

Abstract

"The Quality of Medical Treatment Services at the Wieliczka Salt Mine Spa,"

Analyzes the quality of medical and rehabilitation services and their users at one of the most unique spas in Poland. Her goal was to determine the level of quality, identify factors influencing the treatment experience, and verify conclusions regarding the relationship between medical competence, service efficiency, and patient care.

In the theoretical section, the author discusses the topic in the fields of health, culture, and tourism, pointing to access to health services in the context of global wellness and well-being trends. The author discusses the development of Polish spa treatment, its legal and economic applications, and changes in the behavior of contemporary public services. In light of the literature, spas are not only places of treatment but also centers for prevention, recreation, and health education.

The empirical part of the study, conducted in 2023–2024 at the Wieliczka Salt Mine Spa, included a diagnostic survey of 350 patients and 20 staff members (doctors, physiotherapists, and nurses). The study was supplemented by a mystery shopping method, in which three independent observers recommended service quality and compliance with promotional materials. The research test was a proprietary questionnaire based on the SERVQUAL model, adjusted to the specific needs of the healthcare sector, and a five-point Likert scale. The scope of the studies examined included the following service categories: physical therapy, kinesiotherapy, therapeutic massage, dietetics, nursing care, rehabilitation, and post-COVID-19 treatment. Functioning, patient stay, and treatment of stays were also assessed. The results of the follow-up studies demonstrated a high level of service quality and overall cleansing treatments. Over 80% of respondents rated access as "high" or "very high." The highest levels of professional service, treatment, and wellness at the spa were achieved. Physiotherapists and therapists received particularly high ratings (73% and 68% rated "very good," respectively). Patients can access the microclimate of underground salt cells, indicating its effects on the respiratory system. Massages, physical exercises, and dietary programs are also highly demanding, and therefore, the consequences affect the organization and logistics of the stay and some services. An analysis of employee responses confirmed the

consistency of the offerings and employee engagement, while optimizing staff resources and stay durations was indicated. The results of the Mystery Shopping method confirmed the consistency of services with the promotion, a high level of professional ethics, and compliance. Overall customer satisfaction was 4.7 points on a 5-point scale.

In the interpretative section, the author summarized the results from the theory of service quality. According to the SERVQUAL model, the Wieliczka Spa Resort's assessment focuses on the following parameters: competence, empathy, and application, while the scores used address aspects of responsiveness (my reactivity) and functional quality, which occur in the organization of the service process. Grönroos's (1990) model demonstrated a very basic significance (treatment outcome), while functional quality (service delivery method) was different. The study results also indicate that patient satisfaction is not limited to health outcomes but also to social, communication, and empathy outcomes. The study was developed to support Ryn's (2004) thesis, which concerns interpersonal relationships as components of service quality. The research was also published in trends published by Dryglas and Różycki (2017) – spas should be viewed as primary health centers, integrating medicine, rehabilitation, and recreation. In the main section, the author discusses the practical implications of the research. From a management perspective, key solutions include the importance of expanding smart services, standardizing services, improving communication, and investing in access and digitalization of services. From a scientific perspective, the study contributes to the development of interdisciplinary interconnected health, tourism, and management sciences.

Among the limitations of the study, the author lists: the local nature of the sample (a single spa), the subjective nature of the assessment, and the lack of seasonal analysis. The recommended products include quality of service across spas, an assessment of long-term effects, and research on economic efficiency and the provision of telemedicine on quality of service.

In summary, this thesis demonstrates that the Wieliczka Salt Mine Spa is a model example of the synergy of tradition and innovation, combining balneotherapy heritage with a modern approach to healthcare. This facility successfully implements therapeutic, preventative, and recreational functions, contributing to the development of health tourism in Poland and Europe.