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Analysis of the North Great Plain Region's Accommodation Supply with Special Focus on Sport and Wellness Elements

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Abstract: Tourism is one of the most dynamically growing sectors in the world. One of the most significant tourism products of Hungary and the Northern Great Plain region is health tourism. In our research, we examined the offer of wellness and sports services of 39 hotels in the Northern Great Plain region, broken down by the classification of these hotels. The results show that wellness elements are present in most of the hotels (84.6%), which is an element of competitiveness. Many hotels also include the word wellness in their name, which can be used in the promotion. At 35.9% of hotels, leisure sports are also on offer, this kind of sports service is greatly demanded by health-conscious consumers. The development of wellness and sports services can provide prevention and health retention for the consumers during their stay, besides delivering fun and entertainment.

Keywords: Health tourism, North Great Plain region, wellness, sport services

Introduction

Tourism is today one of the fastest growing sectors, and its importance in Hungary is becoming increasingly significant as it can stimulate the economy to stimulate economic growth and improve economic balance (Árva et al., 2008; Darabos, 2015; Hegedűs, 2006; Herman, 2017, 2018; Ilie et al., 2017; Mudruczó-Szenyiesy, 2005). It can promote the economic catching-up of underdeveloped regions, preserving their natural, cultural values, and improving the living conditions of the population (Michalkó and Rácz, 2011).

Health tourism in Hungary has long been a development priority. In the New Széchenyi Plan (2011) Healing Hungary-Health Industry Program, the development priority is two-pole, one is the development of tourism based on the health industry, and the other is the development of the thermal health industry. Hungarian health tourism is a brand that attracts not only a lot of domestic tourists but also a lot of foreign tourists in the motivation of destination choice (Sörös, 2013; Müller et al., 2011; Dávid et al., 2013; Lengyel, 2016; Müller, 2018).

Tourism is one of the flagships of the Northern Great Plain region, as the spa and thermal water stock is outstanding among the region's features, which can provide a good chance for several cities to compete in tourist destinations.

Among the tourist attractions, several Hungarian tourism regions also report on the success of spa-based bath developments (Müller et al., 2009; Kerényi et al., 2009; Müller and Szabó, 2009; Barta et al., 2011; Bozóti, 2015; Bakucz et al., 2016; Müller et al., 2016a, 2016b).

Domestic research on the Northern Great Plain region also highlights the region's health tourism product development, in which bath developments also occupy a central place (Müller and Könyves, 2006; Müller and Kórik, 2009; Molnár et al., 2010; Lövei-Kalmár, 2017; Darabos and Nagy, 2018). Quality development is the backbone of success as the expansion of quality supply is an element of competitiveness (Go-Govers, 2000; Rulle et al., 2010).

Several studies report that tourists require different health-care and wellness elements during their travel. Tourism trends (Myers et al., 2000) also show that with an active lifestyle becoming more widespread the active recreational activities are getting more and more popular as well (Kiss and Török, 2001; Sziva, 2010). The availability of these services may be suitable for designing a destination health tourism brand and influencing the destination choice of tourists, thus increasing guest satisfaction as well (Kincses, 2005; Müller et al., 2018).

Literature review

Tourism contributes to the performance of several other sectors of the national economy as well. However, the most robust relationship is with the accommodation and catering industry, with a share of 1.6% of total domestic GDP in 2007. If we compare the Northern Great Plain region to the national average, we get a better picture, as in the area this rate was 1.8%. Thus, the economy of the North Great Plain region as a national economic sector has a higher importance than the national average (Mező and Maczik, 2010).

At the end of July 2017, 3411 commercial accommodations were registered in Hungary, where more than 98,000 rooms and 352,000 beds provided the conditions for the reception of tourists. On July 31, 2017, 1094 hotels with 62,000 rooms and 43% of all commercial lodging facilities (151,000 beds) provided tourists with accommodation. The number of functioning accommodations and seats has slightly increased compared to the statistics of 2016. The number of functioning hotels has increased by almost 200 since 2010, displaying a 22% increase in the number of seats. The expansion of the accommodation was necessitated by the increasing demand, as the volume of domestic and international tourism has also increased and is growing steadily.

50% of the Hungarian population took part in a multi-day trip for domestic tourism at least once in 2017. The shorter, 1-3-night trips, which were chosen by 42% of tourists, were the most popular, with only 25% of tourists picking a longer one. In 2017, the population spent 58 million days on a multi-day trip during 14 million travels, 0.4% and 1.8% less than in 2016, respectively. In 2017, hotels were the most popular among commercial accommodation establishments, where the share of time spent rose from 30 to 32% (KSH, 2017).

In recent years, however, there has been a fluctuating but positive trend for foreign arrivals. From 2010 to 2017, the number of international visitors increased by 38% over the seven years, with overnight trips up by 29% and multi-day trips by 66% (KSH, 2017).

The table below shows the regional distribution of the number of guests between 2015 and 2017. The data shows that the North Great Plain region is the 5th most touristic tourist region, preceded by Budapest and Central Danube region, Lake Balaton, Western Transdanubia, and Northern Hungary. The number of guests arriving in the North Great Plain region between 2015 and 2017 realized growth in demand (table 1).

Table 1. Regional distribution of guests in 2015-2017

Year	Budapest- Central Danube Region	Out of this: Budapest	North Hungary	North- Great Plain	Lake Tisza	South- Great Plain	Central Transdanubia	Lake Balaton	South- Transdanubia	West- Transdanubia	Total
Guests (thousand)											
2015	4389	3805	951	720	111	690	438	1573	426	1105	10403
2016	4711	4085	1008	759	105	730	499	1692	450	1163	11117
2017	4988	4273	1083	821	134	818	552	1788	478	1222	11884

The table below shows the number of guest nights and its regional differences between 2015-2017. We can state that the region is also ranked 5th in this indicator, similarly to the number of guests. The number of guest nights in the North Great Plain region also increased from 2015 to 2017 (table 2).

Table 2. The regional development of guest-nights between 2015-2017

Year	Budapest- Central Danube Region	Out of this: Budapest	North Hungary	North- Great Plain	Lake Tisza	South- Great Plain	Central Transdanubia	Lake Balaton	South- Transdanubia	West- Transdanubia	Total
Nights (thousand)											
2015	9887	8768	2149	1945	309	1609	1009	5078	1023	2878	25888
2016	10579	9323	2280	2055	300	1710	1165	5452	1052	3037	27629
2017	11462	10072	2446	2161	367	1913	1312	5760	1121	3227	29769

If we analyze the evolution of the tourist traffic data of the hotels in the North Great Plain Region (figure 1), we can state that since 2010 the number of guests in the region has been growing steadily, showing the linear trend line. This growing trend shows the increasing demand for the North Great Plain region as a tourist destination. In the region, Hajdú-Bihar County is the most sought-after destination, as evidenced by the growing guest turnover of commercial accommodations.

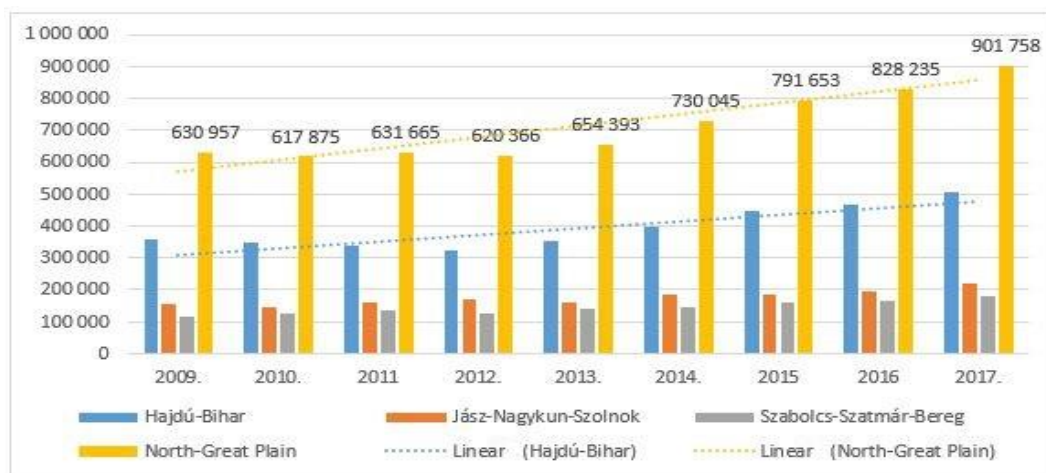


Figure 1. Visitor turnover of commercial accommodations in the North Great Plain Region 2009-2017 (person)

Material and Method

In our research, we used a questionnaire survey among three, four and five-star hotels in the North Great Plain region. By the available database, we have sent out a questionnaire for all hotels that we have compiled to measure the fitness and wellness service elements. The response rate was 86.6%, 39 out of 45 hotels sent us the completed questionnaire. In our research, we sought to find out what health and wellness services are available for guests in different classifications of different hotels. The data was processed using the Spss statistical program, in addition to the basic statistics we used a chi2 test to examine the correlations.

Results

In the course of our investigation, we analyzed the supply elements of 39 hotels in the Northern Great Plain Region.

Table 3. Distribution of the examined hotels by classifications in the North Great Plain region

County/Hotels	Three stars pcs (%)	Four stars pcs (%)	Five stars pcs (%)	Total
Hajdú-Bihar	3 (21,4)	14 (58,3)	1 (100)	18
Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg	4 (28,6)	6 (25)	0	10
Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok	7 (50)	4 (16,7)	0	11
Total	14 (100)	24 (100)	1 (100)	39

In the case of the hotels we surveyed, the hotels with higher qualification in Hajdú-Bihar County are significantly overrepresented compared to the other two counties ($\chi^2 = 7.34$, $p = 0.09$), 18 of the 39 hotels examined are in this county (table 3).

Since health tourism plays a decisive role in the region and the related wellness and health services are a very important attraction, we were curious as to how many hotels use a brand value of health tourism (Kerényi et al., 2010) and how many of them use it in their name.

Out of the hotels examined, 23.1% (9pcs) of them states that the word "wellness" occurs in their name; out of these 28,6% (table 4) have three-star classification. 20.55% (table 5) of the four-star hotels said the same. These hotels use of the opportunity to link brand building to an old or domestic health tourism brand (Mosonyi et al., 2013).

The name of the spa appears in 15.4% (table 6) of the examined hotels, 28.6% (table 4) of the three-star hotels, 8.3% of the four-star hotels (table 2) said the same.

The classification of commercial hotels was previously regulated by GKM enactment 54/2003, amended IKIM enactment (Borbély and Müller, 2008), which was in effect until 2012. Based on this enactment, the number of wellness rating among the hotels we examined was the following, de-scribed in figure 2.

Table 4. Distribution of the hotels examined, by previous wellness classification

Classifications of the hotels					
		Three stars pcs (%)	Four stars pcs (%)	Five stars pcs (%)	Total pcs (%)
According to earlier classification: the hotel operates as a wellness institute	Yes	3 (21,4)	9 (37,5)	0 (0)	12 (30,8)
	No	11 (78,6)	15 (62,5)	1 (100)	27 (69,2)
	Total	14 (100)	24 (100)	1 (100)	39 (100)

It can be observed that 21.4% of the three-star hotels and 37.5% of the four-star hotels operated as a wellness hotel (table 4). Although according to the new classification wellness hotels are no longer registered, they only have to be classified according to the star criteria based on quality, yet the existence of the wellness supply

elements increases the competitiveness of the hotels as they follow the consumption trends of the health-conscious consumers of our time (Müller and Kerényi, 2009; Sörös et al., 2012; Csirmaz and Pető, 2015; Bíró et al., 2018a).

Table 5. The appearance of wellness elements in the examined hotels

		Classifications of the hotels			
		Three stars pcs (%)	Four stars pcs (%)	Five stars pcs (%)	Total pcs (%)
Does the hotel offer wellness services?	Yes	10 (71,4)	22 (91,7)	1 (100)	33 (84,6)
	No	4 (28,6)	2 (8,3)	0 (0)	6 (15,4)
	Total	14 (100)	24 (100)	1 (100)	39 (100)

33 (84%) of the hotels have wellness items (table 5). Based on the results, it can be stated that more of the 4-star hotels provide wellness services to the guests than the 3-star hotels. The diversity of well-ness offerings (Müller et al. 2005) and its diversification can provide health-conscious guests with a state of physical and mental well-being.

Table 6. Table The availability of fitness facilities in examined hotels

		Classifications of the hotels			
		Three stars pcs (%)	Four stars pcs (%)	Five stars pcs (%)	Total pcs (%)
Does the hotel have a fitness facility?	Yes	2 (14,3)	10 (41,7)	1 (100)	13 (33,3)
	No	12 (85,7)	14 (58,3)	0 (0)	26 (66,7)
	Total	14 (100)	24 (100)	1 (100)	39 (100)

Also, we also examined whether the hotels have a fitness room. The results showed that 41.7% of the 4-star hotels and only 14.3% of the 3-star hotels had a fitness room and provided this opportunity to their guests (table 6). The former wellness hotel enchantment required the provision of air conditioning rooms for guests, which may have emphasized the wellness concept related to the development of physical health as this kind of sporting service is not a seasonal supply element provided throughout the year.

Recreational trends show that regular health-conscious exercise is essential for today's health-conscious consumers, who want to do it during their stay (Lenténé et al., 2018).

Table 7. The appearance of leisure sports services in the examined hotels

		Classifications of the hotels			
		Three stars pcs (%)	Four stars pcs (%)	Five stars pcs (%)	Total pcs (%)
Is there an opportunity for leisure sport, east or aerobic type of sport?	Yes	5 (35,7)	9 (37,5)	0 (0)	14 (35,9)
	No	9 (64,3)	15 (62,5)	1 (100)	25 (64,1)
	Total	14 (100)	24 (100)	1 (100)	39 (100)

For leisure sports, 35.7% of 3 the star and 37.5% of the 4-star hotels provide opportunity for their guests (table 7). The expectation for leisure sports is that it should be fun, excitement-centered and have a wide range of movement repertoire according to the expectations of different target groups. In our previous survey, we have evaluated the leisure sports offerings of the hotels in the counties of the region. The results showed that most hotels are located in Hajdú-Bihar County, and the most popular in leisure sports in them are: yoga, aerobics, bicycle tours and water training (Lenténé et al., 2018).

Among sports services, the most popular among hotel guests, are suitable for prevention, the improvement of fitness level and for the support of the physical, psychological and social well-being, which fact is also confirmed by trends (Müller and Bácsné, 2018; Bendíková, 2017).

Recreational sports offerings are available in many domestic and foreign hotels, as tourist trends show that active holidays are replacing passive holidays more and more (Müller et al., 2016). Health conscious guests require a variety of active pack refill services during their stay.

Conclusions

Tourism and health tourism product development is vital for the North Great Plain region, as the development of the tourism market is based on reasonable conditions. This is especially important given that the region's commercial accommodation has been able to increase its number of guests since 2010. Quality parameters should also be taken into account in the development of supply elements, as the extensive and intensive development of services together represents competitiveness in tourism (Molnár et al., 2014; Bíró et al., 2018b). The wellness and sports offer are predominantly seen in the hotels in the North Great Plain region as additional services. The expansion of these services is justified by to-day's recreational trends, which show that regular exercise is important for health-conscious consumers, who want to do it during their holidays.

Our research has shown that the inclusion of wellness offerings in the hotels of the Northern Great Plain region is markedly marked. The addition of wellness elements in the offers of the hotels is definitely an essential element of competitiveness, as it meets increasing demand. The word well-ness appears in many names of the Northern Great Plain region's hotels, thus in the marketing communication sends a message to the guests, this attraction factor is used predominantly in the promotion. Fitness and sports offerings are also available in many hotels, which can provide active leisure for health-conscious consumers.

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