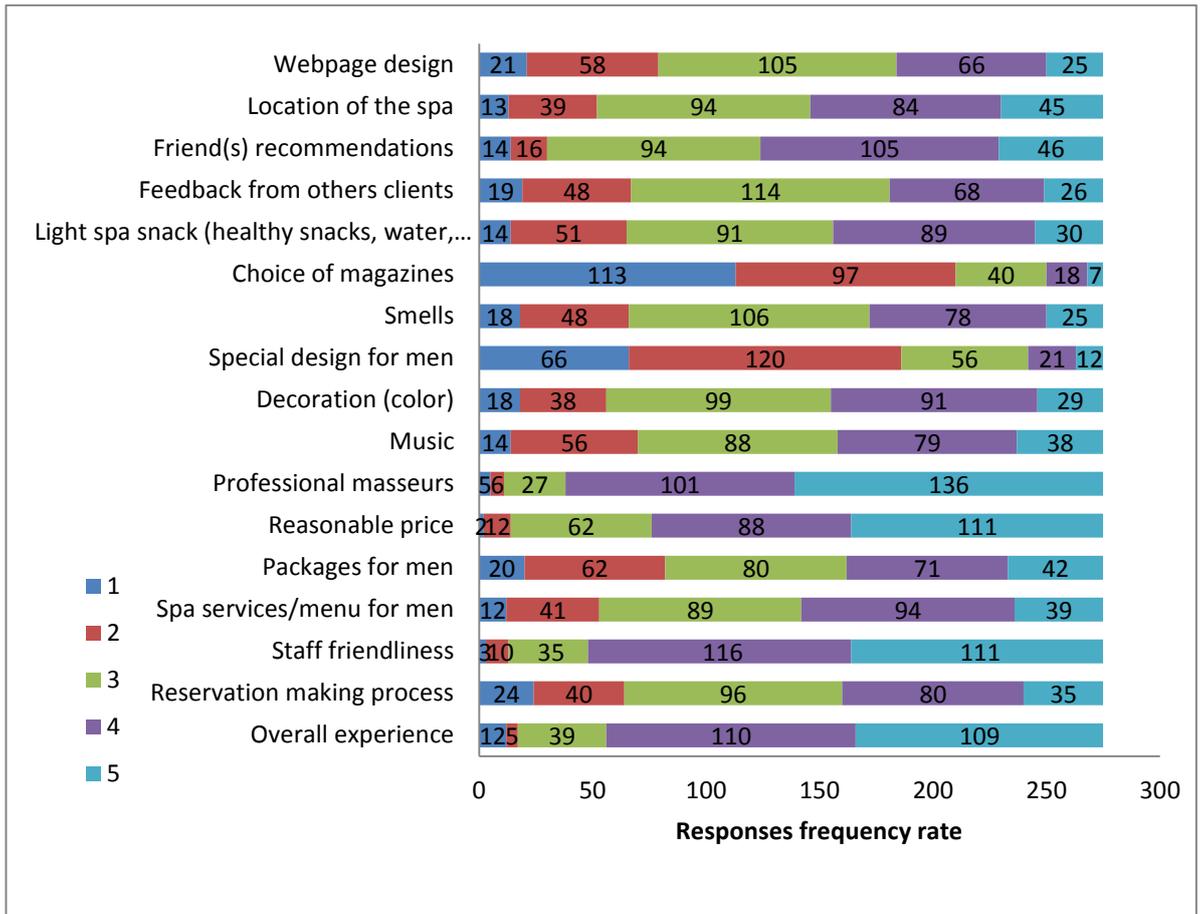


**Figure 11.** Sources of information men would you use to get some additional information about spas

The large amount of internet users is related probably with the younger generation who made up the bigger part of the respondents and use internet daily whether related to job or entertainment. This shows clearly that all the online marketing channels and firstly homepage should be really informative and easily understandable not only for men but also to all potential clients. In order to make first spa visitation and choices easier for men it would be advisable to highlight treatments designed for men among what the

male spa visitor can choose. When the needs have been identified, then follows the information search part. Here the information searching process is important part in buyer decision process as if not relevant or needed information is received, the purchase process might end just here. Whereas internal information searching is more common and easier, then external might require more effort like talking with different people, reading additional information from media publications etc. So also the search for information can be done actively or passively. Hereby the most effective sources, however tend to be personal sources as they evaluate the product whereas commercial sources normally inform the buyer (Kotler, McDougall, & Armstrong, 1988). This also proved with the fact that 70% of men would ask information via „Word of mouth recommendation“.

After all of those previous steps the consumers starts to evaluate potential alternatives based on the previous information search level (Reisinger, 2009). Regarding with the question about evaluating the important and unimportant details/factors when visiting spa, the respondents were asked to evaluate the importance of mentioned attributes. The evaluation was done by using the 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (Unimportant) to 5 (Critically important). This question was actually designed for measuring the male spa-goers and non-spa-goers preferences while visiting the spa (Please see figure 12). Current evaluating question with the frequently mentioned as being extremely important (5-critically important) factors of spa visitation were professional masseurs, what was followed by factors like staff friendliness and reasonable price. These findings show that such details are very important for men when they tend to visit spas. Little bit less important was overall experience, but still it was pointed out as critically important factor.



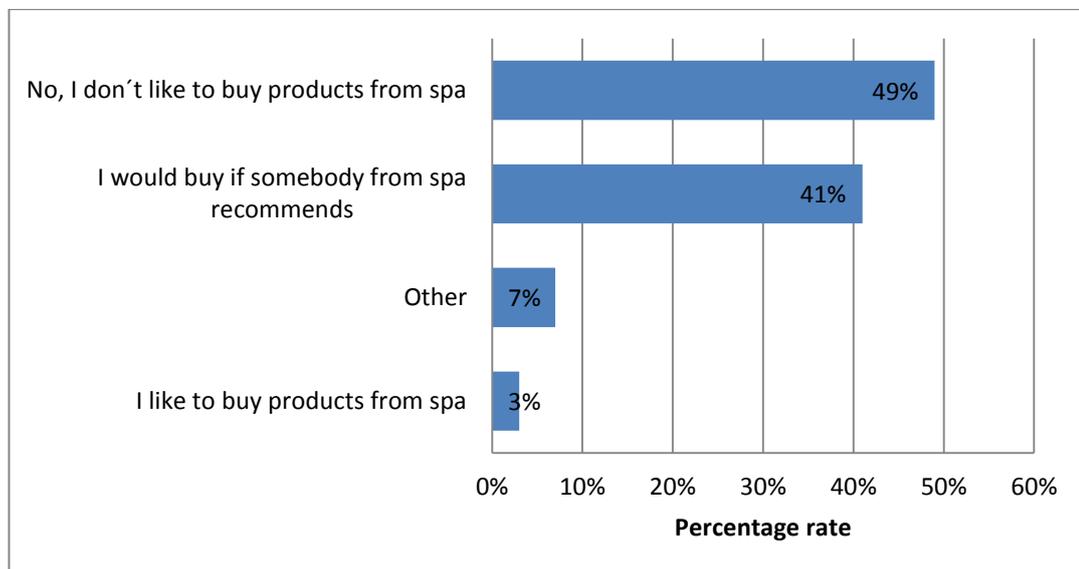
**Figure 12.** Evaluation of details when visiting spas

The details, that were evaluated as unimportant factors for men were the choice of magazines and special design for men. With the rate 3 (important) were evaluated feedback from others clients, webpage design and smells in spa. It comes out that men do not pay much attention to visual effects like the design on spa or additional values like magazine choice whereas important for them is more the professional therapists and reasonable price. This shows that respondents are also price sensitive when they have brought out that factor. Also it can be explained now why the amounts of money spent on treatment, one day in water-based spa and spa package offered were not in balance at all. Men are not so familiar with the prices in spa- more related to treatments.

Furthermore, this evaluation shows expressively what male spa goers value the most during their visit and which factors are not important at all. Taking following factors

into consideration it will be good to design the spa and spa services according to men preferences so that the spa meets male spa-goers high expectations.

In order to find out if it would be good idea to make extra sales for men and whether they are interested in it following questions was asked: „Would you purchase products for home use from spa if there is a chance?“ (Please see Figure 13). Quite big majority (49%) are not interested in buying products from spa at all. Surprisingly big amount of men are still willing to buy if somebody recommends from spa (41%). This group of men is remarkably good and potential clients to whom the spas can and should do more extra sales.



**Figure 13.** Male ambition to purchase products for home use from spa

There was also one optional open-ended question, where respondents were able to share their experiences in spa that were their favourite ones. Altogether 77% responded men were kindly sharing their thoughts about memorable experiences or favourite treatment in different spas they had been. When analysing the answers, there was possibility to create three main categories regarding with received answers: spa hotels that were mentioned treatments that were experienced and words that were described when talking about their experiences. From the spa hotels mentioned (Please see Appendix 6) most of them were the spa hotels were the author had also interviews with spa

managers. It was not expected to get spa hotel names here, but from the responses it can be said that men have been in different spas and their knowledge about it is really good. As referred before already then the expected answers to this questions were treatments, which were also mentioned several times (Please see Appendix 7) and there could be said that those treatments were not at all only classical ones. Some of the treatments men had experienced and deserves hereby mentioning were Red Wine Treatment, Egypt Cocoon Treatment, Chocolate Wrap and Chocolate massage, Charcot shower, Fish Therapy, Herb Bath etc. This list of treatments shows obviously that some men are willing to try also new treatments and something new. Whether this is women affection here or not, then suggesting men more different treatments in spas than just classical treatments would not do any damage. It is always worth of trying.

Another thing here is how the staff is explaining or suggesting the treatment and bringing out the effects. Explaining treatment with too feminine words like „makes you younger“, „your skins starts to shine“ etc would not appeal obviously any men to try- here might come in this „woman thing“ thinking. Therefore the author is in opinion that the words used while talking to men in „spa language“ it is good to use more masculine words though the treatment might be the same as for women.

During the analysis of following question, the author took the chance, marked and highlighted the words that men used while describing their favourite spa experiences (Please see Figure 14). It was possible to bring out separately the adjectives and nouns whereas men were responding to this question so.



**Figure 14.** Male spa-goers mentioned words while describing experienced services in spa

Also it was interesting to observe what words men use to describe their experiences in spa in order to see whether those nouns and adjectives used are more feminine or masculine style. Though there came out few feminine words like soft/smooth skin, warm feeling, romantic place; then overall those words could be still consider to be as masculine. It could be said that men use overall quite discreet and natural words when describing their feelings and experiences. Some examples hereby are: good, pleasant, fresh, relaxing etc.

## 4.2. Interview results

There was altogether conducted 15 interviews in spa hotels, that all belonged to the Estonian Spa Association with the purpose to have officially rated as spa hotels- whether it was wellness or medical spa. All of the interviewees answers have presented anonymously in current thesis. Furthermore, the author has brought out visited spa hotels features that asked during the interviews from the spa managers. As seen in Table 2 all of the interviewed hotels have been described without mentioning specific hotel names and have been listed randomly starting from Spa Hotel 1 (SH1), Spa Hotel 2 (SH2) etc.

Due to the research subject was Estonian men, then the author identified firstly the percentage of Estonians, who are visiting interviewed spas in order to move forward and focus to Estonian male customer habits. The interviews resulted with the Estonian visitors amount among all visitors to be higher in wellness spas (50-80% Estonians) whereas in medical spas it was rather small (20-40% Estonians). The percentage have been brought out also in Tabel 2 each hotel separately. The reason why the percentage of Estonians is higher in wellness spas is because Estonians visit spas for relaxation purposes and therefore medical spa hotels are visited less. Nevertheless, all of the interviewed medical spa managers (8 persons) noted that weekends they have more younger client and also Estonian client likes to visit medical spas then. Main reason is that men come to relax from the busy working week with their wife or partner or with the whole family.

Every interviewed spa hotel had their niche or their unique selling point that they are proud of and use while marketing themselves. Hereby it should be noted that they could use more advantages from their uniqueness also when marketing to men. According to Hilton Blue Paper (2012) men like to experience new things so Estonian spas can also surprise men and offer something different to their male spa-goers than classical massage. This one way how to educate men about spa and its benefits.

**Table 2.** Overview of interviewed spa hotels features

Spa hotel	Percentage of EST	Uniqueness	Women/Men split	Men spa-goer profile
SH1	65-80%	Marine concept	40/60	35+ , day spa client with partner or couples
SH2	80%	Special range from Saaremaa	45/55	40+, With partner; families
SH3	70-80%	Oriental luxury	65/35	25+, With partner, friends
SH4	65%	Alessandro concept	50/50	35+, With wife, couples
SH5	70%	Nature Spa	70/30	30+, with partner, families
SH6	76%	Natural mineralwater, freshwater mud	40/60	45-60, weekends 30+; couples
SH7	55%	Location in nature	40/60	30-40, with partner, families
SH8	50%	Capsule treatments	70/30	30-45, with partner
SH9	50%	Load test possibility	75/35	55+, weekend 30+; with partner
SH10	40%	Thalasso concept	60/40	40+, with partner and seminars
SH11	40%	Variety of spa services (medical and wellness)	70/30	50+, weekends 35+, with partner, families
SH12	30-40%	Bone and joint treatment	40/60	60+ ; with partner
SH13	35%	Baths and Water Center, Cold Therapy	50/50	60+, weekends 30+; with partner, families
SH14	33%	Local mud used	60/40	60+, weekends 30+; with partner, families
SH15	28%	Heart Studies	65/35	60+; with partner

Source: made by author according to the interviews

When looking at the male spa-goers profiles within spa hotels, then those Estonians that arrived to interviewed spas differed also by age- older people (50-60-years old) visited more medical spas and younger or middle-aged (30-40-years old) preferences were wellness spas. The male spa hotel client at this moment still comes mainly with their wife to have a vacation there whereas seminars and male friends spa visits have increase lately too.

From the marketing perspective the hotels are not doing something remarkably special for attracting more men to hotel and spas as they still see that women is the final decision maker and men just follow women and want to make their partner happy. However men are not left without total attention and there is brought out in several interviewed spas special day spa or spa packages specially for men also on the website. Furthermore, some of the spa hotels have made the decision making even easier for men and have special suggestions with treatment list recommended for men. When comparing it with the questionnaire responses where the Internet was number one source, where men would search for more information, then such suggestions and special places in website brining out the best for men is very welcomed solution in author's opinion. Treatments that are suitable for men were included in the overall treatment lists without any suggestions to men, which makes choosing something for the first male spa goer really difficult and instead of guessing or searching the right treatment from the list may end up so that this men do not come to spa at all.

Two interviewees from the medical spa hotels commented, that the amount of male clients preventing their health and visit medical spas frequently would be bigger, if there is abolished taxation on fringe benefits related to the work healthcare. Namely one interviewee mentioned how specific agriculture company is sending their workers- men to be exact- to medical spa before hard working season. This shows well that company is taking care of their workers health in order the workers can cope with the work tasks. Of course such caring gesture should also be seen from the other companies as well, because which manager would not want his/her workers to be healthy and are able to work. The problem hereby why only few companies reward their workers is because of taxes they need to pay from that. Namely everything related to work health care goes also under fringe benefit and in Estonia the employers need to pay taxes related to that

benefit. According to Estonian Tax and Customs Board (2014) employers have to pay the full amount of income and social tax that is calculated on granted fringe benefits. This law about income tax on fringe benefits is assigned according to the Income Tax Act § 48 (2013), that states: „*Fringe benefits are any goods, services, remuneration in kind or monetarily appraisable benefits which are given to a person in connection with an employment or service relationship...*“.

No wonder then that employers are not that eager to send their workers to spa, when already buying first aid equipment or vaccination rises the taxation question. Obviously from the rationality the employers are not willing to do such spendings where they need to pay additional taxes from it. Though there has been raised this issue already by professional associations and work health care, then so far they have not been successful yet. Unfortunately seems like country itself does not contribute in promoting the health among citizens and investing in people when establishing such taxes that are not supporting the work health care. Good example here could be Denmark for example with their triviality limit meaning that employer there can make tax free fringe benefits up to certain amount. Furthermore, Bolander (2012) states that with the triviality limit in taxation came along 3 different limits for the taxation of employment benefits. One of the limit in Denmark is also having free benefits for certain amount containing general medical control, vaccination and other health related benefits.

When talking about the future then all interviewees agreed that men will start to visit more spas and they need to answer to this need somehow, but still something really different from other spas at the moment they were not intending to do. Also it was noted that future male spa-goers will be even more demanding and knowledgeable as they start their spa experiences already from the early ages. Nowadays almost every Estonian Spa Hotel is offering something in spa also for children.

### **4.3. Recommendations and discussion**

The following results represent the analysis of data which was collected during this research and master thesis. The information was gathered using the questionnaire results among 275 Estonian men and semi-structured interviews among 13 Estonian spa managers. The data was collected in order to find the answer to the research question of this present thesis, which was „What factors are important and influence men while visiting the spa?“

Responses from the questionnaire described very well male spa consumer behaviour features and speciality while visiting the spa. Surprisingly big amount of men visit spa regularly or have visited spa during last year. Furthermore male spa goers seem to value more the spa visiting process (treatments) itself considering the most important things to be Professional Masseurs and Staff friendliness. This shows clearly that men do expect the staff to guide them and suggest something specially for them. Not less important for men when going to spas is the reasonable price and the overall experience to be nice and satisfactory. Though bigger part of the respondents were married or living with a partner, what might affect their decision while visiting the spas, then this research revealed clearly that men expect to be more noticed and offered extra products/services that are specially tailored and designed for them.

Due to the fact that over 85% of the respondents would use internet as their source to get information about spa services then it would be advisable that spas have their webpages critically inspected. It would be advisable to design or made it user friendly for men as well- such personal approach makes decisions concerning with choosing the treatments also more convenient for first male spa visitor. Still it is wrong to assume that all men have been in spa and experienced any treatment. Though mainly spa managers agreed that such treatment suggestions brought out in webpage for men would be good to have, then some still thought that it is not necessary to highlight it as it is seen also from the overall treatment list. Another questions in authors opinion is whether the first male spa goer would know what to search from there if he does not have any experience before. In future perspective the interviewees saw that the amount of knowledgeable men is increasing and more men are coming to spas, but they do not

see that it would need special or additional attention to pay. However interviewees agreed that services as well as turning to men needs something different, but they will observe how the market changes and then start to change themselves if needed.

Based on the previous results of this particular study, it can be recommended for the Estonian Spa Hotels that male guests still expect more personal approach and they would not visit spas only because their partner wants to go. With more personal approach to them and extra sales they make the man feel special and it would be also easier for them to orientate in spa and go back there. More tailored treatments and packages is need in order men feel and understand they are expected in spas. This makes them decide to revisit.

## CONCLUSION

Nowadays it is a growing trend for spas to sell experiences instead of simple treatments. Furthermore, clients are getting more educated; their wishes and demands are constantly changing. As the cornerstone of marketing theory has been considered to be the satisfaction of the consumer it is important to know the complete profile of the customer- their needs, expectations and factors that might influence their decisions. Unfortunately lots of companies have imperfect picture of detailed consumer behavior in order to compete with their competitors.

Health issues are important to study also from the consumer behavior standpoint because lots of money nowadays is spent on health and body products. Furthermore, well-being and wellness equally are needed to study even further in consumer economics. Health, wellness and tourism is moving on extremely quickly. Keeping up with all of the needs of clients seems to be great challenge.

Before marketing strategies can be developed, the consumer behavior needs to be understood. Nevertheless, the construction of standard model of consumer behavior is also quite problematic. Whereas inputs and outputs can be defined, then there are intangible elements involved with the buyer characteristics and choice determinants that are more unnoticeable. Understanding the consumer behavior helps the market managers to specify which of the consumer groups is appropriate to target for marketing tactics. Marketing to men is also little bit different than marketing to women for example. Marketing to men in the world and also in Estonia still requires straightforward message, masculine wording and shapes and functional elements with a touch of personaility

The overall aim of this thesis was to make suggestions according to the results of the questionnaires to the spa hotels for improving the spa attractiveness among Estonian men. According to the stated thesis question and problem setting, the author choose to combine both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Hereby the research question was set as follows: „What factors influence the use of spa services among men?“ Qualitative method and semi-structured interviews were used for evaluating the

opinions and values containing structured interviews with Estonian spa managers about men- friendly and specialized spa related topic. There was altogether conducted 15 interviews in spa hotels, that all belonged to the Estonian Spa Association with the purpose to have officially rated as spa hotels- whether it was wellness or medical spa. Quantitative method in the other hand was used in order to know the general public tendency among Estonian men.

Based on the results of the survey, there were done by the author some recommendations, that can be beneficial for the spa hotels for the better service designing with orientation to men. Due to the fact that over 85% of the respondents used internet as their source to get information about spa services then it would be advisable that spas have their webpages critically inspected. Also it can be recommended for the Estonian Spa Hotels that male guests still expect more personal approach and they would not visit spas only because their female partner wants to go. With more personal approach to them and extra sales they can make the man feel special and it would be also easier for them to orientate in spa and go back there for repurchase. Moreover, men can feel that those services are tailored towards their needs.

The author is convinced that the research conducted shows enough proofs and evidences how important is knowing the male consumer behavior and marketing to them. The author is thankful to all the interviewed spa managers who took time and effort for present thesis research project.

For further studies on customer behavior of men practices, the author has few recommendations for students, who want to conduct study in this field. Future studies could include a larger sample or adopt another qualitative technique like focus groups or observation in spas even to validate the findings of this current study. Another interesting thing to determine could be investigating male expectation and perception level towards spa services and service quality satisfaction.

As this was quite not researched area, then it made the research process even more attractive to work with. Hopefully the ideas and suggestions turned out from the master's thesis will inspire the directors of spas, owners, students who are searching for an idea for future study projects.

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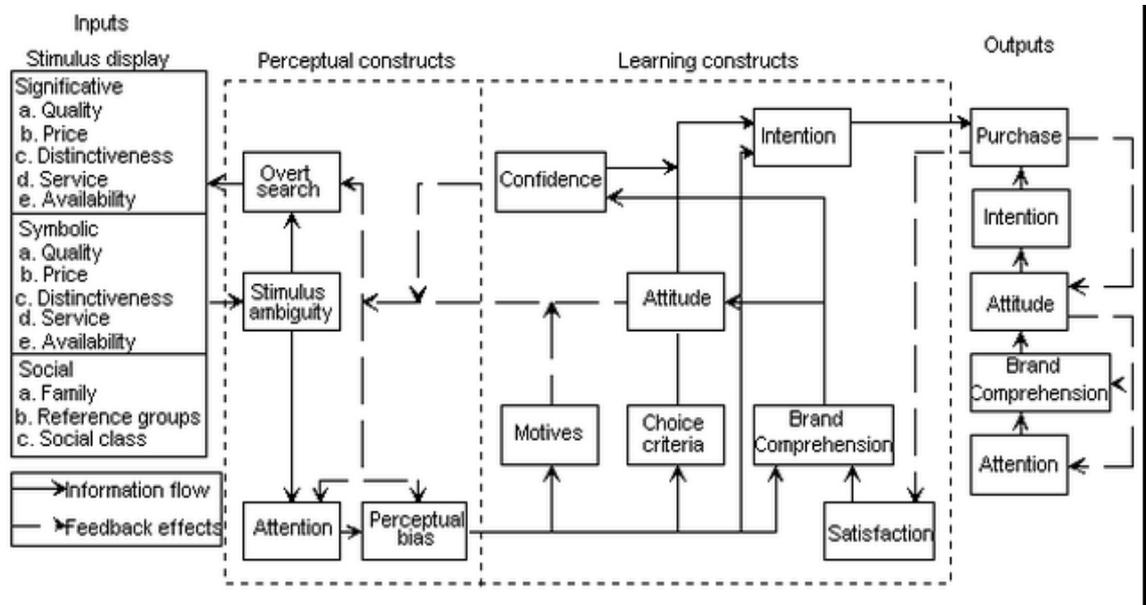
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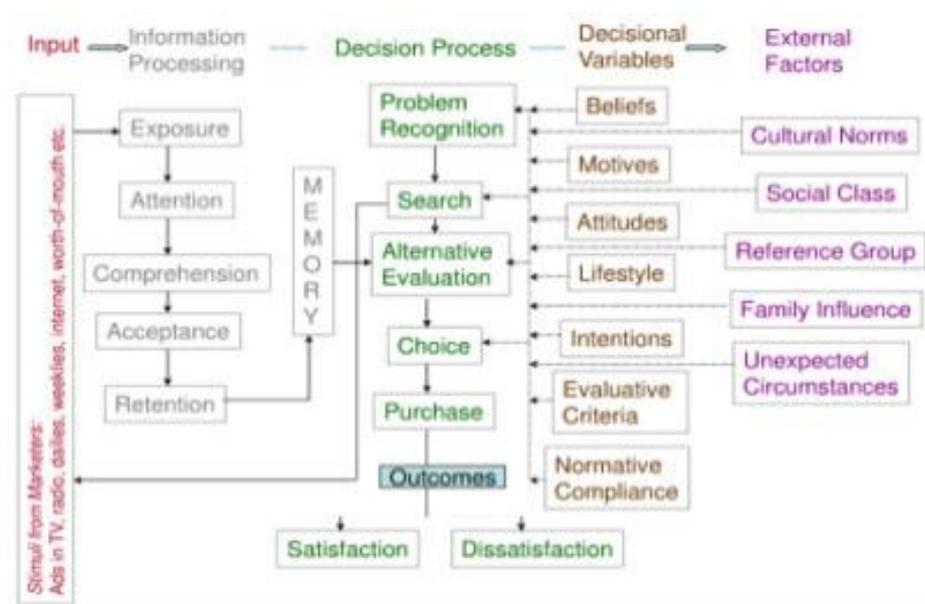
# APPENDICES

## Appendix 1. Howard- Sheth Model



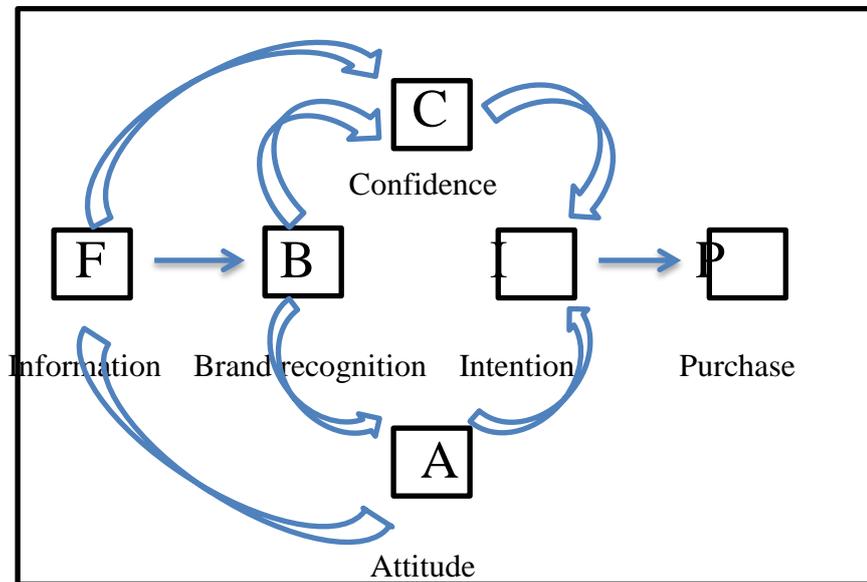
Source: Engel, Blackwell, & Kollat (1978)

## Appendix 2. Engel Kollat Blackwell Model (EKB)



Source: Engel, Blackwell, & Kollat (1978)

### Appendix 3. Howard Simplified Model: Consumer Decision Model



(Source: Howard, 2005, pp.29)

Howard (1989) explains his simplified model with six components:

- Information/facts (F)- the source of the information, which can be magazines, newspapers, radio, television, word-of-mouth sources etc. Hereby such sense organs like sight and hearing help to get needed information beside smelling, touching and tasting;
- Brand recognition (B)- picture in consumer's mind that contains different product attributes and function and causes situation to like or dislike it;
- Attitude (A)- consumer's sense to the extent where is expected the product to satisfy consumers particular needs;
- Confidence (C)- situation where the customer is certain, that the brand has correctly been evaluated and judged. Here customer is also confident, that the product is recognized and it matches with the information heard before;
- Intention (I) – mental situation, that reflects consumers plan to buy certain product or service. This situation is strongly affected by attitude and confidence;
- Purchase (P)- condition where has happened the real purchase itself and the consumer has paid for the product;

## Appendix 4. Map of interviewed spa hotels in Estonia



Source: Estonian Spa Association webpage

## Appendix 5. Interviewees

Hotel name	Interviewee	Profession	Interview time	Recording technique	Location of enterprise
Laulasmaa Spa Hotel	Anne Ast	Spa Manager	13.04.2014	Transcript, notes	Laulasmaa
Grand Rose Spa	Marge Nuut	Spa Manager	18.03.2014	Transcript, notes	Saaremaa, Kuressaare
Aqva Spa	Eeva Salusoo	Spa Manager	-	E-mail	Rakvere
Meresuu Spa	Aleksandr Suvorov	Spa Manager	20.03.2014	Transcript, notes	Narva-Jõesuu
Toila Spa Hotel	Sales Department		20.03.2014	Transcript, notes	Toila
Georg Ots Spa Hotel	Irene Targem	Spa Manager	17.03.2014	Transcript, notes	Saaremaa, Kuressaare
Saaremaa Spa Hotels	Helvi Koppel	Senior Doctor	-	E-mail	Saaremaa, Kuressaare
Pühajärve Spa Hotel	Merike Peetsalu	Spa Manager	27.03.2014	Transcript, notes	Otepää
Kubija Hotel & Nature Spa	Ruth Hoole	Spa Manager	27.03.2014	Transcript, notes	Võru
Väraska Spa Hotel	Küllli Margus	Head Physician	26.03.2014	Transcript, notes	Väraska
Estonia Spa Hotel	Kristi Johanson	Hotel Service Manager	08.04.2014	Transcript, notes	Pärnu
Health Center and Hotel Wasa	Mare Koort	Head Doctor, sales	31.03.2014	Transcript, notes	Pärnu
Viiking Spa Hotel	Anne Kallit	Head Doctor	31.03.2014	Transcript, notes	Pärnu
Fra Mare Thalasso Spa	Agnessa Peit	Spa Manager	21.03.2014	Transcript, notes	Haapsalu
Laine Spa Hotel	Ulla Bacmann	Spa Manager	21.03.2013	Transcript, notes	Haapsalu

Source: created by the author

Appendix 6. Male spa-goers memorable experiences in different spas



Appendix 7. Male spa-goers mentioned favourite treatments



## Appendix 8. Questionnaires for men

### Questionnaire: How to increase spa attractiveness among Estonian men?

Dear respondent,

I am master degree student of Spa and Wellness and Service Design and Management in Tartu University of Pärnu College. Related to my master thesis I am carrying out a survey among men, which aim is to investigate more in detail male customer behaviour while going to spas. Hereby I kindly ask you to take a moment (around 10 min.) to complete the following survey. While answering, be honest with yourself! Underline or draw a circle your answers were necessary.



Your answers will remain confidential.

Yours sincerely,

Elleriin Sillaots

#### 1. What do you associate with the word „Spa“? (Choose all that apply)

- |               |                                |          |
|---------------|--------------------------------|----------|
| A: Waterparks | E: Different type of trainings | H: Women |
| B: Treatments | F: Sport Centers               | I: Gays  |
| C: Massages   | G: Beauty Salons               | J: Other |
| D: Saunas     |                                | .....    |

#### 2. What do you associate with the word „Wellness“? (Choose all that apply)

- |  |                                     |                   |
|--|-------------------------------------|-------------------|
| A: Being healthy (lifestyle)           | C: Making healthy nutrition choices | F: Self-awareness |
| B: Doing regularly physical activities | D: Being optimistic                 | G: Personal care  |
|  | E: Meditating                       | H: Other          |
|  |                                     | .....             |

#### 3. There has been understanding among men like those male who are going to spas are too feminine and they are even considered to be as homosexuals because of this. How do you feel about this statement?

- A: Totally agree   B: Agree   C: Rather agree   D: Disagree   E: Don't know

**4. What sources of information would you use to get some additional information about spas?**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| A: Word-of-mouth recommendation (friends) | F: Advertisement in my gym or leisure centre |
| B: Men's magazines                        | G: I'm not interested in spa                 |
| C: Blogs                                  | H: Other                                     |
| D: Social media (facebook)                | .....  |
| E: Internet                               |  |

**5. Have you visited spa during last year?**                      Yes                      No

**(If you answered „YES“, please move to question nr 11, if „NO“ move to next question)**

**6. Why haven't you visited spa during last year? (Choose all that apply)**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| A: It is more „women thing“            | spas                                     |
| B: It is too expensive                 | F: I would prefer to do other activities |
| C: I do not have anybody to go with    | G: Haven't had chance or time to go      |
| D: Spa is too boring and quiet         | H: Other (Please name it):               |
| E: I do not understand the benefits of | .....                                    |

**7. Would you be interested in visiting a spa in near future?**    Yes    No    Maybe

**8. What is the main purpose, why you go to a spa?**

- |                             |                                     |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| A: To feel better           | F: To get away from daily problems  |
| B: To be more attractive    | G: To accompany my partner          |
| C: Medical reasons          | H: To socialize and meet new people |
| D: To take care of yourself | I: Other (Please name it)           |
| E: To relax and feel better | .....                               |

**9. Which services would you be interested to experience in spa? (Choose all that apply)**

- |                       |                         |                 |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|
| A: Hand treatment     | F: Full body massage    | therapies       |
| B: Foot treatment     | G: Baths (water         | J: I don't know |
| C: Facial             | treatments)             | K:Other         |
| D: Neck/ back massage | H: Rich food experience | .....           |
| E: Waxing             | I: Sauna or/and steam   |                 |

**NB!(After answering move to question number 15)**

**10. How often do you like to go to a spa?**

- |                         |                |
|-------------------------|----------------|
| A: Once a week          | D: Once a year |
| B: Once/twice a month   | E: Other ..... |
| C: Once during 6 months |                |

**11. What is your main purpose of going to a spa?**

- |                             |                                     |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| A: To feel better           | F: To get away from daily problems  |
| B: To be more attractive    | G: To accompany my partner          |
| C: Medical reasons          | H: To socialize and meet new people |
| D: To take care of yourself | I: Other (Please name it)           |
| E: To relax and feel better |                                     |

**12. Which of the services listed below have you recieved in the past? (Choose all that apply)**

- |                       |                      |                         |
|-----------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|
| A: Hand treatment     | E: Waxing            | H: Rich food experience |
| B: Foot treatment     | F: Full body massage | I: Sauna therapies      |
| C: Facial             | G: Baths (water      | J:Other                 |
| D: Neck/ back massage | treatments)          | .....                   |

**13. Which spa service(s) do you consider to be the best/favourite, that you have experienced? Why?**

.....  
.....

**14. What gender of staff would you prefer provide your treatment in spa?**

- |         |           |                  |               |
|---------|-----------|------------------|---------------|
| A: Male | B: Female | C: No preference | D: Don't know |
|---------|-----------|------------------|---------------|

**15. How important you consider to be the following details when you visit a spa?**

(Please rate the following details on a scale of 1-5, where:

(1) Unimportant, (2) slightly important, (3) important, (4) very important and (5) critical.

	1	2	3	4	5
Overall experience					
Reservation making process					
Staff friendliness					
Spa services/menu for men					
Packages for men					
Reasonable price					
Professional masseurs					
Music choice					
Decoration (color/style)					
Special design for men					
Smells					
Choice of magazines					
Light spa snack (healthy snacks, water, fresh juice etc)					
Feedback from others clients					
Friend(s) recommendations					
Location of the spa					
Webpage design					

**16. Would You purchase products for home use from spa if there is a chance?**

A: I would buy if somebody from spa recommends

B: I like to buy products from spa

C: No, I don't like to buy products from spa

D: Other (name it) .....

**17. How much are you willing to spend on one treatment (e.g. a massage)**

.....

**18. How much are you willing to spend on a day in a water-based spa?**

.....

**19. How much are you willing to spend on a half day package in a day spa (with 2-3 treatments)**

.....

**20. Your birth year .....**

**21. Your marital status**

A- Single

B- Married

C: Living with a partner (female)

D: Living with a partner (male)

E: Other (name it)

**22. Your education .....**

A: Primary school

B: High School

C: College

D: Vocational school

E: University

F: Other .....

**23. Your profession**

A: Employee

B: Civil servant

C: Supervisor

D: Specialist

E: Manager

F: Other (name it)

.....

**Please provide any other additional comments, feedback or suggestions you want to share!**

.....  
.....  
.....

Thank you for your time and answers!

## Appendix 9. Interview questions to spa managers



### *Interview questions to spa managers*

- 1. How would you evaluate the occupancy of your hotel year-round?  
How big is approximately the percentage of Estonians?**

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- 2. What kind of experiences is possible to find from your spa? (Short overview of different facilities, number of treatment rooms, treatments and additional services)?**

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- 3. What could be your spa unique selling point - how do you differ from the other spas in your region? In Estonia?**

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- 5. Which direction in your opinion could Estonian spa industry regarding male target group head in next 5-10 years?**

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- 6. Please give some examples of how do you attract men to your spa (special prices, packages, e-mail campaigns, design, masculine spa theme).  
How efficient and profitable it is ?**

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- 7. „According to the International SPA Associations Spa Report 2013, more men than ever are visiting spas. Furthermore, 47% of all spa-goers are male“**

**How many customers you approximately serve in spa during the day? How would you comment about the number of Estonian male spa-goers during last years?**

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**8. Could you please describe your Estonian male clients.** (Single spa-goers, fathers with children, men with partner/ friends)

**Have you noticed any pattern in consumer habits of Estonian male spa-goers when they visit your spa** (age, use of spa services, making choices, what attracts the most etc)?

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**9. Do you think that you meet expectation of your male spa customer? How do you keep ahead with the demand?** (feedback, survey etc)

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**10. How would you comment on the number of different treatment types/services you offer to men in your spa?**

(Something special for men from all treatment types, signature treatments, therapist choice-female or male etc)

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**11. What plans do you have in the future regarding services to men?** (more different types of treatments in spa menu, special spa programs, masculine spa themes etc )

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**12. Has your staff received any special trainings for serving male spa clients** (extra knowledge about men treatments, products to sell etc) ? (Please specify)

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**13. Which spa experience would you recommend for the first-time male visitor in your spa?** (Please specify why)

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**14. What kind of extra sales are you doing for men?** (products, service etc)

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***Please provide any other additional comments or suggestions you want to share!***

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***Thank you for your time !***

# RESÜMEE

## SPAAS ATRAKTIIVSUSE SUURENDAMINE MEESTE HULGAS EESTI NÄITEL

Elleriin Sillaots

Igaüks meist on igapäevaselt suuremal või vähemal määral tarbija, kes soovib saada kvaliteetset toodet ja teenust parima hinnaga. Selleks, et ettevõtte tunneks paremini oma klienti, tema soove ja nõudmisi, valikuid ning motivaatoreid, tuleks täpsemalt uurida iga kliendi tarbijakäitumist. Viimastel aastatel on muutused ärikeskkonnas muutnud ettevõtete olukorra raskemaks, mis tähendab, et juhtidel on suurem surve seoses turule püsima jäämisega. Juhid peavadki siinkohal nõustuma tõsiasjaga, et kui pole kliente, siis pole ka äritegevust. Selleks, et olla edukas ja konkurentsivõimeline, peavad ettevõtte juhid tundma ja mõistma oma kliente eesmärgiga pakkuda neile, seda mida kliendid täpselt ootavad, eeldavad ja soovivad. Taolist põhimõtet võib rakendada kõikidel elualadel sealhulgas teenindussektoris, mis omakorda hõlmab ka spaad ja heaolu.

Maailmas on spaade külastamine meeste hulgas tõusuteel ning see on äärmiselt populaarseks muutunud. Hoolimata sellest, võiks külastatavus olla veelgi intensiivsem ning piisavalt on veel arenguruumi paremaks turundustegevuseks, mis on spetsiaalselt suunatud vaid meestele. Ülesanne, leidmaks vastust küsimusele kuidas meelitavad spaad mehi ning kuidas oleks võimalik mehi harida sel teemal, on küllaltki keeruline. Seepärast on antud lõputöö autor valinud teema, mis on seotud meestega ning spaaga uurimaks lähemalt Eesti meeste tarbijakäitumist spaad külastades. Antud teema uurimine on äärmiselt oluline, kuna meestel (eriti Eesti meestel) tundub olevat teatud eelarvamused justkui spaas käimine oleks rohkem naistele mõeldud kui meestele. Maailma mastaabis on trendiks saamas juba see, et on loodud spetsiaalselt spaad eraldi meestele. Taoline olukord panigi autori arutlema ja uurima, kuidas on olukord Eestis ning kuidas suhtuvad Eesti mehed spaad külastamisse.

Põhiline probleem antud uurimuses on seotud võimalike erinevustega meestarbijakäitumise ja naistarbijakäitumise vahel spaad külastades, mistõttu nägi

käesoleva töö autor vajadust antud teemaga tegeleda ning uurimuse käigus see välja tuua. Seepärast on käesoleva magistritöö uurimusküsimus tõstatatud järgmiselt: „Millised tegurid on olulised ja mõjutavad meeste spaakülastust?“. Probleemi tõstatamine põhinebki olukorral, kus spaajuhtid on väheteadlikud meesklientide ootuste ja eelistuste kohta, kuna autorile teadaolevalt ei ole taolisi meeste spaakliendi tarbijakäitumise uuringuid Eestis varasemalt tehtud. Meeste meelitamine spaasse on tugevalt seotud spaa *imago* ning turundusega, kuid tähelepanuta ei tohiks jätta ka mitmeid väikseid detaile nagu rätikute värv, sisekujundus, teenuste disain ja lisategevuste võimalus.

Antud magistritöös on uurimistmeetodina kasutatud kombineeritud meetodit kvalitatiivse ja kvantitatiivse meetodi näol. Lähtuvalt eelkirjeldatud situatsioonist ja tekkinud probleemist, tekkis töö autoril idee uurida meeste tarbijakäitumist paralleelselt spaajuhtide arvamusega ning tulemustele toetudes teha ettepanekuid spaahotellidele (heaolu- ja spaasektorile) ning sellega vastata meeste sihtrühma vajadustele. Magistritöö oodatavaks tulemuseks olid konkreetset soovitusid meeste sihtrühmale turundamise jaoks. Tulemuste saavutamiseks viidigi läbi kvalitatiivne uurimus kombineerituna kvantitatiivse uurimisega, mille peamiseks meetoditeks olid poolstruktureeritud intervjuud Eesti Spaaliitu kuuluvate spaajuhtidega ja küsitlused Eesti meestele nii veebis kui ka paber kandjal. Kuna andmeid koguti kasutades kahte erinevat meetodit, siis oli vajalik kogutud andmeid erinevalt ka analüüsida. Seetõttu on antud magistritöös kasutatud analüüsi meetodina sisuanalüüsi intervjuude puhul ning statistilist analüüsi küsitluste puhul. Käesoleva magistritöö autoril oli võimalus kaasata peaaegu kõik Eesti Spaaliitu kuuluvad spaahotellid, kes leidsid aega uurimuses osalemiseks. Intervjueriti nii arste, spaajuhte, turundus- ja müügijuhte- olenevalt sellest, kellel oli võimalus ja soov töö autorit aidata. Analüüsi käigus oli huvitav jälgida, kuidas arvamused meeste sihtturu raames haakusid või täiendasid teineteise seisukohti.

Käesolev magistritöö on jagatud neljaks põhipeatükiks, mis omakorda hõlmavad alapeatükke juba konkreetsemate teemadega. Töö esimene peatükk annab ülevaate tarbijakäitumise olemusest ning selle mõistest, tarbijakäitumise arenguloost ning tutvustab tarbijakäitumise erinevaid integreeritavaid mudeleid, mis aastate jooksul on teadlaste poolt loodud ja täiendatud ning tänapäevasesse võtmesse pandud. Samuti on esimeses peatükis kirjeldatud tarbija ostuotsustuse protsessi erinevaid faase, mida iga

tarbija läbib enne ostuotsustuse langetamist. Lisaks on autor välja toonud ka tarbijakäitumist mõjutavad erinevad tegurid ning analüüsinud eraldi meestarbijakäitumist erinevates tarbijakäitumise uuringutes ka spaa- ja heaolusektoris.

Teine peatükk keskendub rohkem tarbijakäitumisele turundusstrateegia valdkonnas, mõtestab lahti sihtturunduse olemuse ja vajalikkuse ning uurib lähemalt kuidas toimib tänapäeval turundamine spetsiaalselt meestele nii üldiselt kui ka spaa- ja heaolusektoris. Kolmas peatükk antud magistritöös on pühendatud valitud uurimismeetoditele, üldkogumi valikule, uurimuspriirangutele ja erinevale metoodikale, mida uurimuse käigus kasutati. Viimane neljas peatükk annab ülevaate küsitluste ja intervjuude tulemuste analüüsist ning autori poolt tehtud soovitustest Eesti spaahotellidele, mis võiks aidata neil meelitada rohkem mehi spaasse ning disianida paremaid spetsiaalselt meestele mõeldud teenuseid.

Püstitatud töö eesmärk oli vastavalt küsitluse tulemustele anda soovitusi Eesti spaahotellidele põhimõttega, et nad saaksid täiendada oma teenuseid muutes neid meeste keskmaks ning nii suurendada spaa atraktiivsust meeste hulgas. Antud eesmärk sai täidetud ning uurimuse ülesanded samuti saavutatud. Uurimuse käigus koguti autori arvates piisavalt tõendeid tõestamaks, et mehed on väga tõsiselt võetav ja lojaalne sihtrühm kui ainult spaad oskaksid seda sõnumit ära kasutada. Veelgi enam-kuna ühe uurimuse tulemusena tuli välja, et 85% meetest kasutavad kõige rohkem internetti infoallikana, siis on esimese ning tähtsaima asjana kindlasti soovitatav kriitilise pilguga üle vaadata olemasolevad spaahotellide kodulehed. Kodulehel leitav info võiks olla selgelt loetav, arusaadav, liigendatud lihtsustatud valiku tegemiseks (meestele eraldi hoolitsused ära märkida) ning ilma liigse tekstita, mis on mitmetes erinevates värvides. Samuti soovitas autor tõsisemalt võtta mehi kui sihtrühma, kuna mehedki vajavad rohkem personaalset lähenemist sest need ajad, kus mehed käisid vaid naiste pärast spaas hakkavad mööduma eelkõige ka soorollide muutuse pärast maailmas. Tänapäevane mees on palju teadlikum ning nõudlikum kui varem ning nad soovivad samuti tunda end eriliselt ikka selleks, et taaskord spaad külastada. Seepärast on väga teretulnud ja hooliv nähtus, kui spaades on eraldi välja toodud hoolitsused meestele-samuti kergendab see esmase meesspaakülastaja valikuid ning julgustab teda spaad külastama. Kuidas siiski meelitada rohkem mehi spaasse? Parem turundamine ning

õigete turundussõnumite ja turunduskanalite valimine meestele oleks siinkohal sobilik ja soovituslik vastus autori poolt. Tuleviku ühiskond on eelnevatest generatsioonidest palju spaateadlikum ja spaasõbralikum, kuna alustavad spaade külastamist juba varases eas. Samuti pakuvad peaaegu kõik Eesti spaad juba ka kõige väiksematele pereliikmetele spetsiaalselt mõeldud hoolitsusi. Seega peab arvestama kindlasti sellega, et kui soovitakse olla konkurentsivõimelised ning Eesti spaaturul silma paista, siis on soovituslik rõhku hakata panema just omanäoliste ja eriliste spaateenuste disainile.

Intervjuudest spaajuhtidega jäi kõlama mitme ravispaajuhi murelik kommentaar, kus Eesti seadustega kehtestatud erisoodustusmaksu tühistamine võiks olla tuleviku vaates üks võimalusi kuidas saaks tõsta ka ravispaa meesspaakülastajate arvu, kes satuvad sinna rohkem tervist ennetavatel eesmärkidel. Nimelt on ettevõtteid, kuid väheseid, kes saavad oma töötajaid spaasse puhkama eelkõige eesmärgiga, et töötajad oleksid terved ja õnnelikud. Hetkel antud erisoodustusmaksu maksmine tähendab ettevõttele lisakulu ning soodustamiseks „tervel“ Eesti mehel jõudmast ka ravispaase eesmärgiga ennetada haigusi ja lõõgastuda, sellisel moel ei toimi. Siinkohal näebki käesoleva magisitritöö autor arengu- ning koostöövõimalust heaolu- ja spaasektori (Eesti Spaaliit, spaahotellid, tervisekeskused) ja riigiasutuste vahel. Üks võimalusi oleks alustada tihedamat koostööd (näiteks kampaaniaid) avaliku tervishoiusüsteemiga ning valitsusega teavitamiseks olukorrast ning toetamiseks rahva tervist riiklikul tasemel. Erisoodustusmaksu tühistamisega saaks ettevõtteid saata mehi spaasse „tervist ennetama“ selle asemel, et Eesti mehed jõuavad pigem sinna alles ravi eesmärgil. Samuti näeb autor siin head võimalust projektil „Mehed liikuma“ raames koos tervishoiusüsteemiga teha teavitustööd meeste seas ning julgustada neid rohkem oma heaolu eest seisma. Siinkohal võiksid oma abistava käe ulatada ka Eesti spaad, kes saaksid Eesti mehe näol lojaalse kliendi.

Magisitritöö autor soovib tänada kõiki intervjuueeritud paarste, spaajuhte ja asjaosalisi, kes leidsid aega igapäeva toimetuste juurest ning vaevusid kaasa aitama käesolevale uurimustööle. Töös leitavate ideede ja soovitustega loodab autor inspireerida mitmeid spaajuhte ning tudengeid, kes otsivad mõtteid tulevaste uuringuprojektide tarbeks.

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