
REVIEW OF A UNIVERSITY TEXTBOOK SPA AND WELLNESS

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We live hectic, busy lives with high workloads and constant exposure to stress. Therefore, it is not surprising that a growing number of people seek opportunities to relax, unwind, and rejuvenate both physically and mentally. Many turn to places specifically designed to alleviate stress. The tourism sector offers numerous such opportunities. In response to these modern lifestyle challenges, spa tourism and wellness services have gained importance in recent years. Training future professionals who are knowledgeable and practice-oriented requires incorporating the key areas of tourism into their education. One such area is undoubtedly spa and wellness tourism. In Slovakia, there are only a limited number of institutions dedicated to the training professionals for the spa and wellness sector. One of the leading institutions in this field is the Department of Tourism at the Faculty of Commerce, University of Economics in Bratislava.

As part of the study programme Entrepreneurship in Tourism and Services at the 1st level of study, students are also educated and professionally trained in the subject of Spa and Wellness Tourism. This is a compulsory course in which students acquire valuable theoretical knowledge, and also practical skills. The teaching team, consisting of Ing. Anna Veszprémi Sirotková, PhD., prof. Ing. Viera Kubičková, PhD., and Ing. Mária Halenárová, has prepared a university textbook not only for students at their home institution but also for students from other universities studying the spa industry, as well as for entrepreneurs, spa professionals, and other interested individuals. The peer-reviewed university textbook were also published as a response to the increased general interest in spa treatment, spas, relaxation, post-treatment or wellness stays in Slovak facilities providing the above services.

The reviewed university textbook reflects the increased need for training new professionals for the spa tourism and wellness services. The texts are organized into a total of thirteen thematic units, which correspond to the thirteen-week semester at colleges and universities. Each topic is designed for one week in the semester. The theoretical analysis in the texts is complemented by a rich array of graphical illustrations, namely ten tables, two graphs, a figure, and two diagrams. The graphical elements help to visualize the material, contribute to its memorability and better understanding. The theoretical interpretation of the material is based on a total of 160 literary sources, which are very varied and include books, monographs, journals, works in proceedings, web portals and legal regulations. All sources are properly and correctly cited, identified in the reference list with complete data. The sources are not only Slovak, but also numerous foreign literary sources have been used.

Thematically, college textbook cover a wide range of topics that are important to address. These are thematic units, the mastery of which is important from the point of view of preparation for business in the spa and wellness sector. In addition to the thematic chapters themselves, the textbook also contains an introduction through which the tutors introduce the readers to the topic. The textbooks have a slight overlap into the healthcare industry, with the economic and business aspects of spa and wellness services dominating. A significant portion of the text is also dedicated to managerial and marketing aspects, such as service design, management specifics, etc. The authors' team has also presented the legal background of operating businesses in the spa and wellness sector.

Among the important topics, the authors have included a subtopic on the historical use of water for healing purposes (first civilizations, western civilizations), spas in Slovakia and their history, new world spa cultures, body health medicine and spa rehabilitation. The second chapter focuses on defining the basic conceptual framework in the field of spa and wellness. The professional interpretation continues with the legal aspects of business in spa and wellness services in the Slovak Republic. The following chapters deal directly with healing resources and procedures. The typology of natural resources is anchored in the fourth chapter and spa and wellness procedures in the fifth chapter. In addition to the classification of spa and wellness treatments, the authors also present the health indications and contraindications for such treatments and services, the knowledge of which is essential. The sixth chapter provides an in-depth look at the field of wellness and wellness economics, followed by a discussion on the quality of life. The detailed eight chapter is devoted to the European beauty industry. The ninth chapter introduces students and other interested individuals to partnerships and national and international organizations operating in the spa and wellness sector, not only in Slovakia but also across Europe and worldwide. In this way, the authors have been able to reflect on a wider and geographical context. The tenth chapter focuses on popular thermal baths, water parks, and thermal parks, covering the subtopic of SPA wellness. The eleventh and twelfth chapters introduce readers to marketing and management in the spa and wellness sector, analysing service design in the spa industry and the unique aspects of process organization in managing spa and wellness entities. The final chapter explores the phenomenon of sustainability and the development of wellness and spa. At the end of each chapter, the didactic aspect of the teaching texts is reinforced through exercises or questions.

In conclusion, this work can be regarded as a valuable contribution to the literature in this field and is recommended for students, professionals, and the general public.

Bibliography

Veszprémi Sirotková, A., Kubičková, V., Halenárová, M. (2023). *Kúpeľníctvo a wellness*. Bratislava: Vydavateľstvo EKONÓM, 2023, 136 p. ISBN 978-80-225-5097-0

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